### We Are All Works In Progress

**by gemjam**

**Summary**

Stiles is grabbed in the woods and sold as a Companion to a man who teaches him about surrender, acceptance and how it takes a lot of hard work to become who you really are.

**Notes**

Backstory wise, pretty much follows canon for Stiles except Malia doesn't exist and instead of the Wild Hunt, when he goes missing senior year, this is where he ends up.

Peter leaves Beacon Hills before the fire and so never meets Stiles and co and Derek is the Alpha who turns Scott in season one.
Chapter 1

Stiles plays the memory over and over in his head, not because he hopes he can gain anything from it, but because it feels like the last time he was himself, and he wants to cling to that.

He was in the woods with Scott, tracking a werewolf that Scott guessed was newly bitten and definitely volatile. It had been a long night and Stiles’ attention was waning. He didn’t need his wits about him when Scott was leading the way. Stiles would follow him to the ends of the earth. He should have watched his footing though because he stepped on a branch, the crack echoing through the trees and spooking the werewolf.

He bolted, Scott giving chase, and Stiles had no hope of keeping up but he tried regardless. He lost sight of Scott, his legs starting to slow, and that’s it, that’s when he stopped being him, when everything turned into present tense in this nightmare he can’t escape.

He’s grabbed from behind, smashed against the ground, and at first he thinks it must be the werewolf. He flails, managing to flip himself over before he’s pinned against the earth. It’s not the kid.

“Scott!” he yells at the top of his lungs.

The man clamps a hand over his mouth and Stiles twists himself, biting down on the flesh of his palm. The man yelps, pulling his hand away.

“Little fucker.”

“You’re making this very messy,” another voice says critically.

Stiles sees a second man lean over the first, reaching down and stabbing something into Stiles’ neck. He feels himself fading fast, the trees starting to blur around him.

“Scott,” he says weakly, knowing that Scott will be tuned into his voice, knowing that he’ll hear him, but he’s already afraid it’s too late.

When he opens his eyes again, he’s inside a blacked-out van. The road is uneven beneath him and he wonders if he’s still in the woods, wonders how long he was out. Can Scott still track him? His head is pounding, his face tender. He reaches up a hand, touching his temple and feeling a graze from where he was slammed into the ground. It’s damp and he wonders if it’s still bleeding.

There’s not enough light to see, he can’t even tell if he’s alone in here. After a while he hears voices in the cab, a conversation back and forth. He takes a chance, crawling to the back of the van and trying the door but he can’t find a handle. He kicks at it, slams his body against it. Falling out of a moving vehicle has to be better option than letting himself be taken wherever they’re going.

The van stops abruptly and he thinks they must have heard him, that they’re coming to subdue him again. He shuffles backwards, getting as far away from the door as he can. When it opens, he’s blinded by a bright light shined directly into his eyes. He tries to put his hand up to shield himself but one of the men is on him, putting a hood over his head.

He’s grabbed by two sets of hands and dragged roughly from the van. He can’t see, can’t breathe, but he’s pulled along, feet scraping the floor. It feels gritty under his sneakers, dirty. He’s taken into an elevator that feels and sounds industrial, jerking downwards in a way that makes his stomach lurch. He’s walked down corridors, turning this way and that before he’s finally tossed
forwards, a door clanging shut behind him.

He pulls the hood off, spinning around to see the men walking away. He’s in what looks like a holding cell, rusted bars separating him from the corridor. There’s no windows, just a dull electric light in the hallway that buzzes.

He doesn’t know how long he’s there. Sometimes they bring him food that always seems like stale leftovers but there’s never any clue what time of day it is. He hears voices from the end of the echoing corridor and he’s never sure if they don’t realise he can hear them or if they just don’t care.

“We can’t keep him here much longer.”

“You’re the one who messed his face up. We won’t get full price for him looking like that.”

“I’m ready to cut my losses and get rid of him.”

“We wait. He’ll heal. I didn’t go to all this trouble to not get what he’s worth.”

Stiles is tempted to claw at his own face, to make himself worthless to them. He doesn’t know who he’s being sold to but he doesn’t think any good can come of it. He picks half-heartedly at the scabs on his face but it makes him squeamish and he’s already weak enough. He tries to work out the thing that will help him survive this. To sell him they’ll have to move him. That could be the best chance he’ll get.

When the day comes, both men stand at the door, braced for him.

“Turn and face the wall.”

“No,” Stiles says defiantly.

“Don’t make us do this the hard way.”

“You can’t hurt me,” Stiles says. “You won’t get full price.”

The man produces a flip knife, revealing the blade. “That’s only if we do it where they can see.”

Stiles considers his options. They’re limited. He eyes the man and then turns around, facing the back wall. He listens, the clanking lock turning, and as soon as the door releases he spins, rushing the two men. He knows his chances are slim but he can’t do nothing. He slams full body into the first man, no give, and then he feels a sharp pain in his neck, the needle going in. He sinks helplessly to his knees, feeling himself lifted as it all fades away.

When he comes around again, he’s aware of movement beneath him, the van, but when he cracks his eyes open everything is bright. He hears a heavy door shutting and struggles to sit up, trying to get his bearings. As his eyes adjust to the light he sees that he’s on a gurney in a clinical looking room. The men are gone but there’s a younger man with a clipboard wearing some kind of uniform.

“Oh good, you’re awake,” he says. “I was worried they’d given you too much. The risks of working with amateurs.”

“Where is this place?” Stiles asks.

“This is intake,” the man tells him.

“Intake for what?” Stiles demands.
“For the Foundry,” the man says calmly. “My name’s Nick, I’m your handler.” He considers Stiles for a moment. “You probably want to get cleaned up before I take you to your room.”

“No,” Stiles says, swinging his legs off the side of the gurney, the panic rising up in him. “I’m not supposed to be here.”

Nick looks at him, bemused. “You think I don’t know that? I just had to fake your paperwork.”

Stiles stares at him, unable comprehend the magnitude of what that means for his future. Nick sighs, putting the clipboard down.

“Look, we don’t get as many orphans and runaways as we used to,” he explains. “We’ve had to get a little more creative in our recruitment process.”

“So you kidnap people?” Stiles asks incredulously.

“We accept donations,” Nick responds. “No questions asked.”

“Well I’m not supposed to be here,” Stiles insists.

“I know,” Nick agrees, something like sympathy in his voice. “But the thing is, you’re a third class citizen now, so no one’s going to listen to you.”

“My dad’s a sheriff,” Stiles tells him. “He’s going to find me, find out what you’ve been doing, you’re all going to rot in jail.”

Nick looks disinterested, picking up his clipboard again. “Your old life is gone. No one’s going to find you. Do you want a shower now? Because it could be a while before anyone asks you again.”

Stiles swallows uncomfortably, looking at the floor. He’s filthy, covered in sweat and grime, and he knows that he must reek. He’s been craving a hot shower but not here, not like this. The thought of being that vulnerable makes his skin crawl.

Nick huffs, clearly impatient. “There’s a lock on the door and I have no interest in watching,” he assures Stiles. “No one here is going to hurt you or use you or be inappropriate. We look after the merchandise. That’s the golden rule. You’ll be well fed, you’ll be comfortable, and if you’re good, you can earn privileges.”

Stiles closes his eyes, taking a steadying breath. He has to admit, being here feels like a significant improvement to the cage he’s been stuck in, but he knows what this place is, knows what happens next. Companions is their official title but everyone knows they’re sex slaves. No one pays that much money just for someone to cuddle and make them dinner. They buy them so they can live out all their fantasies that no self-respecting person would entertain.

“Get up,” Nick tells him.

Stiles opens his eyes, tensing as he shies away. Nick crosses the room, opening a door.

“Didn’t I just say I wasn’t going to hurt you,” he says warily. “Get over here.”

Stiles stands cautiously, going to join Nick in the doorway. It’s a bathroom, white and clean.

“Shower,” Nick says, gesturing towards it. He reaches around the door. “Lock,” he says, demonstrating it. “No hidden cameras. We’re not voyeurs. You’re only going to be thought of like that by the person who buys you. We’re just running a business.” He turns to look at Stiles. “Take
a shower. Trust me, you’ll regret it if you don’t.”

Stiles steps into the room, Nick moving away from the door as Stiles pushes it closed. He clicks the lock quickly into place and lets himself sag. He turns, looking around the room for anything useful. Soap. Shampoo. No razors. He knows it’s a lost battle already, even if he could get past Nick, there’s no way out of this complex. He knows how these places work. Everyone knows how they work. And they all just let it be a part of their world.

He strips self-consciously, not doubting Nick’s claim that no one is watching, but not wanting to expose himself anyway. It feels wrong. He doesn’t feel safe.

He turns the shower on, stepping under the hot stream of water, and he instantly begins to shake. The relief at such a familiar, needed sensation mixed with the terror of where he is overwhelms him. He can feel the tears sliding down his face, but maybe if they all go straight down the drain he can pretend they’re not real.

He washes himself quickly, efficiently, always keeping himself guarded, angled in a way that he can hide himself easily. He wraps a towel around his waist as he steps out, looking at the clean, folded clothes on the shelf. He guesses he’s supposed to put them on. As much as he doesn’t want to comply, he can’t stand the thought of putting on his own dirty clothes again. They’re coated in sweat, blood and anxiety.

He towels himself dry and pulls on the clean clothes, considering himself. It’s like the uniform of some kind of private school but he has to admit it’s at least comfortable. It will do. Maybe if he blends in, he’ll have more chance to plot his escape.

He takes a deep breath, trying to steady himself before he unlocks the door. Nick is sat on a stool, looking idly over the clipboard.

“You look better,” he comments, getting to his feet. “You ready to go to your room?”

Stiles shakes his head, crossing his arms over his chest.

“It’s not so bad here,” Nick tells him, leading the way towards the door. “You’ll see.”

Nick takes him down a series of corridors, every door they go through requiring two-point security - an access card and a fingerprint. Nick notices him watching and smiles at him.

“The fingerprint only works if it’s body temperature,” he says. “It’s a bitch when it’s a cold day out and you’re trying to start your shift, but it means a severed finger doesn’t work.”

“It’ll work if I warm it up,” Stiles counters.

Nick looks amused. “I think it’s going to be a while before you get any privileges.”

He unlocks the next door and Stiles can see that they’re in a more residential area of the building. Each room has a window and Stiles can see people sat at desks, people laid on beds. Nick stops outside an empty room, using his access card and fingerprint to open the door.

“This is yours,” he says.

Stiles steps inside. It’s the same as all the others, reminiscent of a dorm room. There’s a bed, a desk and chair, a lamp, one long window that’s too high up to see anything but sky through. It’s dark outside now. He looks through the adjoining door and sees a toilet and sink, no shower. He guesses that’s one of the privileges. As he turns back into the room he sees that the window he
looked through before is a mirror on this side. Two-way glass. He wonders why they bother when they have to pass it to get into the room, but maybe being faced with your own reflection makes you forget that you’re being watched.

“Get settled in,” Nick tells him. “I’ll bring you some dinner.”

Stiles feels a shudder go through him as the door closes, the electronic lock clicking into place. He looks around again. There’s a TV on one wall but no remote. Maybe that’s a privilege too. There’s no books, nothing to stimulate his mind, but he has to admit that Nick is right, it is comfortable at least. It’s a step up from the underground cell he’s been in, even if the need to escape feels more urgent than ever.

Nick brings him dinner, meat and fresh vegetables, delicious and filling and everything he’s been lacking. He tries not to feel grateful. He’s not being treated like a person; he’s being kept in saleable condition.

That night he has to watch his first video about being a Companion. It starts on his TV without warning, giving him an introduction to the history of the role and what an honour it is to serve. Stiles loses count of the amount of times he rolls his eyes. He’s worried for the people in here who actually buy this bullshit.

It is nice to climb into a real bed at the end of the day though, even if it’s not his own. It’s nice to have a real toilet with a door he can close. There’s no mirror in there so he assumes they can’t see him but he’s not going to take that for granted. It’s nice to have clean clothes and the ability to at least clean up a little in the small sink. But he’s not grateful. He refuses to be grateful.

Nick brings him his three square meals a day and he has to watch two videos on his TV about the various roles of a Companion and what to expect when you get taken home by your new Master or Mistress. They explain how to behave when you’re alone with them, when you’re in company, how to show your respect. It all makes Stiles’ skin crawl. No one ever asks him if he’s taking any of this in, if he’s understanding it, if he’s going to go along with it. That’s not really how brainwashing works though. He guesses he’ll be sat here with these videos until he internalises it and then he’ll be sold off to the highest bidder.

After three days, Nick tells him he can take a shower. He leads him down the corridor to a tiled room with separate stalls. He’s the only one in there. Nick waits outside while Stiles closes the door to his cubicle, using the soap and shampoo provided to get clean. He’s given fresh clothes and taken back to his room which feels more and more like a cell.

The next day, Nick comes back for him again. “You didn’t do anything dumb yesterday. That means you can have exercise today.”

Stiles doesn’t know what that entails but he’s going stir crazy so he’ll take any distraction. He follows Nick through the corridors until they make their way outside. He’s disappointed to see it’s completely walled in, no chance to get a look around. He’s tried looking out of his window but even when he climbs on the bed and gets up on his tiptoes he can’t see the horizon. He could be anywhere.

He looks at the space in front of him, like a prison yard but eerily empty. Aside from the people he saw through the windows when he first got taken to his room, he hasn’t seen another Companion.

“We’re not sure you can play well with others yet,” Nick tells him. “You’re in solitary until you prove we can trust you.”
“So human contact is a privilege too?” Stiles asks.

“I’m human,” Nick points out.

Stiles rolls his eyes, looking away.

“You have thirty minutes,” Nick tells him. “Use them wisely.”

Stiles starts to pace. There’s nothing really to do out here, but it does feel good to get some fresh air, to be moving. He speeds up to a jog, moving in circuits around the outside of the yard, trying to shift the restless feeling that only fuels his anxiety. He goes faster and faster, sweat dripping from him, and the release is close to euphoric.


Stiles looks at him, pleading. “Can I do a cool down?”

“Time,” Nick says again. “We have a schedule. You need to clear out so the good boys can play.”

Stiles nods, not daring to argue. His blood is still pumping too hard as he’s taken back to his room.

“You can’t have a shower until tomorrow but I can bring you some fresh clothes,” Nick tells him.

He leaves and Stiles goes through to the washroom, stripping off and cleaning himself up in the sink. He hears the door to his room open and sticks his head out to see Nick placing some clothes on his desk along with a couple of books.

“Thought you might appreciate something to read.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says earnestly and he realises too late that he’s grateful.

Life falls into a routine. He gets to shower every other day, is allowed to exercise twice a week. He now has to watch three videos a day telling him all about how fulfilling being a Companion can be and how much joy can be gained from serving others if you let yourself surrender to it. Stiles groans every time they come on.

When the door opens, he doesn’t bother looking up, just waits for Nick to tell him what it’s time for now.

“Do you want a book?”

Stiles looks up sharply, jumping off the bed. It’s not Nick. In his whole time here, he’s never met anyone but Nick, has never seen another Companion or handler or guard in the corridors or common areas. Solitary really does mean solitary. Everything is so perfectly choreographed and timed that he’s always moved around without seeing another person.

But here in his doorway is someone else in the same private school-esque uniform as him, wheeling a trolley of books. Stiles peers out into the hallway but the kid’s not with a handler, he’s not being supervised. He must have opened the door himself.

“Your fingerprint opens the doors?” Stiles asks.

“I have the highest privilege level,” the kid tells him. “And I’m going to have to report you for asking that question.”

Stiles frowns at him. “What?”
“Curiosity is not encouraged,” the kid says. “And you’re never getting out of solitary with that attitude.”

“This is not attitude,” Stiles says incredulously. “Under the circumstances, I think I’m being pretty damn reasonable.”

The kid shakes his head. “Spirit is not encouraged either.” He looks down at the trolley. “Do you want a book?”


He browses through the collection, pretending to make his mind up, desperate to buy some time to find out something actually useful. He picks up a book, reading the back cover.

“So the highest level is grounds privileges?” he asks casually.

“I can’t get out of this corridor,” the kid says. “I can get into the library, if they let me out of my room, and I can get in the other rooms. I can’t even get as far as the showers.”

Stiles nods, considering his options. That’s not enough but it would be a start. Maybe once he’s in the system he can work out a way of opening up the other locks to his fingerprint.

“And I have to report that you asked me that too,” the kid adds.

Stiles gives him a weary look. “Oh, come on. I’m just trying to figure out how it works. I keep getting told I’ll get privileges if I’m good but I don’t know what it means.”

“Well, I have to report you,” the kid says. “Sorry.”

“And then what happens?” Stiles asks. “I get punished?”

“You’ll get a note in your file,” the kid says. “Maybe I won’t be able to come see you for a while. You don’t have much though, I don’t think they’d take away more than that.” He shifts on his feet. “I have to go. Do you want a book?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, putting down the one he’s holding and picking one out that looks interesting.

“Step back,” the kid tells him, his tone official.

Stiles moves fully back into his room and the kid closes the door, head bowed down to avoid eye-contact. Stiles raises his eyebrows, tapping the book against his palm. His next move has to be getting these people to trust him. The more privileges he has, the higher his chances of finding a loophole to get out of here.

Nick doesn’t say anything to him when he brings him his lunch so Stiles can’t tell if the kid really reported him or not. He eats at his desk as he’s played a video about respect and how to honour your Master or Mistress. You should always be available, always pleased by their attention, always eager to do whatever you’re asked. It’s like they’re brainwashing people to forget that consent exists.

He paces his room, wondering if he’s going to be allowed any exercise today. He’s restless, his legs heavy, and all he can think about is running through the woods with Scott, lacrosse practice, being in the world. It feels so distant already and that scares him.

He lies down on the floor with his pillow under his head, his legs propped up on his bed. The
stretch in his muscles grounds him, and more blood to his head can only be a good thing. His
braincells need all the help they can get. He reads the book he got from the kid, happy for the fresh
distraction. He’s a third of the way through, wondering if he should try and pace himself, when he
hears voices in the hallway. His heart speeds up. He’s never heard voices before. He was
beginning to wonder if his room was soundproofed, but the place is so eerily quiet even when he’s
walking around.

“I think you’ll be quite pleased.”

“What about this one?”

Stiles tilts his head back, looking upside down at the mirrored glass, but of course he can’t see
anything. He swears that’s where the voices are though, which means they can see him.

“He’s not ready yet. We haven’t finished breaking him in.”

Stiles looks away, staring at the pages of his book. That’s a good thing, it means he’s not going to
be taken away to some new prison he’s going to have to work out all over again, but it also means
he’s a long way from any privileges that might get him a way out of here.

“I’m perfectly capable of breaking things myself. Bones. Spirits.”

Stiles freezes. Staying here indefinitely is looking like a better and better option.

“I’m sure you could handle him, sir. I would just hate to see you leaving with inadequate
merchandise. After you made such a generous donation…”

“After I made such a generous donation, I don’t expect to have to repeat myself. I want him. Bring
him to me.”

Footsteps retreat and Stiles swallows uncomfortably, not daring to move. He hears the lock on his
door beep and brings his legs down, rolling over to see Nick with a tight expression on his face.

“Well, little piggy,” Nick says. “Looks like you’re going to market a little earlier than anticipated.”

“Who is he?” Stiles asks, getting to his feet.


His voice is flat which just makes Stiles feel worse. There’s a knot in his stomach that tightens with
every electronic door he watches Nick open, a sense of foreboding that he won’t be coming back.
He never formulated any plans for what would happen if he was actually bought, he didn’t think it
would get this far. Running has to be his only option. He can do that better from somebody’s house
than he can from here, right? Maybe this could be a good thing.

Nick stops outside a door with no lock on it, turning to face Stiles. “Don’t make me look bad.” He
opens the door and gestures for Stiles to enter.

Stiles steps forward cautiously, peering into the room. On a couch sits a man who’s not as old or
repulsive as Stiles was afraid of. He assumed the only people that really used this service were
dirty old men. This guy is probably still twice Stiles’ age, but he seems youthful, tight jeans and a
V-neck sweatshirt, relatable at least.

When he looks up at Stiles, a slow smiles spreads across his face that looks nothing short of
predatory. Stiles tries to step back but then the door slams behind him, making him flinch.
“Well aren’t you a sweet little thing.” He pats the seat beside him. “Come sit me.”

“No, thanks,” Stiles responds, looking around the room. He spots a window and moves closer.

“I think you might have mistaken that for a request,” the man says.

Stiles looks back at him. “Huh?”

“Sit,” the man says firmly. There’s something in his tone that makes Stiles comply. “That’s a good boy,” the man praises.

Stiles leans into the back of the couch, looking out of the window over the man’s shoulder. He can see greenery. He doesn’t know what he hopes to gain from knowing that.

“I suppose it’s been a while since you’ve seen the outside world,” the man comments. Stiles looks at him again. “It would be nice if you could muster your undivided attention though. I don’t tolerate rudeness.”

“I’m not trained,” Stiles says, hoping it might put him off. “I haven’t been here long. I don’t know the rules.”

“Good,” the man says, that slow smile coming over his face again. “I have my own rules. Always a pain to retrain. I think I’d be perfectly happy to take you just as you are.”

Stiles feels bile rising up in his throat. He looks to the door and then surveys the room again. There’s no mirrors and he can’t see anything that could be a camera. “I’m not supposed to be here,” he confides. “My dad’s a sheriff. He’s looking for me. I got kidnapped and taken to some basement and then they sold me to this place.”

“That’s adorable,” the man says earnestly.

Stiles feels his face fall. “That’s not adorable. I was kidnapped. Are you paying attention?”

The man looks amused. “Sometimes families don’t like having to explain to their children that they’re getting sold into slavery. It makes for an awkward conversation. There are companies that specialise in faking kidnappings as a way to move kids to the Foundry. It can be the least painful way for all involved.”

“My dad would never do that to me,” Stiles insists. “I’m all he has.”

“And he’s never had money problems?” the man prompts. Stiles frowns but he’s not about to admit it. “Everybody has a price.”

“He wouldn’t do that to me,” Stiles repeats.

“Well, regardless, here we find ourselves,” the man says. “And now I’m going to take you home and find out what other adorable traits you have.”

Stiles feels a shudder go through him, a hopeless, empty feeling.

“What’s your name?” the man asks.

“I’m not telling you,” Stiles responds. It feels like giving away too much and he doesn’t want his old life tied to this. He doesn’t want it to be real.

The man purses his lips together. “I suppose I could think up a name for you. It doesn’t really
matter at the end of the day. Although, if this law enforcement father of yours is really trying to find you, you’re not leaving much of a trail for him.”

Stiles grits his teeth. He knows he’s being played, even as the word comes out of his mouth.
“Stiles.”

The man smiles. “Hello, Stiles. My name is Peter. You’re going to call me Daddy though.”

“I’m definitely not,” Stiles tells him, his stomach flipping over. This is exactly the kind of pervert he was afraid of.

“Not right now,” Peter allows. “It’s going to take a while, I appreciate that, but you absolutely will.” He turns towards the door. “I’ll take him!” he hollers.

He gets to his feet as the door opens, nodding at Nick as he exits the room. Stiles sits on the couch, still reeling.

“I asked you not to show me up,” Nick says, clearly unimpressed.

“I don’t want to go with him,” Stiles says desperately.

“Well, that’s not up to either of us now,” Nick tells him. “Time to get you processed. Let’s go.”

He follows Nick out of the room and around the corner to a front desk where Peter is already signing some forms. He opens up his leather satchel, taking out some bound stacks of cash and placing them on the counter. Stiles’ eyes widen.

Peter smirks as he catches him looking. “You’re going to be very well looked after,” he assures him. “If you’re a good boy.”

He finishes up his transaction with the desk clerk and then Nick is guiding Stiles closer. Stiles tries to dig his feet in but it doesn’t do him any good.

“Do you want him restrained for travel?” Nick offers.

Stiles turns to give him an incredulous look. It’s not like he ever really thought Nick was on his side but he can’t believe he’s dismissing him as easily as this.

Peter leans in close, making Stiles shy away. “Do we need restraints, dear?”

Stiles takes shaky breaths, the thought of it making tears prick at his eyes. He has to run. He has to run now.

Peter looks at Nick. “I think we’re going to be just fine.” He turns his attention back to Stiles, clicking his fingers. “With me.”

He takes a step, clearly waiting for Stiles to walk to heel like a dog. Stiles stands there, frozen, everything seeming to stand still. He can feel the tension in the room, not just his own but the staff, waiting to see if he’ll do the right thing, waiting to see what will happen if he doesn’t. He can tell he’s on very thin ice. He looks at Nick, imploring, but Nick just gives him a look full of anger like he’s fucking it all up and Stiles realises that even if he can somehow miraculously get out of this sale, he won’t be safe here. He’s not safe anywhere. Worst of all, he doesn’t even have a choice.

He moves forward, his legs shaky, and Peter smiles at him, encouraging. “There we go.” He walks towards the door, Stiles going with him. “Thank you, gentlemen,” he calls back. “Spend my money
wisely.” The door buzzes, the lock releasing, and Peter opens it, gesturing to Stiles. “After you.”

Stiles steps through, out into the parking lot, and he’s struck by how big everything looks. It’s been so long since he’s seen anything but walls around him. It’s liberating for a moment before he realises what comes next. Peter steers him towards a flashy Mercedes and Stiles wants nothing more than to run, but now isn’t the time. He wouldn’t be able to get far enough fast enough and the staff would just help hand him back to Peter. Then he’d be in trouble. He knows instinctively that he doesn’t want to be in trouble with this man.

Peter opens the passenger door for him, a gesture that almost seems chivalrous and not possessive. Stiles climbs inside, Peter closing the door after him and walking around to the driver’s side. Stiles eyes the ignition, wishing he knew how to hotwire a car, he might just be able to make it in time before Peter can climb in. He thinks about reaching over, locking him out, but he has the keys in his hand, it would only buy Stiles seconds and possibly a lot of pain.

He clasps his hands in his lap as Peter climbs into the car, trying to stop himself from fidgeting. He has to play along, at least until he can work out how to get away.

“Seatbelt,” Peter prompts as he pulls his own on.

Stiles reaches for it, Peter watching him, waiting until it’s clicked into place before he turns the keys in the ignition. It seems like a caring gesture, or maybe he just spent too much money to watch his new investment fly through the windscreen. Peter gives him a little nod of approval and then starts the car.

“Let’s go home.”

The words don’t sound comforting to Stiles, they sound like a threat. His heart beats harder in his chest, feeling like it might bruise his ribcage. He’s too hot, he feels sick, but he has to hold it together. As they drive, he tries to get his bearings, looks for anything he might recognise, but they’re definitely not in Beacon Hills. Instead he looks for landmarks, tries to trace a route he could find again, but if he ever escapes, the Foundry is the last place he wants to make his way back to. If nothing else it gives his mind something to do, a job to keep it busy, to keep the panic at bay.

“You don’t have to be nervous,” Peter tells him, that smooth voice, like he’s in charge of not just Stiles but the whole world.

Stiles swallows. “I’m not,” he says. He doesn’t want Peter to see him as a flight risk. He doesn’t want to be punished for something he hasn’t even done yet.

“No,” Peter agrees. “Terror would probably describe it more accurately.”

Stiles looks at him. Hearing it out loud shouldn’t make it more true or powerful but it’s like Peter is creeping inside his head.

“I can work with that,” Peter continues. “Fear shows me who you really are. It’s unnecessary though, I assure you. I’m not going to force myself on you. I’m not going to hurt you. Not unless you make me.”

Stiles wraps his arms around himself, looking out of the window, but everything is getting increasingly non-descript. They’re on a long stretch of road, nothing but trees either side. He looks for a road sign, a rock, anything, but there’s nothing he can latch onto. Nothing that can tell him where the fuck he is in case he can somehow get a message out. I’m in the woods. Help. He could have sent that five minutes from his own front door.
They turn down another road, narrow and winding. There’s only room for one car, if they come across anyone else they’d be in trouble. Stiles gets the impression it’s a private road though. The isolation makes him go cold. Anything could happen to him out here and no one would ever know.

It’s five minutes until they come to a clearing at the end of the road, a house sat proudly like it has every right to be in this place. The arrogance of it seems fitting for Peter. As they pull up outside, Peter turns to face him, killing the engine.

“Stay.”

Stiles nods, watching as Peter gets out of the car, walking around to Stiles’ side. He opens the door, gesturing for him to get out, and Stiles gets caught in his seatbelt in his blind attempt to comply, remembering too late that he needs to take it off. He avoids looking at Peter, not wanting to see the smug look that’s doubtless on his face. He looks up at the house instead. It’s made of stone that looks like it could have been dug out of the earth around them but it’s not some quaint little cottage. It’s impressive.

“I want to show you something before we go inside,” Peter tells him, closing the car door. “With me.”

Stiles clenches his teeth, shoving his hands into his pockets. He really doesn’t appreciate being spoken to like a dog. He walks with Peter around the house though, to the lawn at the back that reaches out into the seemingly endless trees.

“I don’t have any neighbours,” Peter points out. “I like the quiet.” He looks at Stiles. “If you try to run, I will catch you before you get back to anything resembling civilisation. I have been tracking and hunting things my whole life. You cannot get away from me and if I have to go chasing you through these trees I am not going to have much patience left by the time I drag you back here. Do you understand me?”

Stiles nods his head, dread sitting heavy in his stomach. “Yeah.”

“Good,” Peter says. “I do not enjoy losing my patience. I don’t think you’ll enjoy it either.” He smiles at Stiles, like he hasn’t just threatened him. “Let’s go inside. I’ll give you the tour.”

He leads Stiles in through the back door. Everything is much more sleek and modern than Stiles was expecting from the rustic exterior. The kitchen is big with a granite island and high-end appliances as well as a solid wooden dining table that looks like it’s been sculpted from the trees outside. The living room has a large open fire and leather couches that look incredibly cosy. There’s a bookshelf that spans one wall, filled with well-worn paperbacks, reference books and artefacts. Stiles takes a step closer, intrigued, but Peter catches his elbow, directing him elsewhere.

“This is my study,” he says, gesturing to a closed door. “You are not permitted to go in here. Not that it matters right now, you’re not permitted to go anywhere, but I just want to make that clear.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

“I do my work in here, I don’t need distractions, and I can’t stand people touching my things,” Peter tells him. “Everything is in order, it needs to stay that way.”

“Oh, Stiles says, trying not to look at him like he’s crazy. The last thing Stiles intends to do is get in the way. He wants to be invisible and then he wants to be gone. The insistence does make him curious what Peter’s hiding though. Stiles is very good at evoking horror stories, but hopefully the guy is just OCD. He’s definitely a control freak.
Peter gives him a curt nod, turning away. “Follow me.”

He leads Stiles up the wooden staircase and past some strange artworks hung along the landing that Stiles wants to stop and study. They look South American and old. He trails after Peter to the end of the hallway, into a bedroom. The large bed dominates the room, wooden and carved, luxurious blankets draped over it. There’s a bay window with a bench seat built in, strewn with cushions. There’s built in wardrobes, some shelves with more books, and a door leading to what looks like a bathroom. The whole house feels like a labour of love but this room especially. Stiles wonders if Peter made these things or if he commissioned them. He’s clearly rich enough to not flinch at the price tag.

“This is our bedroom,” Peter says. “You’ll be spending most of your time here while I get you settled in.” He moves over to the bed and lifts up a leather cuff. It’s attached to a chain which in turn is attached to the bed. Stiles shies away. “I’m sure you understand I have to take precautions to protect my investment.”

Stiles shifts uncomfortably on his feet. He doesn’t like being spoken about like that. He doesn’t like anything about this.

“It’s not going to hurt you,” Peter assures him, as though he’s being pathetic. “And the chain is plenty long enough that you can comfortably go to the bathroom or sit in the window seat or pace around wearing a hole in my carpet if you so wish.”

Stiles hesitates, not moving out of the doorway, but he can tell by Peter’s face that he doesn’t have a choice in this, it’s happening one way or another, and the survivalist part of his brain is telling him that compliance now might buy him the chance he needs later.

He steps forward, Peter gesturing to the bed. He sits, clasping his hands together in his lap as Peter bends down, securing the cuff snugly around his ankle. Once it’s buckled into place he threads a padlock through it, clicking it closed. He gives a little tug for good measure and then looks at Stiles smugly as he gets to his feet, making a show of sliding the key into his pocket.

“Safe and sound,” he says. “I’m going to give you some space, go and cook us some nice dinner. You make yourself at home.”

Stiles watches as he leaves the room, listening to his footsteps on the stairs before he lifts his foot up onto the bed, examining the cuff. There’s no give in it and the lock is secure. Why didn’t he learn to pick locks? Why doesn’t he have more illegal skills in his repertoire?

He follows the chain to where it’s attached to the bed and finds that it’s not simply hooked around a handy piece of the existing bed, it’s looped through a metal casing set into the solid wooden bedframe. This was custom made to ensure the chain couldn’t wear away at the wood through friction. The thought of someone putting that much thought into keeping their slave locked up in their bedroom, that they anticipated this in advance and hired someone to fit this contraption, it’s more than a little sinister. He can’t imagine the kind of person who would do that, but of course he can, he’s right downstairs.

Stiles drops the chain, fighting to keep calm. Nothing bad has happened to him yet. He can still get out of this unscathed. He just needs a plan. He gets to his feet, investigating the room. The chain feels lighter than he expected, not weighing him down. He can get a foot out into the hallway if he pulls it taut put he can’t reach anything from there. It’s not a way out.

He goes over to the window instead, pulling at the handle, but of course it’s locked. Even if he got it open, what was he going to do, dangle himself out of it? He looks through the wardrobes, the
drawers, the bookshelves. Everything is neat and ordered but incredibly mundane. He heads through to the bathroom, looking through the cabinet. There’s no razors, no drugs except for a couple of aspirin. There’s two toothbrushes in the holder though, one new looking, and Stiles thinks again of the planning that’s gone into this.

He opens up the cupboard finding expensive fluffy towels that all match, as impersonal as a hotel. He moves things around, discovering a travel bag that’s still partially packed from some trip. He opens it up and right in the bottom he finds a pair of nail scissors. The blades might be small but they look sharp. He feels a little flutter of hope.

He takes them through to the bedroom, sitting on the bed so he has a clear view of the open door, listening for any noise from Peter. He brings his cuffed ankle up onto the bed with him and picks at the stitching with the blade of the scissors, trying to get it loose. The stupid thing is high quality but there has to be some give in it. If he can keep these hidden somewhere then maybe he can keep working on it when he’s alone. He’s seen Shawshank Redemption. He can be patient.

He has his head bowed, so focussed on what he’s doing that he doesn’t hear Peter coming into the room.

“I must have missed those.”

Stiles jumps, gripping the scissors in his fist and holding them up defensively, blade pointed threateningly towards Peter.

“Do you really think you’re going to kill me with a pair of nail scissors?” Peter asks, not in the slightest bit concerned.

“If I get your carotid artery,” Stiles responds. “Right here,” he adds, touching it on his own neck with his free hand.

Peter raises his eyebrows a smile coming over his face. “I knew there was a reason I liked you.”

Stiles frowns at him, gripping the scissors tighter, his hand shaking.

“We both know you’re not going to do that,” Peter says calmly. “You’re smarter than that, Stiles.”

There’s something about hearing his name, a connection that’s been missing for so long, that makes Stiles give. He didn’t realise how close he was to losing himself and it’s like Peter’s handed him a gift. As Peter holds his hand out, Stiles almost takes hold of it before realising what Peter wants. He places the scissors down in his palm.

“Thank you,” Peter responds, examining them before sliding them into his back pocket. He steps forward. “Let me see.”

Stiles leans back, letting him look at the cuff. He didn’t manage anything more than superficial scratches.

“You know, I bought this with comfort in mind,” Peter says as he examines it a little more closely than feels strictly necessary. “Soft leather, padded interior, buckle never touches skin.” He stands up tall again, looking down at Stiles. “If I ever catch you doing anything like that again, I’m going to get some steel shackles and weld them to you. Is that clear?”

Stiles nods. “Yeah.”

“Good,” Peter says with a nod. He rearranges his face into something more welcoming. “Dinner is
“Come,” he says, turning and leaving the room, trusting that Stiles will follow, which of course he does. Peter leads him through to the kitchen, taking the scissors from his pocket and placing them in one of the drawers. “Take a seat,” he says, gesturing to the dining table.

Stiles sits at one of the places that have been set, a placemat and cutlery and a napkin. It looks like a date night and the thought makes Stiles uncomfortable. He knows how dates end. Peter brings two plates over, setting one down in front of Stiles and then sitting opposite him. It looks good. Peter seems irritatingly competent.

“What about your etiquette class?” Peter asks.

Stiles looks up at him. “They had classes in that place?”

Peter considers him. “You didn’t go to classes? What were you doing in there?”

Stiles shrugs, imagining all the things he had no idea he was being excluded from. “I was in solitary.”

“For what?” Peter asks.

“I hadn’t earned any privileges yet,” Stiles tells him, feeling somehow embarrassed about it. “They told you I wasn’t trained. Maybe you can take me back and get a refund.”

“All sales are final,” Peter dismisses. “Besides, I am definitely keeping you.”

Stiles isn’t sure what about that makes his face go hot. He stares down at his plate.

“My training probably wouldn’t have lined up with theirs anyway,” Peter says. “Better that I do it myself. There’s no confusion that way.”

Stiles chews on his lip, looking up through his lashes. “How does your training work?”

“All in due time, my boy,” Peter tells him, a joyful note in his voice. “You don’t need to worry about that right now. Eat your dinner.”

Stiles tries not to roll his eyes, shoving another forkful of food in his mouth. He hates being talked down to, treated like a kid, but then he remembers that Peter literally wants to be called Daddy and he fails to repress the shudder.

When they’ve finished eating, Peter collects the plates, placing them in the dishwasher. He has his back turned and Stiles is aware that he could run, there’s no restraints on him now, but he wouldn’t get very far. If he got free while he was upstairs he could have sneaked out the door while Peter
was cooking, he could have gotten a decent head start before Peter realised he was gone. As much as every instinct in his body tells him to get out of there, he knows he has to wait.

Peter turns back to face him, making a show of looking at his watch before levelling his gaze at Stiles. “I think it’s bath time.”

Stiles eyes him warily, not moving.

“Let’s go,” Peter prompts, looking at him expectantly.

Stiles sighs, getting to his feet. He climbs the stairs, Peter behind him, his eyes falling on the cuff laying on the bed as he steps into the room. Peter doesn’t pick it up, walks straight through to the bathroom instead, turning on the taps. Stiles stands in the middle of the room, considering his options, but truthfully he doesn’t think he has any. He wanders over to the bathroom, watching as Peter puts a couple of drops of some essential oil into the water.

“We need to get the smell of that place off you,” he says, clearly sensing Stiles’ presence. He replaces the bottle and turns to face him. “It’s so clinical, I can’t stand it. Everything here is natural, wood and rock and earth, did you notice that?”

Stiles just shrugs.

“No, of course not,” Peter says, almost to himself. He turns off the taps, swirling a hand through the water before looking up at Stiles. “Take off your clothes.”

Stiles gapes at him. “No.”

Peter smirks. “Shy?”

“I’m not taking my clothes off,” Stiles tells him, edging backwards. “Not in front of you.”

“I already told you I have no interest in forcing myself on you,” Peter says calmly. “I’m not going to touch you until you want me to.”

“I’m never going to want you to,” Stiles insists.

“Then I guess I’ll never touch you,” Peter responds. “Either way, you’re getting in this bath.”

“I’m not taking my clothes off,” Stiles says again, wrapping his arms around himself.

“Look, you can either take off your clothes and get in the bath or I can lift you up and put you in there fully clothed,” Peter tells him, getting to his feet. “I know which one would be more comfortable, but either way you’re going in.”

Stiles clenches his jaw, shaking his head.

“Fine,” Peter says easily.

He steps forward, grabbing Stiles around the waist and lifting him effortlessly. Stiles flails but Peter doesn’t break stride, hefting him into the bathtub as water sloshes out. The guy is strong. Stiles sits there in the warm water, stunned, not quite able to process it as the wetness seeps into his clothes.

“Now you’re in the bath,” Peter says smugly, grabbing a towel and putting it on the wet floor before sitting down.
Stiles just stares at him, feeling so utterly powerless that it paralyses him. There’s something so humiliating, so degrading, about being tossed around with such ease, no regard for his feelings. He remembers Nick’s words, third class citizen. He’s not even a real person now.

Peter reaches over, swirling his hand through the water, making it move against Stiles. He flinches, an involuntary response. Peter’s hand stills but he doesn’t remove it, considering Stiles carefully.

“Are you going to lean back so I can wash your hair?”

Stiles doesn’t respond, isn’t sure he even remembers how words work. What’s the point in him speaking anyway? Peter doesn’t give a fuck what he has to say.

“Well, in that case, you might want to close your eyes because I’m about to dump some water over your head,” Peter tells him, reaching for a container.

Stiles bows his head, closing his eyes tightly. He tries not to splutter as Peter pours water liberally over him. It runs down the back of his shirt, making him shiver. He keeps his eyes closed as he hears Peter open a bottle and then cool liquid is rubbed into his scalp. Peter isn’t rough, he takes his time, works it in, massaging the suds through every strand. Stiles feels his body give, even as he tries to fight it, but it feels nice. It’s been so long since anyone touched him.

“Water,” Peter tells him as his hands slide away.

Stiles lifts a hand this time to stop the shampoo going in his eyes. Peter pours the water more gently, playing his fingers through the strands to get rid of all the bubbles. It’s gentle and caring and Stiles has to remind himself that he’s property, that this isn’t affection. It’s maintenance.

Peter moves away and Stiles can hear the container being placed down on the side of the bath. He wipes at his eyes, opening them to see Peter offering a towel out to him. He takes it, drying his face, and reminds himself not to feel grateful. This man is the enemy.

Peter reaches into the bath, pulling the plug out, the water draining around Stiles. He watches as Peter walks through to the bedroom, opening up the chest of drawers and taking something out before returning to the bathroom.

“You can put these on,” he says. “You have exactly two minutes, then I’m coming in here and putting the cuff on you and you’ll be stuck in whatever you’re wearing.”

He tosses down the clothes and then leaves the room, closing the door behind himself. Stiles climbs out of the bath, feeling the time limit as he tries to peel his soaked clothes off his skin. He doesn’t feel any cleaner. If anything, he feels worse. He towels himself dry though, putting on the T-shirt and sweatpants that Peter has left him. He’s barely managed to adjust them on his still damp body when the door opens. Peter steps inside with the cuff and Stiles stands obediently in place while he secures it, water dripping from his hair and soaking into the collar of his shirt.

Peter stands up, appraising him, and Stiles realises he’s shaking. He can feel it mounting, a panic attack or something worse. He wants to go home. The hopelessness crashes down on him and he bows his head, unable to even look Peter in the eye. Some sick part of him feels like he’s not worthy.

“All this goes in the hamper when you’re done,” Peter says, gesturing to the towels and clothes on the floor. Stiles nods. “Take as long as you need,” Peter adds, something softer in his voice.

He closes the door behind himself, the chain fitting neatly underneath, and Stiles feels certain that’s been meticulously planned out too. Stiles looks around at the mess, leaning down to pick up
the towels, but his legs give under him and he crumples, slumping against the wall. He’s not strong enough for this. He thinks back to his last memory, in the woods with Scott, but it’s so worn around the edges that it doesn’t feel real anymore.

He’s been gone so long, Scott will never find his scent, they’ll never trace him here. The tears come and he sits on the floor and cries, trying to stay quiet, but soon he’s sobbing and he’s sure that Peter can hear him, will know just how much he’s broken him. He doesn’t know how to fight this. He can’t. The resignation feels worse than the dehumanising way he’s been treated through all this.

He cries himself out, feeling empty and weak and beaten, nothing left to give. He wipes at his face, the skin tight and heated, trying to scrub away the tears. He considers the cuff on his ankle, remembers he has a job to do. He gathers up the towels and soaking clothes from the floor, depositing them in the hamper before standing in front of the mirror. Part of him still expects Nick to be watching him from the other side.

He splashes cold water on his face but it doesn’t do much good. His eyes are damp, rimmed with red, his face blotchy. There’s no hiding it. He takes a deep breath, trying to psych himself up before he opens the door, but he just feels himself sag on the exhale. He shakes his head, easing the door open and peering out.

Peter is sat up in bed, reading a book. He looks up at Stiles with a casualness that’s bordering on disinterest. “You’re welcome to share the bed with me,” he says. “But if you’d prefer there’s extra bedding at the bottom of the closet. You can sleep in the window seat or on the floor or in the bathroom if you really want.”

Stiles considers him but Peter’s already turned back to his book as though it’s all of no consequence to him. Stiles opens the bathroom door fully, stepping onto the carpeted floor. He’s not getting into that bed, there’s no way he’s getting into that bed, but he finds himself eying it anyway. It looks so ridiculously comfortable and all he wants is comfort right now. He pads over to the closet though, finds a blanket and a pillow and takes them over to the window seat. It’s not quite long enough to stretch out on but it’s soft and he can snuggle into it.

He wraps the blanket around himself, facing the closed curtain and wondering why Peter isn’t taking advantage of his obvious vulnerability, isn’t trying to take him apart. Stiles already feels like he’s in pieces though so maybe Peter’s smart enough to realise he doesn’t have to. He’s good at breaking spirits, Stiles remembers. And bones. He squeezes his eyes shut tight. It won’t come to that.

He hears Peter moving in the bed and then the light flicks off. “Goodnight, Stiles,” Peter says. “Goodnight,” Stiles murmurs back.

Once Peter has settled down, the air in the room is still and quiet. Stiles can’t sleep, but he listens to Peter sleep, listens to the little snuffles he makes and the way he shifts. It’s so achingly intimate, or maybe just claustrophobic.

Stiles doesn’t move all night, just stares at the bottom of the curtain in front of him as the light slowly starts to seep in, the darkness bleeding away.
Chapter 2

Stiles must doze off at some point in the night because he’s woken by Peter’s alarm. He listens to Peter getting up, going into the bathroom, running water. A hand lands on his shoulder and Stiles flinches.

“Time to get up,” Peter tells him. “I’m going to get breakfast ready. Go to the bathroom, wash up, I’ll be back for you.”

Stiles nods, not moving. “Okay,” he agrees, his voice cracking on the word.

Peter leaves the room and Stiles listens to his footsteps on the stairs before he rolls onto his back, stretching. His body feels coiled too tightly and he curls his hands into fists but he’s kind of lost the will to punch anything. He sits up, looking at the cuff on his ankle, picking at it absently. He lets his hand drop away, lifting his gaze to the bathroom door. It feels like an enormous effort to pull himself up to his feet.

He pees, washes his hands and face, runs his fingers through his hair to try and tame it a little. He looks at the bathtub over his shoulder in the mirror and then turns to face it in person like it’s some kind of monster. He can still feel that shuddering helplessness. He wonders if bath time will be a regular thing, wonders if he’ll be allowed to keep his clothes on next time. He knows he should be grateful that’s all he’s had to deal with, he knows the reputation Companions have, knows from the videos that saying no to any of your master’s desires was not an option.

He sits on the side of the tub as though he can reclaim it but it just feels like a surrender. He picks up the little dropper bottle from the edge of the bath, the essential oils that Peter used yesterday. He opens it up, sniffing it, but it doesn’t smell like anything to him. He replaces the cap, going through to the bedroom and returning to the window seat, sitting perfectly still while he waits for Peter.

When he comes upstairs, he pauses in the doorway, considering Stiles until he finally looks up at him. “Hungry?”

“I don’t know,” Stiles says honestly.

Something passes over Peter’s face but it’s gone before Stiles can begin to make sense of it. “Let’s eat.”

He slips the key from his pocket as he approaches Stiles, leaning down to unlock the cuff. Stiles follows him downstairs, sitting at the island where two places are laid out. He feels unsteady on the stool, like he’s teetering on a precipice, but he’s glad it’s less formal than dinner last night. There’s eggs and bacon and toast and orange juice. Peter encourages him to help himself and Stiles picks at the food more out of duty than anything else.

“I feel as though your silence has gone from belligerent to disillusioned,” Peter states thoughtfully. Stiles lifts his head to look at him, trying to work out if Peter sees that as a bad thing or not. “I didn’t go to etiquette classes,” he reminds him.

“Yes, we’ve established that,” Peter agrees. He turns his attention back to his food. “I have no interest in you being miserable, however. I understand and appreciate there’s going to be an adjustment period, you’re getting your head around this, learning to accept it, which you will. But having you sat there glowering at me is a little off putting, I have to admit.”
Stiles shakes his head. “I’m not angry,” he says. He means it, despite the fact that he feels like he should be.

Peter turns to face him, his eyes glinting. “You could stand to be a little angry.”

Stiles frowns at him. “What does that mean?”

Peter gets to his feet, picking up his empty plate and glass and walking over to the sink. He turns to look at Stiles, eyes sliding up and down. “Docile doesn’t really do it for me.”

Stiles thinks about the threats, the way he’s been treated when he didn’t do exactly as Peter demanded, exactly when he demanded it. “But…” he starts and then presses his lips closed, staring down at his plate. His mouth is far too good at getting him into trouble. It doesn’t matter if he understands, he just needs to shut up.

“I have rules,” Peter agrees. “I expect you to follow them. I need to be firm with you while you internalise them. But within those rules, you can be as feisty as you like. I encourage it. There are many reasons I chose you, my dear, and one of them was the fact that they hadn’t finished brainwashing you yet.”

Stiles looks up at him, wary if he can trust anything he says. Actions speak louder than words.

“Put your dishes in the sink when you’re done,” Peter says, heading towards the doorway. “Then I want to make a start on getting to know you a little better.” He stops and turns back to Stiles, smirking at him. “A lot better, actually.”

“What does that mean?” Stiles asks.

“It means we’re going to talk,” Peter tells him wearily, stepping through into the living room.

Stiles watches him go into his study and then eyes the door to outside. He knows he doesn’t have time, but he’s tempted anyway. Peter comes back through holding a notebook, putting it down on the counter as he goes to pour himself a cup of coffee. Stiles drains his orange juice and stands up, the stool scraping on the tile floor making him flinch. It’s cold under his bare feet. He deposits his dishes in the sink and then stands there, watching Peter, waiting.

Peter takes a sip of his coffee and then holds the cup up to Stiles. “Do you want one?”

Stiles shakes his head. “No, thanks.”

“Let’s get started then,” he says, retrieving the notebook on his way past. “With me.”

Stiles feels that familiar flash of irritation before he follows after Peter who gestures for him to sit on the couch. He does, Peter sitting down beside him but leaving a respectful gap. He places his coffee cup down on the table, and then unclips the expensive looking pen from the front of his notebook, opening it up to the first page.

“This is going to be my little book of Stiles,” he says. “I’m going to ask you some questions now. You’re probably going to think that they’re personal and intrusive and I’m sure you’ll take objection to them but I ask you to remind yourself that you belong to me. Privacy isn’t an option.”

Stiles swallows uncomfortably, shifting on the couch. The leather is as soft as it looks and Stiles runs a finger over it, trying to distract himself.

“Stiles, it is very, very important that you tell me the truth,” Peter says. “This is going to lay the
foundation for your training and if the information you give me isn’t completely accurate then
you’re going to put yourself in a very uncomfortable position.” He leans forward, fixing Stiles with
a look. “And I will know if you are lying. I can hear a lie. The shake in your voice as your heart
skips. I am very good at reading people.”

Stiles freezes, a cold dread closing over him as it all slots into place. Tracking experience, the
certainty he could catch Stiles, his sensitivity to scents, the fact that your heart skips when you lie.

Something changes in Peter’s body language, confusion crossing over his face. He must smell
Stiles’ scent go sour. “What’s wrong?”

Stiles looks at him, feeling almost at home at the realisation. “At the risk of sounding completely
insane,” he begins. Peter tilts his head at him, looking interesting. Stiles takes a breath and forces
the words out. “Are you a werewolf?”

“A werewolf?” Peters asks, his face unreadable. His eyes narrow slightly. “You know about
werewolves?”

“My best friend is a werewolf!” Stiles exclaims in what is quite possibly the most cliched thing
he’s ever said.

“Huh,” Peter says, his expression still closely guarded. He reaches for his coffee, taking a sip
before he carefully places it down. “Fascinating.”

“You’re a werewolf, right?” Stiles asks, frustrated he’s not confirming it.

“I am,” Peter agrees, still watching Stiles carefully. “If I knew you had a little Beta friend, maybe I
would have led with that. Clearly that’s something you would have understood.”

“He’s not a Beta,” Stiles corrects. “He’s an Alpha. A True Alpha.”

“A True Alpha,” Peter repeats, his jaw twitching.

Stiles looks down, shying away. He doesn’t mean it as a threat but he guesses Peter takes it as one.
Stiles is just stupidly proud of Scott and can’t help himself. He misses him so much. He misses
everyone. “I’m in his pack,” he says longingly. He looks up at Peter. “Where’s your pack?”

“I don’t have one right now,” Peter says.

“You’re an Omega?”

“I’m an Alpha,” Peter all but growls at him. “But I don’t need a pack. I have you.”

Stiles feels his blood run cold. “Are you going to give me the bite?”

“Ohly if you want it,” Peter responds.

Stiles shakes his head. “I don’t.”

“Then no,” Peter tells him. He deliberately clicks the pen, poising it over his notebook. “Are you
ready to start now?”

Stiles looks at the blank page, a sense of unease creeping over him. He shrugs.

“I guess I can put things plainly now,” Peter says. “I can tell when you’re lying. Don’t lie.”
Stiles nods his head. “Okay.”

“Okay,” Peter agrees. He relaxes back into the couch, looking instantly more at ease now that he’s back on track. He looks up at Stiles. “Are you virgin?”

Stiles feels heat rising up on his face, an uncomfortable feeling squirming in his stomach. “What?”

“Are you a virgin?” Peter repeats, enunciating each word carefully. Stiles just stares at him. “Have you ever put your dick inside someone?” Peter clarifies, as though Stiles doesn’t understand the question. “Or had someone else’s dick in you. Either way.”

“I’m not answering that,” Stiles says incredulously.

“If you’re not answering that then we’re really not going to get very far,” Peter says, raising his eyebrows at him.

Stiles gapes at him. Peter reaches forward, sips some more coffee, sits back and regards Stiles.

“If you tell me you’ve fucked the whole football team and all the cheerleaders, that doesn’t mean I’m going to take you upstairs and fuck you,” Peter tells him, perfectly matter of fact. “You being a virgin or a slut or anything in between isn’t going to dictate what we do. I won’t touch you until you want me to, irregardless of how many people might have touched you before and in what manner. It just tells me what you need to learn. It tells me how to unfold you until you are my beautiful open book.”

Stiles shakes his head, clenching his hands into fists. “I’m not answering.”

Peter lowers his pen with a sigh. “You can sit here and talk to me and be civilised, or I’ll just put you away upstairs with your chain on if that’s what you’d prefer to be reduced to.”

“That’s not fair,” Stiles says in a small voice.

“It’s your call,” Peter tells him. “I’m being very straightforward with my expectations. I think that’s perfectly fair.”

Stiles feels his eyes flash with anger. “You can’t give me two equally awful choices and make it seem like I’m in control.”

There’s a smugness radiating from Peter at the fact that he’s getting under his skin and Stiles has to look away. Peter gives a little nod, standing from the couch. “Get up.”

Stiles looks up at him, his whole body tensing.

“Please don’t mistake that for a request,” Peter tells him.

Stiles feels the will draining from him, getting to his feet.

“There we go,” Peter says appreciatively. “With me.”

Stiles clenches his teeth, following after Peter. As he starts up the stairs, Stiles considers his back and then looks to the door, wondering if it’s locked.

“You know you won’t make it,” Peter says. “I’m faster and I’m stronger and I have a lock on your scent.” He turns to look at Stiles. “I know every intricacy of it and I promise you, Stiles, I could find you anywhere.”
He gestures for Stiles to go ahead of him and Stiles squeezes past him, careful not to let their bodies touch. He walks dutifully up the stairs, feeling Peter’s eyes on his back. His eyes fall on the artwork lining the landing as he passes by, sitting down in the window seat as they reach the bedroom. He watches as Peter places the cuff on his ankle, locking it into place. He feels so hopeless, but not because of the chain.

“I don’t understand how I can be feisty and do everything you say.”

Peter lifts his head, tugging on the padlock. He gets his face close to Stiles’. “Work it out.”

Stiles sags, his face crumpling. Peter stands up, moving over to the doorway.

“Have a cry,” he tells him. “Have a tantrum. Get it out. Then calm the hell down and think about everything I’ve said to you. I’m not trying to catch you out. You’re just trying not to accept it.”

He leaves and Stiles falls back on the window seat, staring up at the ceiling. The tears do come, sliding down his temples, but they don’t amount to much. He rolls onto his side, tugging at the curtains that are still closed from the night before, revealing the view. He can’t see anything past the treetops and it makes him feel so achingly lonely. He never knew that loneliness had a physical sensation but he feels it like a hollow inside him. He wants his pack. Now that he’s thinking about them, he’s certain he can’t do this on his own.

He pulls one of the cushions towards himself, hugging it to his chest as he closes his eyes, trying to come to terms with the fact that they can’t save him now. All he has is wilderness and this house and his chain and Peter.

Peter. That’s the only chance he has for company right now and Stiles has disappointed him so much he can’t even bear to be in the same room as him. Not cooperating is just creating a prison within a prison. He can’t be in solitary anymore. He can’t have empty rooms and silence.

Stiles has to admit that Peter has treated him more like a person than anyone else has since he was grabbed in the woods. His rules are reasonable and if Stiles follows them then Peter will respect his boundaries. That’s the promise he’s been made. On the surface it looks like a deal he should take. He doesn’t know if he can trust Peter but there aren’t many other options available to him.

He tugs the cushion tighter against himself, feeling something inside him give, but it’s different to the surrender he felt before. This is letting go rather than having something ripped away. He feels like that leaves him more intact. The only power move he has is to yield.

When he opens his eyes again, Peter is standing over him, saying his name softly. Stiles blinks up at him, realising he must have fallen asleep. He still has that dreamlike feeling of everything being soft around the edges. He stares at Peter, feeling that softness in himself as well. The give, he remembers. He has to give.

“What?” Peter asks, looking intrigued at whatever he sees on Stiles’ face.

“I’m a virgin,” Stiles tells him.

Peter nods. “I appreciate your honesty.” He moves forward, leaning down to unlock Stiles’ cuff. “We’ll talk about this after lunch.”

Stiles releases the cushion, propping himself up on his elbows. “It’s lunchtime?”

“It’s lunchtime,” Peter confirms. He puts the key back in his pocket, heading for the door. “With me.”
Lunch is sandwiches and salad, ready assembled and cut into little triangles on Stiles’ plate. There’s something caring about the gesture. Or paternal. Stiles tries to bite back the fear but he still has no idea where this is heading, what’s expected of him. He knows what Peter wants to be called, but he doesn’t really understand what that makes him.

“I’m sorry I fell asleep,” he says, needing to make some kind of amends, to show that he’s trying. “I was thinking. I thought a lot. I was doing what you asked and I think I might have worked it out. But I didn’t get any sleep last night and I guess it caught up with me.”

“I have no objection to my baby taking a nap when he’s feeling cranky,” Peter assures him.

There it is again, that dynamic that Stiles doesn’t understand. He tries not to let his breath catch, tries to keep himself even. Peter will be able to smell fear on him, repulsion probably even more so. Stiles doesn’t want to give him another reason to get upset.

“It’s okay,” Peter says. “You’ll get used to it.” He turns to face Stiles, looking darkly amused. “I get the feeling you’re going to really like it. You have that vibe about you. Lying upside down in your room, reading a book.”

Stiles frowns, not sure what he’s talking about until he remembers the day he left the Foundry, Peter seeing him through the window and deciding that he wanted him. What was Stiles putting out except restlessness and boredom? Something precocious? Something juvenile? Stiles wishes he understood what Peter thought he was getting.

“Do you like reading?” Peter asks, his attention back on his food, his tone light and casual as though the subtext is all in Stiles’ mind. It feels carefully rehearsed to knock him off balance though and Stiles feels like that’s not playing by the rules. “Feel free to help yourself to the books in my bedroom. If you’re a good boy, maybe I’ll let you use my Amazon account, choose something for yourself. Supervised, obviously. Can’t have you set loose on the internet.”

“Thanks,” Stiles mumbles, because he feels like he should say something and it feels like maybe that’s the right thing.

Peter reaches across for his plate as soon as he takes the last bite, taking it with his own over to the dishwasher and placing it inside. He turns to face Stiles. “Are you ready to have that conversation now?”

Stiles tenses, fear prickling over his skin, as much as he tries to fight it. Making the decision to go along with this is one thing, seeing it through is something else entirely, and he’s still not sure he can do it. The moment stretches out and Peter waits, not speaking or moving, not rushing him, but Stiles knows he has to answer eventually. He knows what has to happen.

“Yeah,” he responds. “Okay.”

“Do you want a soda?” Peter offers, gesturing to the fridge. “Juice? Glass of water?”

Stiles shakes his head. “No thanks.”

Peter nods towards the living room. “Let’s go get started then.”

They sit on the couch, Peter retrieving his notebook from the table and opening it back up to that same blank page. “So, you’re a virgin, correct?”

“Uh, yeah,” Stiles agrees.
Peter nods, jotting something down. “Good.” He looks up at Stiles. “Have you ever kissed anyone?”

“Yeah,” Stiles responds, not managing to keep the pathetic indignation out of his voice.

“How many?” Peter asks.

“I don’t know, I wasn’t counting,” Stiles says.

Peter raises an eyebrow at him. “You definitely were,” he says knowingly. “But let’s go with a ballpark.”

Stiles shrugs, embarrassed by his own inadequacy. “Six?”

“Oh-huh,” Peter says, jotting it down. “Girls or boys?”

Stiles feels himself blush. There’s not many people he’d answer that question for. “Both,” he admits.

“How many of each?” Peter asks.

“Four girls, two boys.”

Peter nods, not commenting. “Second base?”

“How are you defining your bases?” Stiles asks. He’s stalling because he doesn’t want to admit what comes next. He doesn’t want to talk about how little there is to admit. Maybe it’s a good thing in this context, convince Peter to go slow, or maybe it will just make him all the more eager to corrupt him.

“Let’s simplify,” Peter says. “Over the clothes, above the waist.”

“Uh, yeah,” Stiles says.

“Numbers,” Peter prompts. “Genders.”

“You’re making this very clinical,” Stiles comments.

Peter looks at him pointedly. “It’s not supposed to be arousing.”

Stiles blushes harder. There’s sweat prickling at the back of his neck and thinking about this isn’t exactly keeping his mind clean. He’s not turned on though. Not quite.

“Okay, uh, one girl.”

“Over the clothes, below the waist,” Peter says, all his attention on making notes.

“One girl, one boy,” Stiles tells him.

“Dry humping?” Peter asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, already there in his head. Peter looks up at him, gesturing for him to continue. “Oh, uh, one boy.”

“Under the clothes, above the waist?”

“No,” Stiles says.
“Under the clothes, below the waist?”

Stiles feels his breath catch, shifting in his seat. “Kind of.”

“What does kind of mean?” Peter asks.

“Look, I was drunk and it’s… it was blurry,” Stiles says. “I went to this club, this gay club, with some friends, some gay friends, and… I was making out with this guy in a back room and I know I put my hand inside his jeans and I kind of remember touching his… But I also remember being really dizzy and needing to sit down and I told them not to call Scott, I didn’t want him to know I was there, but they called him.”

“Scott’s your boyfriend?” Peter guesses.

Stiles give him a look. “Scott’s my Alpha.”

“Right,” Peter says tightly. “Him.”

“The next thing I knew I was in my Jeep getting driven home by Scott, so clearly they called him,” Stiles says.

Peter studies him for a moment. “You’re ashamed of that.”

“Not at wanting to be with a guy,” Stiles insists. “I don’t think anybody thought I was straight. Just, at not wanting to go through the motions. Choosing the animalistic route. Trying to get it out of the way as quickly as I could. The fact that I needed that much alcohol to get as far as I did is a ringing endorsement for what a bad idea it was.”

“What were you trying to get out of the way?” Peter asks, his voice careful and curious.

Stiles thinks about that, licking his lips thoughtfully. “I think I didn’t like idling in the middle. And if you haven’t done it, how can you prove you like it?”

“Who did you need to prove it to?” Peter asks.

Stiles shrugs. “Myself, I guess.” He looks up at Peter, wondering why the fuck he’s saying all these things that he’s never even said to Scott. He clears his throat, sitting up a little straighter. “So, under the clothes, below the waist, very drunken yes.”

Peter makes a note. “Given oral sex?”

Stiles shakes his head. “No.”

“Received?”


Peter deliberately turns the page in his notebook and Stiles realises this isn’t over.

“How often do you masturbate?”

Stiles gives him a weary look. “Oh, come on.”

“Once a day?” Peter suggests. “Three, four times a week?”

“You can’t possibly need to know that,” Stiles responds.
“My intention is to make you happy,” Peter tells him. “So I need to know all of the things that make you tick.”

“Let me give you a hint,” Stiles says. “This line of questioning does not make me happy.”

“We can take a break if you want,” Peter says. “Come back to it later.”

Stiles shakes his head, feeling that helplessness creeping in. Choices that aren’t choices at all. Powerlessness.

“Stiles, I could tell you were drawing deep from the well there,” Peter tells him earnestly. “I know that took guts. Just stick with me a little while longer.”

Stiles looks up at him, the encouragement spurring him on. He just has to get through this, then the worst is surely over. “ Twice,” he says.

“Twice a week,” Peter says, writing in the notebook.

“Oh, uh, that’s a day,” Stiles says awkwardly.

Peter’s pen stills, his eyes flicking briefly to Stiles. “Twice a day,” he corrects, writing it in. He raises his eyebrows. “You’re going to be a handful to keep on top of.”

Stiles’ face burns with shame, edging away. He’s a healthy teenage boy, he shouldn’t be embarrassed by his hormones, he never has been before. It’s less to do with his own urges though and more about the fact that he’s never had anyone to answer them. Instead he has to do it all by himself in a way that feels dirty and pathetic in comparison.

“How do you masturbate?” Peter asks.

Stiles squirms further away. “I don’t want to talk about that,” he says. “It’s private.”

“What did I say about privacy?” Peter asks, looking at him expectantly.

Stiles sighs. “That I don’t have any,” he responds dutifully. “Which is bullshit, by the way.”

Peter moves his pen away from his notebook, turning his full attention on Stiles, which is nothing short of terrifying.

“I do not appreciate swearing,” Peter tells him. “Not from you. I expect better. I expect you to be a good boy. Now, I know that you’re new to this and we haven’t had a chance to lay out the rules, I’ve given you a little space to settle in, so I’m not going to punish you for that. I’m giving you a warning though. Watch your mouth and don’t be disrespectful.”

Stiles nods, looking up at him. “What would a punishment be?”

“We’ll get to all that later,” Peter dismisses, looking back at his notebook.

“Why is this first?” Stiles asks. Peter looks up at him and Stiles knows he’s on thin ice but none of this makes sense to him. “Why is humiliating me and making me tell you all these deeply personal things… Why is this more important than telling me the rules and the consequences and what I’m supposed to do?” He shakes his head. “I don’t know what I’m supposed to do,” he says hopelessly, sagging back against the couch.

“Sweetheart,” Peter says softly, full of affection. “I’m not trying to humiliate you. There’s no reason to feel inadequate about all this.”
“I don’t feel inadequate,” Stiles bites back.

Peter gives him a condescending look. “Please remember I know exactly how you feel. There’s really no point in lying to me, certainly not out of pride.”

“You don’t know exactly how I’m feeling,” Stiles dismisses. “There’s subtlety to it, you can’t read my mind.”

“I am a born werewolf and a very powerful Alpha,” Peter tells him.

“Then why are you sitting all alone in this house?” Stiles counters. “Why do you have to go out and buy teenage boys to keep you company?”

Peter stares at him and Stiles can’t work out what his expression is. It’s not anger, not distain, but it feels dangerous. Stiles swallows uncomfortably.

“You said feisty was okay,” he says tentatively.

“Pretty sure I also said something about respect,” Peter responds, his face still unreadable.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees quietly, his eyes falling down to his lap. He twists his hands.

“So,” Peter says. “Twice a day. When?”

Stiles can feel the discomfort creeping over him, squeamish and dirty all at once. He tries to rediscover the headspace where it’s okay to say these things because he knows he has to say them. That’s the only way this ends. Maybe when it’s out there, they can move on. Stiles doesn’t want to think about what they might be moving onto. One crippling anxiety trigger at a time.

“If I wake up and I… if I’m…” he begins hesitantly, unable to make himself say it. It feels like crossing a threshold he can’t handle.

“Hard?” Peter prompts easily.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “Then I’ll…”

“Get yourself off,” Peter provides, filling in the blanks for him. He jots something down in his notebook as Stiles squeezes his eyes shut, trying not to think about the record he’s making, how it’s going to be used against him. “Do you wake up hard a lot?” Peter asks.

“I guess,” Stiles shrugs. “Sometimes when I don’t, I’ll still… When I’m in the shower.”

“Nice and warm, locked door, easy clean up,” Peter says. “Can’t argue with that.”

It feels like an invitation to imagine it but Stiles fights against it. He feels like the least sexy thing in the world right now, even as his body argues against him.

“So that’s one,” Peter says. “When do you like to get your other one in, generally speaking?”

“If I get home from school and my dad’s still at work, sometimes I do it then,” Stiles says. “Or sometimes when I go to bed at night. If I’m stressed or on edge, it relaxes me, helps me sleep. It’s comforting.”

“I get that,” Peter agrees.

Stiles opens his eyes, looking up at him. “You do?”
Peter nods earnestly. “I do.”

Stiles considers him for a moment. He always thought it was pathetic to find jerking off comforting. He doesn’t know how to equate that with this cocky, confident man in front of him.

“So,” Peter says, drawing Stiles’ attention back to the task. “How do you do it?”

“Do it?” Stiles asks.

“How do you get yourself off?” Peter clarifies.

“Oh,” Stiles says. “I just, uh, do it?”

“What’s your go to move?” Peter asks.

Stiles shakes his head, shrinking back in himself. “This is too much.” He doesn’t mean it in a bratty, indignant kind of way, but as a genuine plea to stop. He feels overloaded and muddled and cut to the bone.

“Stiles.”

Peter says his name firmly, commanding, and Stiles can’t help but look at him, a focus coming over him as their eyes meet.

“You’re doing so well,” Peter tells him earnestly. “I’m really pleased with you.”

Stiles can’t help the flush of pride, even as it disgusts him.

“We don’t have much further to go,” Peter assures him. “If you absolutely don’t have the capacity to keep going with that right now, I will respect that. I will always respect that. That’s why I’m going to give you something now. I’m going to give you a word. You can say that word any time you need to stop, no questions asked. This is for you to keep. This is for you to use whether we’re talking or doing or I’m pushing your limits to see when you break. You say this word, it all stops.”

“A safeword,” Stiles says.

“Good boy,” Peter praises. “A safeword. Yours is silver.”

Stiles looks at him, sidestepping the cliché of a werewolf using that as a safeword. “So I can just say that and you’ll stop asking me these questions?”

“Not forever,” Peter tells him. “This really is non-negotiable. If you can’t do it right now then we can step back, spend some more time getting to know each other, work on the foundations, but we’re coming back to it. I need to know these things. We can’t move on until I do.”

He edges forward and Stiles shifts back though he has nowhere left to go. It feels like a horrible metaphor.

“It’s about solace,” Peter says. “I need to know where your safe place is. Then I can keep you safe.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I don’t feel safe.”

“Not yet,” Peter agrees. “You will.”

Stiles looks down at his clasped hands, feeling the sweat gathering between his palms. He feels
wretched, but having the option to stop this, having that power, somehow it makes this easier to take. He has to push through this. He has to get it over with. It feels more like a choice when he knows he can make it stop.

He looks up at Peter. “We can keep going.”

“You’re sure?” Peter asks. Stiles nods, trying to look determined. “Okay,” Peter agrees in a tone of voice that suggests he better not bitch about it again. “When you wake up in the morning with a hard on, what do you do about it?”

Stiles shrugs, trying to face it head on. “I jerk off.”

“I believe the question was how,” Peter prompts.

“With my hand?” Stiles responds.

“You wrap your hand around your cock and stroke yourself?” Peter asks.

“This is a ridiculous level of detail and I’m sure you’ve seen enough porn to know how it works,” Stiles tells him. Peter gives an impatient look, raising an eyebrow at him. Stiles sighs. “Yeah, I wrap my hand around my cock and stroke it.”

“Good,” Peter says, writing something down. “One hand?”

Stiles frowns. “I guess.”

“What is your other hand doing?” Peter asks.

Stiles has never really paid attention. “Usually gripping the sheets or the pillow or something,” he says, uncertainty lacing his voice.


Stiles glares at him. “I don’t like this game.”

Peter looks up at him. “It’s not a game, Stiles,” he says earnestly.

Stiles gives a little huff, looking away.


“Not my nipples,” Stiles dismisses. “Sometimes balls.”

“You don’t like the sensation of having your nipples played with?” Peter asks. “Or you’ve just never tried?”

Stiles thinks about it and he honestly doesn’t know. When he’s getting off, the only thing he’s thinking about is his cock and the urgency of his hard on and that he wants to rectify the situation. Is he supposed to know these things about himself? Should he have been exploring himself more? Was his sexual development stunted just like the virginity he never got rid of?

“I don’t know,” he says distractedly, unsure what he’s even answering anymore.

“Okay,” Peter tells him in a way that sounds encouraging. “Do you use lube?”
“Spit sometimes,” Stiles says. “I get pretty wet with precome, to be honest.”

“I like that,” Peter says appreciatively, writing it down. Stiles tells himself it’s creepy and not a compliment. “You ever hump a pillow or anything?”

“Not often,” Stiles responds.

“Is that a yes?” Peter prompts.

“I have done,” Stiles admits. “It’s not my go to.”

Peter nods. “Have you ever fingered yourself.”

Stiles stills. “Fingered myself?”

“Have you ever put your fingers in your ass and fucked yourself?” Peter asks.

“I wasn’t looking for a definition,” Stiles mutters, unable to meet his eyes.

“I find it’s best to be clear,” Peter responds, unashamed. “Have you?”

Stiles shakes his head. “No.”

“But you’ve thought about it?” Peter prompts.

“It doesn’t matter what I’ve thought about,” Stiles says.

“It matters to me,” Peter tells him.

Stiles takes a breath, tells himself he can get through this. “Not my own fingers.”

Peter nods. “Okay.” He makes a note. “Have you ever touched yourself there?”


“Have you ever used a sex toy?” Peter asks.

“No,” Stiles tells him. “Just me and my hand. I’m really not that interesting.”

“You’re fascinating to me,” Peter tells him. He sounds like he really means it. “Do you watch porn?”

“In general or…?”

“When you jerk off,” Peter says.

“I don’t really need it,” Stiles responds. “I might look for a little inspiration, but if I’m going to do it I usually just do it.”

“How about it general?” Peter asks. “What does that mean? You watch porn when you’re not jerking off.”

Stiles shrugs defensively. “Maybe.”

“Not to get off?” Peter asks.

“I can look for ideas when I’m not in the mood,” Stiles says. Peter just watches him, knowing
there’s more. Stiles feels himself give. “I’m not sure what I like or what I would do so I might occasionally look at the options and work out what I’d do with someone if someone wanted to do something with me.”

“But not for a fantasy,” Peter says, working it out. “You’re looking for tips.”

“I know it’s porn and I know it’s not realistic,” Stiles says defensively. “I’m not an idiot. But there’s a lot of dynamics and I don’t know what dynamic I like yet. It’s the easiest way to see stuff play out and I always hope that something will click.”

Peter considers him for a moment. “When you say dynamic…”

“I mean boys and girls and tops and bottoms,” Stiles says. “I don’t know where I fit with any of it. That’s why I like watching threesomes. Boy, boy, girl. I try to work out what appeals to me but mostly it’s all of it and then I’m even more confused.”

“That’s called being bisexual,” Peter tells him.

“I don’t know,” Stiles says. “Maybe.” He looks up at Peter. “Are we done yet?”

Peter nods. “We’re done.”

He closes the notebook and puts it down on the table with the pen. The gesture makes Stiles’ eyes fill with grateful tears, feeling a release as it comes crashing down on him. It’s like a switch is flipped, his preservation leaving now that he knows it’s over. He chews on his lip, wrapping his arms around himself.

“Please don’t doubt yourself,” Peter tells him. “You didn’t say anything I would ever judge you for.”

Stiles doesn’t say anything, holding himself tighter. He doesn’t want to care what this man thinks, but he does. He really really does.

“I know that was hard,” Peter says. “Do you want some time to yourself? Just to process and decompress.”

Stiles shrugs. He doesn’t know what he wants. He doesn’t even feel like he’s a person anymore.

“Why don’t I take you upstairs?” Peter suggests. “Give you some space to breathe. Is that what you want?”

Stiles just stares at him dumbly.

“You can stay here with me if you want,” Peter offers. “I can put some music on. Or we can be silent. I can hold you.”

Stiles shakes his head.

“This isn’t an optimum time to go mute on me,” Peter comments.

“I don’t want to have sex with you,” Stiles says, because he feels like he needs to lay it down. No room for confusion or mixed messages. It’s best to be clear.

“I know that,” Peter responds. “That’s why it wasn’t one of the options.”

Stiles looks down, feeling like an idiot. Despite everything, he supposes there’s no guarantee that
Peter wants to fuck him. No one else ever has.

“I want to go upstairs,” he says.

“Okay,” Peter agrees, getting to his feet.

Stiles walks in a daze, climbing the stairs on numb legs, sitting in the window seat and waiting patiently for Peter to fasten his cuff in place before he draws his feet up onto the seat with him, hugging his knees to himself.

“I assume you want to be alone,” Peter says.

“Yes, please,” Stiles mumbles into his knees.

Peter nods. “I’ll be right downstairs. I’ll hear you if you call.”

Stiles makes a noise of agreement and closes his eyes, trying not to feel anything. All his emotions are indistinguishable anyway, a churning mess that’s the emotional equivalent of white noise. It’s actually quite soothing, lulling him off into some warm place inside himself where none of this is real.
Stiles’ body and mind come back to him gradually, like the sensation returning to an arm he’s been sleeping on. It’s numb and then it hurts and then it prickles and then it just is.

He slowly unravels, sprawling across the window seat until he’s staring up at the sky. It’s blue and featureless, like an endless abyss. It should be peaceful but it sets Stiles on edge. He wants to see an imperfection, a flaw, something to make it look real. Instead it just gets darker, but that seems fitting too.

He hears Peter on the stairs but he doesn’t move, doesn’t look away from the expanse of nothingness.

“You can get to the light switch, you know,” Peter tells him, his voice coming from the doorway.

“It’s not black yet,” Stiles says.

Peter moves over to stand above him. “Do you want to talk about it?”

“The sky?” Stiles asks, still staring at it.

“Your head,” Peter responds.

“They smashed it into the ground,” Stiles tells him, the memory feeling disconnected, like maybe it didn’t really happen.

“Who did?” Peter asks.

“When they took me,” Stiles says.

“Fucking amateurs,” Peter mutters in a tone of voice that sounds like it really bothers him. Stiles can’t work that out. Peter leans further over him. “Show me where.”

Stiles lifts a hand, touching his temple. Peter reaches over, running his fingertips across the skin. Stiles looks up at him, the care and concern on his face, and he has to close his eyes.

“It’s looks okay,” Peter says softly.

He moves his fingers further up, stroking Stiles’ hair back. Stiles relaxes into the touch, the comfort of human contact, no matter where it comes from. He thinks of Scott and Lydia and his dad. He even thinks about Liam and Mason. He pretends it’s one of them that’s looking after him. The fantasy makes him feel warm and safe.

“Your dad must have really needed that money if he couldn’t even get a decent enough advance for some competent kidnappers before he got the payment for you,” Peter muses.

Stiles opens his eyes, shoving Peter’s hand away. Peter smirks.

“Glaring is an improvement on catatonic.”

“I don’t like you,” Stiles says, but the words sound juvenile instead of biting.

“Careful, Stiles,” Peter says with thinly concealed glee. “You’re going to hurt my feelings. I don’t think you want to do that.”
Stiles sits up, feeling too vulnerable on his back, but he can tell that Peter isn’t really threatening him. In fact, he gets the impression that he’s flirting. He’s not sure which makes him more uncomfortable.

“I made dinner,” Peter tells him, taking the key from his pocket.

“Okay,” Stiles says, shifting his foot to offer the cuff towards Peter.

“I think you mean thank you,” Peter prompts, that glint still in his eye, making no attempt to unlock him.

Stiles feels his frustration swell, even if he doesn’t have the will to fight him on this. It’s like Peter lulls him in and then proves himself to be the same smug, infuriating asshole.

“Thank you,” he says begrudgingly.

“That’s a good boy,” Peter praises. He leans over, releasing the cuff from Stiles’ ankle. “Let’s go eat.”

Stiles gets to his feet, feeling unsteady as he takes the first few steps. He follows Peter down the stairs, wondering how he never picked up on the delicious smells coming from the kitchen. Peter gestures to the table and Stiles sits, watching as Peter dishes up the food.

Stiles take a bite and instantly starts to feel better. He has to admit that it’s nice having someone cook fancy food for him. His dad was usually too busy to cook and if he did manage anything it was usually only 50% successful. This is faultless. Stiles wonders where Peter learned, if he’s self-taught or he took classes or if he had someone to teach him this. He can’t imagine anyone having the patience to spend that much time with Peter but there’s something about the idea that he likes. He wants to humanise Peter. He wants to see him as something other than the untouchable master who makes all the rules. He must be a real person beneath all that somewhere.

“How are you feeling?” Peter asks, watching Stiles eat as he takes his own measured bites.

Stiles looks up at him, giving him an irritated glare.

“When I ask a question, I require a verbal response,” Peter tells him calmly. “Let’s try again. How are you feeling?”

“How do you think I’m feeling?” Stiles responds.

“Answering a question with a question is passive aggressive and rude,” Peter states. “Don’t make me ask a third time.”

Stiles gives a little huff. “You told me you’re so powerful you know exactly how I’m feeling,” he points out. “So why do you need me to say it?”

“Two reasons,” Peter says, stabbing his fork into a piece of meat. “Firstly, because I would like to work on your table manners.”

Stiles rolls his eyes. Peter chews his meat slowly, considering him.

“And secondly, because I would like you to verbalise your feelings, for your own sake as much as mine. I want to know if you understand them.”

Stiles narrows his eyes at him. “What’s to understand?”
“Where were you just now?” Peter asks.

“In the bedroom,” Stiles says slowly, like he’s an idiot. “Where you chained me up.”

Peter gives him a withering look. “Not physically.”

“What does that even mean?” Stiles asks. “Am I supposed to be doing astral projection? Because I’ve actually done a lot of reading on that but my dreams can get messed up enough.”

Peter stares at him for a moment. “Okay, mental note to come back to that,” he says. “But I don’t think we’re on the same page here. That’s fine. I can teach you all about it later.”

“Why is everything later?” Stiles asks.

“Because you’re not ready now,” Peter tells him. “Really though, how are you feeling? Put it into words for me.”

Stiles looks down, pushing food around his plate. Making a conscious effort to analyse his feelings instead of distance himself from them makes them all come crashing down on him but he can’t pick them apart. It’s all just churning hopelessness.

“Sad,” he finally manages.

“I think we can go a little deeper than that,” Peter encourages.

Everything feels oppressive, tightening up like a panic attack. Stiles takes a few measured breaths, trying to push it away, but he wants to untangle it. He wants to understand what Peter claims he can’t. He wants to put it all in order and tie connections between every emotion like strings on his investigation board.

He feels scared. He feels lonely. He feels trapped. He feels homesick. None of that really does it justice though. He feels something else that he’s never felt before, something slippery inside him that makes him feel like he’s falling. He’s been through worse than this but he’s never gone to whatever depth this is.

He looks up at Peter, not sure if he’s appealing or apologising as he shakes his head. Peter nods like it’s a response that makes sense.

“Eat your dinner,” he says gently.

Stiles does.

When they’ve finished, Peter clears the table and rinses the dishes before loading them into the dishwasher. Stiles watches him as he turns it on, the whirr like a blanket of white noise.

“Don’t you want me to help with chores?” he asks. It feels weird to be waited on when he’s clearly the subordinate.

“That’s not why I brought you here,” Peter says, turning to face him. “I can easily afford a maid or a chef if I want one and they’d cost me considerably less than you did.”

Stiles nods. “So it’s just the sex part of the sex slave that you’re interested in.”

Peter leans back against the counter, crossing his arms over his chest as he raises an eyebrow at Stiles. “It’s the Companion part I’m interested in actually. Prostitutes I can get a lot cheaper than you too.”
Stiles looks down at his hands, rubbing a thumb over his knuckles. He should take that as his answer but he can’t quite let it go. If he’s not allowed to know the rules yet, he at least wants to know this.

“Do you want to have sex with me?”

“Objectively, yes,” Peter tells him. “I chose you because you possess a quality that I think will be a very good fit for me. That’s what made you worth all that money. The fact that you’re absolutely gorgeous and definitely my type was just a bonus.”

“Right,” Stiles mutters, clasping his hands together. He doesn’t know how to feel about that. No one’s ever spoken about him like that before but taking it as a compliment is far too dangerous.

“You have my word that I won’t be acting on it though,” Peter says. “Nothing is ever going to happen between us that you don’t want.”

Stiles sighs heavily, still staring at his hands, his knuckles going white. “You can understand how I’d be sceptical. You keep me chained to a bed.”

“The bed is just the heaviest thing in the room,” Peter dismisses. “I could keep you chained to anything.”

Stiles looks up at him. “But you keep me chained,” he says pointedly.

“That’s for your security as much as mine,” Peter tells him. “You’ll see.”

Stiles looks away, the frustration making his whole body tense. He shakes his head. “I can’t trust you because as far as I know you’re making the rules up as you go. You won’t tell me what they are, you just tell me when I’m doing something wrong. How am I supposed to know what to expect?”

Peter uncrosses his arms, his stance softening. “You can expect to be taken care of,” he says. “You can expect me to take care of the cooking and the cleaning and the maintenance. You can expect to be spoiled and have all your whims met. Money is no object, you can have whatever you want, but you have to meet me halfway.”

Stiles looks up at him, almost afraid to ask. “And what do you get out of that?”

Peter smiles at him, not a smirk but a smile, full of fondness. “I get you.” He moves closer to the table and Stiles averts his gaze. “What would you like to do this evening?” Peter asks him. “It would be nice to actually spend some time together. Contrary to what you seem to believe, I didn’t just buy you to chain you up. That’s a means to an end. So what would you like to do?”

Stiles shrugs. All he wants to do is go home, but he’s pretty sure that’s not an acceptable answer. He looks up at Peter. “What would you usually do?”

Peter purses his lips together, looking thoughtful. “I enjoy fine dining, upscale bars, pretty little things that are much too young for me.”

He meets Stile’s eyes and smirks at him suggestively. Stiles doesn’t bite, but he can’t imagine Peter being that social. He seems like such a recluse in his specially built sanctuary away from the world. Stiles has to admit that he doesn’t really know anything about him though. He doesn’t know anything at all.

“If I were at home though,” Peter says, “I might read or listen to some music. Maybe do some
work if I were feeling inspired. I don’t watch much television but I have a pretty nice set up, I wouldn’t mind watching some with you so long as you understand I get final say.”

“Of course,” Stiles mutters. He looks up at him. “What work do you do?”

“I don’t want to bore you with that,” Peter dismisses. “What do you feel like doing?”

Stiles thinks about what he might be doing if he was at home right now. Procrastinating. Falling down a rabbit hole of supernatural creatures. Maybe chasing one around the woods with Scott. He finds himself actually feeling nostalgic for homework.

“We could listen to music,” he says instead. It seems like an easy enough option and music is soothing, it takes no effort to enjoy. He can’t handle thinking right now. He doesn’t want to be in his own head.

“Music it is,” Peter agrees, heading towards the living room. “With me.”

Stiles sags at the command but follows him through. Peter opens up a cabinet that houses an old-fashioned record player. Of course the guy is pretentious enough to use outdated technology when he could just plug in an MP3 player.

Stiles watches him and he feels tired, but not in that safe, sleepy kind of way that wraps around you like a blanket. He feels like his body is weary and his mind exhausted and he wants to give in to both but he doesn’t even know what that means anymore. Is that the same as surrendering to Peter? He just wants a lack of sensation, a lack of input. He wants a time out.

“Can I lie on the floor?” he asks.

Peter pauses in looking through his records, quirkling an eyebrow at him. “You are allowed to use the furniture,” he says.

“I just want to lie on the floor,” Stiles tells him, not meeting his eyes.

“Would you like a cushion?” Peter asks. “Something to prop your legs up in the air?”

Stiles shakes his head, still staring at the thick rug that covers the hardwood floors. He knows he’s being made fun of, probably rightly so, but he refuses to register that right now. He needs less things in his head, not more.

“Go ahead,” Peter tells him. “I’ll come and join you in a moment.”

Stiles looks up at him, wondering if he literally means join him on the floor, but Peter has already turned back to the record player. Stiles sits on the rug, laying himself out of his back. He rests his hands on his stomach and takes a deep breath, feeling his ribcage expand. There’s a fancy light fixture that hangs above him, glittering with little lights that Stiles can still see against his eyelids when he closes his eyes. It reminds him of fireflies which reminds him of… nothing good.

He shifts restlessly, taking another deep breath. Music starts playing, something soft and classical, and it wouldn’t usually be to Stiles’ tastes but there’s something so soothing about it. He can almost feel the notes moving the air around him. It makes the hairs on his skin stand up. He ignores the sound of Peter moving around the room, lying down beside him. He gets the sensation of being watched and it feels so invasive, threatening to pull him out of himself. He retreats further, letting the music carry him away, trying to reclaim a memory.

He remembers a summer vacation when he was little, his dad waking him up, lifting him from his
bed. He carried him, barely awake, down the stairs and out into the yard where his mom was standing. She smiled at him, surrounded by fireflies that flickered all around. Stiles clung to his dad, feeling like he was still in a dream. He’d never seen fireflies in real life before. As the edges of his sleep peeled away, he took in everything around him afresh. He wriggled in his dad’s arms until he put him down, bare feet sinking into the cool grass. He tipped his head back and looked up at the sky through all the little lights, like he was inside the stars.

That’s a memory he wants to keep. That’s where he wants to be. That little boy feels so distant, but in his head he’s shrunk down and back in that moment, as if he can ever reclaim who he was before he realised how bad the world could get. This was long before he learned about monsters. Sometimes the scariest things are already inside you.

He feels a tear slide down his temple and he lifts a hand to wipe at it, the physical act bringing him back into his body, into this place, which just makes him want to cry more. Peter shifts beside him and Stiles can feel the heat from his body. Some primitive part of him wants to move irresistibly towards it. He’s not an animal though. He’s better than that. He can have restraint. He can be in control of this one tiny thing; his reaction.

He hears Peter inhaling deeply, breathing him in, and he feels instantly ashamed.

“I know anxiety smells bad,” he says pre-emptively. “Sorry.”

“You still smell like the Foundry,” Peter tells him in a tone of voice that sounds more informative than upset. “I can smell it underneath my scent on those clothes. And you. You are a many layered thing.”

Stiles frowns. He doesn’t know what he’s supposed to take away from that.

“I think you’re doing so well,” Peter tells him. “I’m proud of you.”

“I don’t want to talk,” Stiles tells him. “Please.” He wants to go back in his head, wants to stay there.

“Okay,” Peter agrees. “But can I help you?”

Against his better judgement, Stiles opens his eyes, turning his face to look at him. Peter is closer than he realised and it feels far too intimate.

“Your body is so full of tension,” Peter says. “It has to hurt.”

Stiles shakes his head. He’s not denying it, just refusing whatever Peter is about to offer. He doesn’t even want to know.

“You know, I’ve travelled a lot,” Peter says. “Sometimes for work, sometimes just out of curiosity.”

Stiles stares at him, wondering where the hell he’s going with this.

“When I was in the East I learned about Reiki,” Peter tells him. “I don’t know if I really believe all that Eastern healing, but I know there are plenty of forces in the world that can’t be explained by science.” He looks meaningfully at Stiles. “You know that too.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees.

Peter nods, considering him. “Can I show you what I learnt?”
“I don’t want you to touch me,” Stiles insists.

“Yeah, we could play that game,” Peter says, sounding completely unconvinced. “Or I can make you feel better.”

Stiles looks away with a little huff. Being dismissed, being told that he doesn’t know himself as well as Peter knows him, it makes him doubt his own sense of self. It’s a disconcerting feeling, one that gets inside his head and knocks him off balance. He doesn’t want someone to have that much power over him.

“All I want to do is put my hands on your head,” Peter tells him. “It’s not sensual, you don’t take your clothes off, there’s no oils involved. Just touch. Resting my hands. It’s comforting. I’ve had it done to me a few times. It leaves me feeling centred, at peace. It takes a lot to get me feeling at peace.”

Stiles turns back to look at him. He tilts his head one way and then the other, feeling the tension in his neck. Peace sounds so good that Stiles could cry with want. It feels like a trap but it also feels like he’s already lost. Whatever Peter’s ulterior motive is, he’s not sure it outweighs a little comfort right now.

“Don’t talk,” Stiles says.

“Fair enough,” Peter agrees.

“And don’t touch my mouth,” Stiles tells him.

Peter looks amused. “Why would I touch your mouth?”

Stiles shrugs, adjusting himself so that he’s staring up at the light again. Fireflies.

Peter sits up, moving to sit cross-legged at Stiles’ head, his knees either side of Stiles’ temples. He looks down at him and Stiles takes a deep breath, letting his eyes slip closed. He tries to capture the memory again, being held by his dad in the yard, watching his mom surrounded by fireflies. It’s too dreamlike and he starts to wonder if it’s even real but it seems like a safe place to go to right now so he stays there, trying not to let it slip away as Peter’s hands cradle his head.

It feels strange at first, having Peter just hold him like that. It seems like he should be moving his fingers, should be doing something, but he just has a hand on either side of Stiles’ head, keeping him in place. Stiles tries to concentrate on breathing in and out, tries to see the fireflies, but this doesn’t feel relaxing. He’s on edge, waiting for what comes next, but all he gets is constant, warm pressure on his head that melts into his skull.

He feels his eyelids flutter, watching the fireflies, feeling the security of his dad against him, holding him tight. The physical sensation of Peter’s hands on him echoes that feeling, that comfort. The tension leaves him a little bit at a time and he doesn’t quite realise it until his shoulders are resting on the floor and not hunched up into his neck.

Peter moves his hands, Stiles feeling instantly off balance, like his centre of gravity is gone. One of them lands on his forehead though, applying gentle pressure to tilt his head slightly back. Stiles goes with it, lets himself be manipulated as Peter’s other hand slides under his head, cradling the base of his skull. Stiles feels like the heat radiates between his two palms, warming through his brain, locking his thoughts in that happy place.

He can feel the tension dissolving from his body, feel it travelling from the top of his skull right down to his toes. He doesn’t think about Peter, puts himself in that yard, in little Stiles’ body, a
time of innocence before he had to worry about loss and grief and a dad that was too tired to do all the things a dad should do. He was trying though. He always tried. He did a good job. He wouldn’t willingly let Stiles end up like this.

Stiles frowns, trying to push the thought away. Here and now doesn’t exist. Just that little boy on a warm summer’s night with two loving parents and a million fireflies. He can’t get back there though, hears himself sniffle over the music that feels too real, not like the background track to a dream anymore. He wants to push Peter away, doesn’t want the touch if he can’t pretend, but he doesn’t have the physical or emotional strength to break the connection. It feels good to be touched, to be comforted. He needs it too much right now. He tries not to judge himself too harshly for that.

Peter’s hand slides away from beneath him, making him shiver as his fingertips sweep across the nape of his neck. He lifts his hand from Stiles’ forehead and moves it down, pressing it over his eyes. He places the palm of his other hand on the top of Stiles’ head, his fingers curving down his forehead to meet his other hand. It makes Stiles feel so secure, like he’s held inside himself. Peter’s hand pressed against his closed eyelids makes everything so perfectly dark, giving him that sensory deprivation that he was craving.

It’s like floating but Peter’s hands keep him tethered down, making it safe to let go. A whimper escapes him and Peter presses down a little harder in response, letting Stiles know that he has him. Stiles doesn’t dwell on that, doesn’t retreat to his fantasy or let himself be present in the moment. He floats, neither here nor there, someplace else instead, his body flushing with warmth.

Stiles doesn’t know how long it stretches on for, lost inside the black of his own mind. He doesn’t want to leave, instinctively wants to claw at Peter’s hands as he feels them ease away, but his body feels suddenly leaden and his brain is too sluggish to make him move. He makes a tiny noise of protest, Peter stroking his hair back as his hands finally retreat.

“There you go,” he says gently.

Stiles frowns, refusing to open his eyes.

“You see,” Peter says in that same soothing voice. “You let me put my hands on you and I didn’t even rip your throat out.”

Stiles’ eyes fly open, flinching at the brightness, the light fitting making it look like Peter is wearing the fireflies as a halo. He glares at him. “Why would you say that?”

Peter smirks at him, that familiar self-satisfied smugness. Stiles goes to sit up, wanting to put some distance between them, but Peter grabs him, pinning his shoulders effortlessly to the rug.

“Don’t get up yet,” he says. “Trust me.” When he feels Stiles give, he lets go of him. “I’m going to get you a glass of water. Stay there.”

Stiles relents, watching Peter go through into the kitchen. He has to admit he does feel a little dizzy, the disorientation of Peter changing gears on him so quickly not helping. As he listens to the tap running, he rolls onto his side, slowly propping himself up on his elbow, waiting to see if he has the balance to stay there. Peter returns with a glass of water, leaning down to pass it to Stiles before he perches on the edge of the coffee table, watching him take a few sips.

“Good boy.”

Stiles rests the glass on the rug, looking up at him. “Why do you do that?”
“You’re a being a good boy,” Peter responds.

“Not that,” Stiles dismisses. “Why do you make me think I can trust you and then turn around and say something completely psychotic? Do you get off on that?”

“I’m not getting off on anything so far,” Peter says nonchalantly. Stiles gives him an unimpressed look as he lifts the glass for another sip. “I have no intentions of misleading you,” Peter tells him. “I’m going to look after you, I’m going to take care of you, but I’m not going to coddle you. This isn’t always going to be easy. I need you to be tough.”

“I’m tough,” Stiles insists. He sits up, putting a hand out to hold himself steady. “You have no idea what I’ve seen. What I’ve done.”

“With your pack?” Peter asks, an edge to his voice.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “We fought Alpha packs and magic trees and big ancient bad things. We survived assassins and sabotage and crossing over. You ever heard of a Nogitsune?”

Peter raises an eyebrow at him. “You’ve fought a Nogitsune?”

“I was a Nogitsune,” Stiles tells him.

Peter smiles, his eyes going dark. “You really are the gift that keeps on giving.” Stiles gives a huff, shaking his head. “But that’s good,” Peter says. “That means maybe you can do this.”

“Do what?” Stiles asks.

“I can protect you from everything but yourself,” Peter says. “I can’t get in your head. I can’t make that right, as much as I’d like to. So I need you to do that. I need you to be strong enough to do that. I’ll take care of everything else.”

Stiles looks down, playing with his glass. He doesn’t understand what Peter means but he’s certain he shouldn’t agree to it.

Peter gets to his feet, walking over to the record player. “Right now, though, it’s bath time.”

Stiles sags, lifting up his glass and drinking down his water as he stares at Peter’s back. “Can I safeword bath time?”

Peter turns, the record held between his hands, giving Stiles an amused look. “No,” he says, turning back to what he’s doing. “I’m not having you getting filthy. Not unless I make you that way.” He gives Stiles a suggestive look, closing up the cabinet.

“I can wash myself,” Stiles tells him, clenching his jaw.

Peter nods, looking at him thoughtfully. “I think I might be able to meet you halfway.” He walks towards the stairs. “With me.”

Stiles follows him, standing in the bathroom doorway as he watches Peter turn the taps on before riffling through the cabinet. He searches the washbag where Stiles had found the scissors, producing a small bottle of something.

“Left over from a stay at Caracas Palace,” he says, reading the label. He looks up at Stiles. “Venezuela.”

Stiles gives him a look. “You’re, what, a millionaire or something ridiculous? And you steal hotel
toiletries?”

“Stiles, everyone steals hotel toiletries,” Peter responds. “This should make some nice bubbles for you, something to hide your modesty behind.” He twists the top off the bottle, smelling the contents. “A little cloying but not overly offensive. It will do. I’ll buy you something more suitable when I go to town. We’ll make a shopping list tomorrow.”

He turns to the bath and pours half the bottle under the running taps. Bending down to the bath, he sweeps his hands through the water, the aggressive movements encouraging more bubbles to form. By the time he’s finished, the bath is filled with an impressive amount of bubbles, sitting thick on the surface of the water. Peter stands up, looking very proud of himself as he dries his hands on a towel.

“I’m going to go out there now,” he says. “I’m going to close the bathroom door and I’m going to find you something you can put on after your bath.” He places the towel aside, looking up at Stiles. “While I’m doing that, I would like you to take off your clothes and submerge yourself in those bubbles so that you’re nice and ready for me when I come back.” He squeezes past Stiles in the doorway, stepping into the bedroom. “Think you can manage that?” he asks, his body still a little too close to Stiles.

Stiles looks at the bath, taking a step closer. Just the thought of being that vulnerable makes his skin crawl with unease, his brain screaming at him that it’s not safe. This is Peter meeting him halfway though. The smart move would be to take it before Peter loses all patience with him and just obliterates his boundaries completely.

“Yes,” he agrees, turning back to Peter. “Can you knock before you come back in?”

“I’m not knocking on my own bathroom door,” Peter tells him wearily.

Right. When Peter makes concessions, all offers are final. Asking for more is just undermining him. The only power Stiles has that Peter can’t take away is his safeword. This isn’t a safeword situation. Stiles wonders what will be and then quickly pushes the thought away. He can’t go there now, not if he’s going to get through what comes next.

“Okay,” he says again.


He closes the door and Stiles turns to the bath, facing it down. He doesn’t have Peter worked out yet, but this feels like the least terrible way this could happen right now. He hates that he’s already resigning himself to that. He shakes his head, pulling off his T-shirt and pushing his sweatpants down. Peter might be enjoying fucking with him mentally, but he seems genuine when he says he won’t touch Stiles without permission. Stiles wonders at the fact that he’s already given so much of it.

He climbs into the water, finding it to be the perfect temperature, and he wonders how Peter is so good at that. Is it some kind of werewolf sense? He sits himself in the bath, pulling the bubbles he’s disturbed back towards himself, making sure they form a thick blanket that touches him on every side, hiding the lower half of his body from view.

He hasn’t had a bubble bath since he was a kid and it feels slightly juvenile but he has to admit that that soaking in the warm water feels good without his clothes on and the shock of being manhandled against his will. He pushes the memory away, doesn’t want to go back to that place in
his mind. It’s only 24 hours later but it feels like already they understand each other so much better. He might have new horrors ahead, but he hopes he at least won’t have to repeat old one.

The door opens and Peter enters, placing some clothes down on the side. He smiles at Stiles, sitting down on the floor by the side of the bath. “Okay?”

Stiles nods. “Yeah.”

“Good,” Peter says. He reaches for a washcloth, unfolding it. “I want to be able to do this myself,” he says. “You’re going to let me. Daddy wants to clean his own baby up.”

He looks at Stiles, takes in the stiffness of his body, the blush of his cheeks. The words paralyse him. Peter’s easy smile turns to a smirk as he offers the washcloth out to Stiles.

“I’ll let you clean yourself up today though,” he says. “I want that place off you. I want you to smell like you’re mine, like you belong here. Generic hotel toiletries are better than that place lingering on your flesh.”

Stiles takes the washcloth, considering it for a moment. Peter waits, watching him, not hungrily or with anticipation like Stiles would expect, but lazily. He treats it like a foregone conclusion, just like everything else, and a man who thinks he’s already won doesn’t bother getting excited about it.

Stiles dips the washcloth under the water, careful not to disturb the bubbles too much, even though he’s not sure how much Peter would see from his vantage point. He wonders why he doesn’t sit on the edge of the bath, looking down at Stiles. It would feel more fitting. Stiles leans forwards, scrubbing the washcloth over his calves. It’s a big tub, big enough for two if they were willing to be intimate. He wonders if that was carefully designed like everything else in the house and then decides he doesn’t want to know.

He works his way up his legs and then stops when he gets to his crotch. It feels too private a thing to do in front of Peter, even if he can’t see him doing it. He glances at Peter sideways, knows what the expectations are here, but he can’t just turn off his shame. In fact, he wants to cling to it because it feels like the healthiest thing about this situation.

“It needs cleaning,” Peter prompts. He shifts, turning to face Stiles more fully. “Actually, while we’re on the subject, I’d like to share a rule with you. Non-negotiable.”

“You’re giving me a rule?” Stiles asks, something inside him settling. All he wants it to know the rules, to not be constantly blindsided by them, and maybe to work out where his wriggle room between them might be.

“I am,” Peter agrees. “You are not permitted to touch your cock.”

Stiles frowns, feeling himself blush. He pushes his knees closer together.

“Obviously, if you’re cleaning yourself or using the bathroom, those are exceptions,” Peter says. “But never for pleasure. Never without my permission. Understand?”

“Uh, yeah,” Stiles says uncertainly. It feels kinky, but then he remembers that he has a safeword and Peter refers to himself as Daddy and he wonders why he would be surprised. He takes a breath, trying to calm his heart rate.

“Go ahead,” Peter prompts, nodding towards the bubbles. “Get cleaned up.”
Stiles stares down at the water, tightening his grip on the washcloth. Peter can’t see, he reminds himself. That doesn’t even seem like the point anymore though. Peter being in his head is scarier than anything physical and Stiles worries that’s the part he’s giving up most easily.

He gives a little shake of his head, running the washcloth between his legs, over his balls, his cock. He cleans his stomach, lifts the washcloth out of the water to clean his chest. He lifts one arm to clean underneath, does the same at the other side. He reaches back to clean his shoulders and then runs the cloth down each of his arms. He holds it in his hands, looking at Peter expectantly, waiting for his next instruction.

Peter smiles at him softly. “Feel better?”

“Than what?” Stiles asks.

Peter nods slowly, propping his arm on the side of the tub. “I feel better, now that you smell better.”

Stiles lifts the cloth, rubbing at the back of his neck, knowing that he nervous sweats there.

“I’m not talking about your scent,” Peter dismisses. “I like your scent. I don’t want that place lingering on you anymore.”

Stiles wrings out the cloth, placing it aside. Peter rests his head down on his arm, watching Stiles. He looks so totally at ease.

“Does it feel nice?” he asks. “The bath.”

Stiles shrugs, fussing with the bubbles to make sure they’re evenly thick.

“What did I say about questions?” Peter prompts.

Stiles sighs. “They require a verbal response.”

Peter gestures to him. “Well.”

Stiles shifts uncomfortably and then checks the bubbles again. “It’s alright.”

“You don’t seem very at ease,” Peter points out.

Stiles gives him a look. “That’s because I’m naked and you’re sitting right there.”

“I can’t see anything,” Peter says. “I’m not even looking.”

“Still,” Stiles grumbles.

“The idea of bath time is to make you nice and relaxed before bed,” Peter tells him. “This is a part of your day you can always count on. I’d like you to embrace it.”

Stiles looks down at the bubbles, wriggling his toes with nervous energy. It sounds reasonable enough but Stiles is wary of taking anything for granted with Peter. If this was really innocent, would Peter need to be that close to his naked body?


Stiles doesn’t feel comfortable, but he also wants to pick his battles carefully. He keeps his cautious eyes on Peter as he slides down into the warm water until the bubbles reach his chin. He
lets out a sigh despite himself. It does feel nice, his body wanting to give. He goes with it, keeping his eyes on Peter.

“Good boy,” Peter praises.

Stiles tries very hard not to flush at the words. He doesn’t want to like them.

They sit in silence, Stiles’ body unwinding. Peter slouched against the side of the tub, watching him with contentment. He looks almost proud. Stiles doesn’t know what to make of that so he chooses to ignore it, staring at his toes as they rise out of the bubbles. He glides his hands through the water, feeling it moving against his thighs, tickling him. He likes the sensation, likes feeling like he’s floating, that lack of sensory input.

Peter moves, shifting onto his knees, the action making Stiles instantly tense.

“Head back so I can wash your hair,” Peter prompts.

Stiles stills, Peter leaning over to him. He places his hands on Stiles’ head, guiding it down, and Stiles finds himself going with it, bending his knees so he can tip his head back in the water. Peter’s fingers slide through his hair as the water covers his ears, another sensation dulled. It makes everything feel a little bit unreal. He closes his eyes, lifting his head back out of the water when Peter prompts him, listening to the click of the shampoo lid. Peter spreads the cool liquid over his hair, rubbing it in, massaging his scalp. It feels good but he tries not to let Peter know that. He’s starting to believe that Peter can read his mind anyway.

He cradles Stiles’ head, guides him back down into the water. Stiles sighs as the water lifts his hair from where it’s sticking to his scalp, ticklish as it becomes weightless again. Peter rinses every strand with great care, moving from his temples to the nape of his neck and back again.

Peter guides his head back out of the water so that the liquid drains from his ears, letting him hear again.

“There we go,” he says softly.

Stiles opens his eyes, looking at him. He has the urge to say thank you but the words don’t come. He’s pretty sure he’ll be grateful for that later.

Peter plunges his hand into the water without warning, making Stiles instinctively flinch back. Peter’s hand brushes against his thigh as he reaches for the plug, pulling it out. The water starts to drain as Peter gets to his feet.

“I’m going to get changed for bed. Get dressed and I’ll come put your cuff on you.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

Peter nods, closing the door behind himself. Stiles climbs out of the bath, grabbing one of the big, fluffy towels and wrapping it around himself. He dries off and then picks up the clothes that Peter left him, pyjama pants and a T-shirt. He pulls them on, rubbing the towel over his hair. When he’s done, he remembers Peter’s instructions from last night, placing it in the hamper along with the clothes he took off.

He looks up as the door opens to see Peter standing with his cuff. He stands still, waiting for Peter to lock it in place around his ankle. Peter straightens up again, appraising him.

“Such a good boy,” he praises.
Stiles looks away, shifting on his feet. Peter goes back through to the bedroom and Stiles follows him.

“I don’t like you sleeping on there,” Peter says, eyeing up the blanket and pillow on the window seat. “I don’t think it’s good for your back.”

“It’s fine,” Stiles dismisses, not liking where this is going. “Trust me, I’ve slept in way worse positions.”

“And I would love to hear more about your experimental positions later,” Peter says suggestively. “But you’re in my care now, and I don’t want anything less than what is optimal for you.”

Stiles hesitates, already feeling the inevitability of this conversation. “I don’t want to sleep in the bed,” he says, not able to put as much strength behind the words as he’d like.

“You don’t want to sleep in the bed with me,” Peter corrects.

Stiles looks at him. “You’re not going to be in the bed?”

“Of course I am, it’s my bed,” Peter says.

Stiles rolls his eyes, playing with his hands.

“I’m not going to touch you,” Peter assures him. “I will not be inappropriate.”

“I’d just prefer my own space,” Stiles says, hating how apologetic the words sound.

“Very well,” Peter agrees.

He goes to the closet and takes out an extra pillow before grabbing the one Stiles was using in the window seat, taking them both other to the bed. He pulls the covers back and places the pillows down the middle of the bed, forming a barrier between the two sides. He looks up at Stiles.

“Now you have your own space.”

Stiles looks at the bed, edging closer. “I really don’t mind the window seat.”

“Get in the bed, Stiles,” Peter tells him, his voice lacking in patience. He climbs into his own side, pulling the covers back up.

Stiles considers the other half. Peter has kept his promises so far. It would feel so good to stretch out properly. It would feel good to have a full night’s sleep. With a sigh, he walks around the bed. He knows he’s already given in. He knows he’s going to do what Peter tells him.

He climbs into the bed, staying away from the pillows so that he’s only using his own half. It feels strange, more restricted than the window seat, but the mattress is so comfortable and the covers are soft and warm as he pulls them up around him.

“Goodnight, Stiles,” Peter says, reaching over to turn off the light.

“Goodnight,” Stiles responds, snuggling down.
Chapter 4

Peter’s alarm startles Stiles awake, making him almost fall out of the bed which he finds himself teetering on the edge of. Clearly his subconscious was trying to keep him as far away from Peter as possible.

“Good morning, sweetness,” Peter greets, a note of amusement in his voice.

Stiles grunts a response, burying his head under the covers.

“How did you sleep?” Peter asks.

“Yeah, heavy,” Stiles says, eyes still closed.

“Mmm, you look like you’d take some waking up,” Peter muses.

Stiles cracks an eye open, looking at him warily. Everything Peter says sounds vaguely like a threat that he should somehow still be grateful for. Peter smiles, stretching out on his back.

“A good bed is always worth the money,” he tells Stiles. “It’s where all my favourite things happen.”

Stiles continues to eye him, his defences coming up even as all he wants to do is fall back asleep.

Peter sits up with a sigh. “I’m going to take a shower, then I’ll go get started on breakfast.”

Stiles mumbles something that could be a thank you, keeping his eye open to watch Peter pad across the room in his underwear and T-shirt. He swings the bathroom door closed behind him but doesn’t click it into place, leaving a sliver of a gap that looks like an invitation. Stiles stares at it as the sound of the shower starts up and then forcefully dismisses the idea before it’s even fully formed.

He shuffles closer to the pillows at the centre of the bed now that he has it to himself, snuggling into the blankets. The sound of the shower is like white noise filtering into the bedroom, lulling him back to sleep.

He wakes up with Peter standing over him, fully dressed, hair still wet from the shower. “I think that bed might be a little too comfortable for you,” Peter teases.

“Get up,” Peter tells him. “I’ll be back to get you when breakfast is ready.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees with a nod.

Peter give a put-upon sigh. “Have some manners ready when I come back too.”

“Thank you,” Stiles calls after his retreating form before he even realises he’s doing it. He frowns at himself, pushing the blankets back.

Once he’s washed up and ready he sits down on the bed, waiting for Peter. His feet dangle over the edge and he swings them, watching the chain move. It’s strange how quickly he’s gotten used to it being there. He wonders what that says about his mental state, his acceptance to this nightmare, but decides it’s just self-preservation. He wants to get out. He just has to work out how.
When Peter comes upstairs, Stiles shifts back, bringing his foot up onto the bed so Peter can reach the cuff more easily. Peter smiles at him, something crossing over his face as he unlocks him.

“Let’s go eat.”

Breakfast is fresh fruit chopped with care, and yogurt. They eat at the island and Stiles is grateful for the lack of small talk that always feels like it’s designed purely to knock him off balance. Everything feels like a test or a mindfuck and Stiles is exhausted from fighting against it.

When they’re finished, Peter clears away both of their dishes, putting them in the sink on his way to the coffee machine. “Do you want one?” he offers.

“No, thanks,” Stiles dismisses, finishing off his juice.

“You don’t like coffee?” Peter asks.

“I’m not great with stimulants,” Stiles tells him.

“Oh?” Peter says, pouring his own drink. “Is that something I should know about?”

Stiles shrugs. “Just don’t give me stimulants.”

Peter looks at him. “I’m sure you know I expect a better response than that,” he says wearily.

“I get hyperactive, and nobody wants a hyperactive Stiles on their hands, trust me,” Stiles says. He’s about to get up and put his glass in the sink but then suddenly wonders if he’s allowed. He stays where he is.

“I don’t know,” Peter says, turning to consider him as he brings his cup up to his lips. “I might quite like a hyperactive Stiles.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I get fidgety and manic and even more anxious than usual,” he says, feeling that tightness in his chest at just the thought of it. “It’s not fun.”

Peter nods his head, a look of understanding on his face that calms something inside Stiles. “We’ll give that a miss then.” He moves away from the counter. “Do you need anything else before we get started?”

Stiles swallows uncomfortably. “Started on what?”

“You’re going to tell me a little bit more about yourself so that I can work on a shopping list for tomorrow,” Peter tells him.

“What kind of shopping list?” Stiles asks.

“That depends what kind of things you like,” Peter says suggestively. “Do you need a drink?”

Stiles shakes his head, feeling himself retreat already. These are the parts he hates the most, when Peter takes him apart and he’s powerless to stop it. He doesn’t want to give anything away but he knows that Peter will pull it from him. Keeping things to himself isn’t an option and it’s that inevitability that fills Stiles with dread.

“With me, then,” Peter says, walking through to the living room.

Stiles leaves his glass where it is and follows. He hovers just inside the room as he watches Peter go into his study, retrieving his notebook. He closes the door again before Stiles can get a look
inside. His curiosity about Peter only grows with the imbalance between them.

Peter drops a tape measure down onto the coffee table as he sits, looking up at Stiles. “Sit.”

Stiles does as he’s told, still eyeing the tape measure. “What’s that for?”

Peter glances at it as he opens up the notebook to a fresh page. “That’s for later.”

Stiles considers him, shifting in his seat. “What are you going to measure?”

Peter smirks at him. “Get your mind out of the gutter.”

“I wasn’t…” Stiles protests.

“Of course you were,” Peter says easily. “Teenage boys. Obsessed with their dicks.”

Stiles blushes, clasping his hands together in his lap. They haven’t even started and already Peter is making him want to squirm.

“So,” Peter says, commanding his attention. “Besides your dick, which is a given, I’d like to know some of the things you enjoy. What do you do with your time? Again, besides your twice daily masturbation sessions.”

Stiles gives him an incredulous look. “Using my own honesty against me isn’t making me want to share with you.”

“Oh, baby,” Peter dismisses. “I’m just teasing. I’m impressed by your virility. Ah, to be young again.”

“That why you’re a cradle robber?” Stiles returns.

Peter narrows his eyes, considering him. “I think we might have gotten a little off track.”

Stiles wants to apologise, feels like he should, but he presses his lips together, refusing. It’s only when his chest starts to hurt that he realises he’s not breathing. He gives a pathetic little gasp, refusing to meet Peter’s eyes.

“Tell me what you do for fun,” Peter prompts.

Stiles shrugs, still looking down. “Lacrosse.”

“Lacrosse,” Peter repeats, jotting it down in his notebook before looking up at Stiles. “You play?”

“I’m on the school team,” Stiles tells him before hesitating. “I was.” He frowns. Is putting his life into past tense giving up on ever getting back there?

“Were you good?” Peter asks.


“I could never get into team sports,” Peter dismisses. “I don’t play well with others.”

Stiles looks up at him, sensing a weakness. “Is that why you don’t have a pack?”

“I have you,” Peter reminds him.

“Right,” Stiles says, not buying it. “I like pack. Scott believes in team work.”
“Let me guess, he’s on the lacrosse team,” Peter says. While he doesn’t actually roll his eyes, it’s heavily implied.

“He’s the captain,” Stiles tells him.

“Of course he is,” Peter says tightly. “Well, I’m not going to buy you a lacrosse team, so what else?”

Stiles shrugs, feeling small and stupid. “Video games.”

“Video games,” Peter says, writing it down. “What kind?”

“I like first person shooters,” Stiles says. “Or action roleplay. I used to play survival horror games but then my whole life turned survival horror so they got less fun.”

“I’m just going to pretend I know what any of that means,” Peter says, writing it down with a raised eyebrow.

Stiles feels himself retreat further, but people being bemused and dismissive of his enthusiasm isn’t exactly new to him so he should be used to it by now.

“What else do you like doing?” Peter asks.


“The Dark Knight,” Peter says. “Good choice.”

Stiles looks up at him, feeling a glimmer of excitement. “Seriously?”

Peter smiles at him, amused. “I do live in the 21st century.”

“Kind of,” Stiles says, looking around. “You might want to tell your record collection that though.”

Peter gives a breath of laughter and it makes Stiles feel high.

“You like music?” Peter asks.

Stiles shrugs. “Not the same stuff as you, I doubt.”

“You’re allowed your own things,” Peter tells him. “I want you to have your own things. I want you to feel at home, because you are.”

Stiles instantly feels his spark of a good mood evaporate, sinking into that dark, scary place. He instinctively shakes his head before he can catch himself, bowing it down to try and hide the movement. Home is where his dad is, where all his things are, the family photos and his lacrosse kit and all the things that he’s broken and his dad’s had to put back together over the years. Home is Scott and Lydia and the pack. This will never be home.

“Tell me something else you like,” Peter says gently, sensing the sudden change in mood.

“I don’t know,” Stiles says, curling his feet up under him.

“Sweetheart, stay with me,” Peter says. “This is when you need to be tough. Remember what I told you. I know you can be.”
Stiles looks up at him blankly. He doesn’t know what tough has to do with anything. The only bad guy to fight is Peter and he knows he’s not supposed to do that.

“You like Superman?” Peter prompts.

“He’s okay,” Stiles shrugs. “He doesn’t have a sidekick.”

“You like the sidekick?” Peter asks.

“I am the sidekick,” Stiles tells him.

Peter smiles at that. “Not anymore, baby,” he says. “You’re the star of the show now.”

Stiles can feel thin tendrils of pride reaching into the churning darkness inside him but they get swallowed up effortlessly. Story of his life. He’s never been the one who mattered. He’s made peace with it.

“Come on,” Peter encourages. “Tell me something else. What do you lose yourself in?”


“And you like that?” Peter asks.


“I think your brain would like that,” Peter agrees. “You’re a smart kid.”

“Not really,” Stiles dismisses.

Peter writes something down in his notebook and then considers the page. “Anything else I can put in here?”

“I don’t know,” Stiles says.

Peter looks up at him. “You know what, let’s leave it there for right now,” he says, putting the notebook aside. “I’m sure we’ll work out more things that fit you as we go along. That’s a good jumping off point.”

Stiles relaxes in his seat, grateful the interrogation is over.

“Now,” Peter says, reaching for the tape measure and holding it between his hands. “I’m a great believer in tailored clothes.”

Stiles watches him, his defences going back up. He’s not sure he likes where this is going.

“Everything feels better when it’s tailored,” Peter tells him. “Even loungewear.” He turns his attention to Stiles. “I’m going to buy you some clothes tomorrow and that means I need your measurements to take to my tailor. He’s on notice so I’m expecting a quick turnaround, especially with the way I tip him. I should have some things to bring back to you tomorrow.”

“Okay,” Stiles says hesitantly.

“Your gratitude is astounding,” Peter says dryly, getting to his feet. “Up.”

“Thank you,” Stiles amends, following Peter to the empty space where they were laid out the night
“Stay still, do as I say,” Peter states, straightening out the tape measure between his fingers.

He walks around to the back of Stiles, Stiles instinctively wanting to follow him with his eyes but forcing himself not to move. Peter places one end of the tape at the base of his neck, holding it in place as the other hand glides down his back, making him squirm away.

“Stay still was literally the first instruction I gave you,” Peter says wearily.

“It tickles,” Stiles complains.

“Oh?” Peter asks, sounding interested. He leans in, blowing against the back of Stiles’ neck, making his hairs stand on end as his whole body flushes.

“No,” he says firmly, spinning around to glare at Peter.

“Relax,” Peter dismisses. “I’m only playing. I didn’t even touch you.”

“You did touch me,” Stiles points out.

“You have to touch me,” Peter says. “To measure you.”

“Can’t the tailor do this?” Stiles asks.

“I’m not paying for him to make a house call,” Peter says. “Just come here.”

Stiles hesitates. “Do it properly,” he says, but he knows it’s not his place to give orders. “Please,” he adds imploringly.


Stiles notes that Peter doesn’t actually agree to his request, but he doesn’t know what other option he has so he moves closer again, turning back around.

“There’s my good boy,” Peter praises.

He does the measurement again and Stiles tries not to move as Peter’s fingers trace down his spine, down the curve of his lower back, hovering over his ass. He squeezes his eyes shut, trying to disassociate from it. Peter leans over to the table, making a note of the measurement before pressing the tape against Stiles again, running it over his shoulder blade. Stiles concentrates on breathing in and out. Peter moves around to his side, measuring the length of his arm, before Stiles can sense him standing in front of him.

“Arms up,” he says. Stiles complies, feeling the tape wrapped around his chest. “Down,” Peter says. Stiles lowers them to his sides. “Breathe normally for me.”

Stiles’ face screws up. He’s not sure he remembers how to do that and his breaths suddenly become stuttering.

“Darling, your little heart is hammering away,” Peter says, but Stiles is sure he knew that before he put his hand against it. “Stiles,” he says, voice serious. “Look at me.”

Stiles opens his eyes, despite his better judgement, meeting Peter’s gaze.

“You’re okay,” Peter tells him. “I’m doing a nice thing for you.”
Stiles tries to nod, even though he’s not sure he agrees, but then he realises he’s shaking. He closes his eyes again.

“No,” Peter says, soft but demanding. Stiles opens them, staring at him. Peter reaches out, taking hold of his hand, squeezing it. “You don’t have to be scared. I didn’t mean to upset you, I was trying to break the tension. I’m sure you’re familiar with the concept.” He stokes his thumb over the back of Stiles’ hand. “I should have taken into account your issues with intimacy.”

Stiles yanks his hand away. “I don’t have issues with intimacy,” he insists. “I have issues with…” He cuts himself off, clenching his teeth.

“Finish your sentence,” Peter prompts, but it sounds more like a challenge.

Stiles sags, giving up. “Just do the measurements.”

“I will,” Peter agrees. “When you remember how to breathe properly.”

Stiles takes a deep breath, trying to steady himself. It takes a few breaths before it starts to feel natural. Peter adjusts the tape around his chest, taking the measurement. He wraps it around his waist next, Stiles having to resist the urge to suck it in. He breathes and he stares straight ahead and he tells himself he wouldn’t care if it was anyone else touching him. He’s not a virgin because he’s afraid of intimacy. He’s not so sexually inexperienced because the thought terrifies him. Nerves are normal and that’s all it is.

“That’s the top half done,” Peter tells him. “Time for the trousers.”

Stiles nods, trying not to think about what that entails. Peter wraps the tape measure lower around his waist, above where the pyjama pants are sitting low on his hips. He then moves the tape down so that’s he’s measuring around his ass, the thin material of the pants meaning Stiles can feel the tape against this cock, even if he can tell Peter is being careful not to be inappropriate. It still makes him feel exposed, putting all his concentration into not moving.

“Good boy,” Peter says softly as he moves the tape away. “You’re doing so well. Stick with me.” He measures down the side of his leg and then around the cuff of his pants. He stays down on one knee, looking up at Stiles. “This is the part you’re not going to like, but legs apart, sweetheart.”

Stiles chews on his lip, wanting to refuse, but Peter is being so reasonable about it. He does as he’s told, staring at the wall as Peter’s hand brushes against the material at the inside of his thigh. The fact that Stiles isn’t wearing underwear means that Peter’s knuckles brush against his cock as he puts the tape measure into place. He makes an involuntary whimper, using every bit of strength he has not to push him away and retreat.

“Nearly there,” Peter tells him, running the tape down the inside of his leg, reaching his ankle.

Stiles tells himself it doesn’t feel good. His eyes slip closed and he realises that no one’s ever touched him between his legs before. No one.

“All done,” Peter says, pulling the tape away. He steps back as Stiles opens his eyes. “How are you doing?”

Stiles just shrugs, looking at him blankly.

“It’s okay to not be okay,” Peter tells him. “But if you tell me about it I can make it okay again.”

Stiles frowns. He has no idea what that means.
“Right,” Peter says quietly. “Words bad.” He tosses the tape measure aside and nods towards the couch. “Sit.”

Stiles navigates his way around the table and drops down onto the couch, Peter sitting beside him, body angled to tell Stiles he has his total attention. Stiles doesn’t want it. He stares down at his lap, at where Peter’s hands just were. Such an inconsequential touch shouldn’t make him feel like this, shivery and too hot. Peter wasn’t even doing it deliberately. Stiles is just so painfully virginal that it’s gotten under his skin. Maybe Peter is right, maybe he is scared of this. Would that be better or worse than the fact that no one has ever wanted him?

“Stiles?” Peter asks gently.

“Yeah,” Stiles says, looking up at him, at the kindness on his face. “I’m okay.”

Peter studies him for a moment, clearly unconvinced.

“I’m fine,” Stiles insists because the last thing he wants is pity, no matter how fragile he feels. He wants to be alone to lick his wounds rather than letting someone else tend to them. Especially someone like Peter.

“Alright,” Peter says, backing off. “In that case, let’s discuss daily schedules.”

Stiles nods. He’s nervous about what Peter might have planned, but at least if it’s shared with him, he knows what to expect. A little bit of predictability might help him feel the ground under his feet again.

“I work from home,” Peter tells him. “However, until the summer, I still have to go in for office hours once a week. It’s part of the deal. Tomorrow is that day. I’ll go in early, visit my tailor, do my hours, then I’ll go do some shopping for you and pick up your new clothes. I’ll be back in time for dinner.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, trying to process it. “You’re going to leave me alone?”

Peter smirks at him. “I’m sure you’ll still be here when I get back.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says vaguely, his brain still ticking over on the possibilities.

“On a normal day, though, I’ll be working in my study,” Peter tells him. “We’ll have breakfast together and then I’ll take you upstairs and you can keep yourself busy until lunch. After lunch, we will have time to spend together. That’s probably when we’ll focus on your training. Then dinner. Then bath time. Then bed.”

Stile feels himself settle at having it laid out for him. It’s not that he likes what he hears, his training especially still makes him anxious, being such a terrifyingly vague term that could mean anything from etiquette classes to physically breaking him down. There’s a security in the fact that he knows it’s coming though, knows when he needs to brace himself.

“Today, I’m afraid you’ll have to have your alone time without your personal things. They’ll come tomorrow,” Peter says. “Would you be okay reading? You were doing that in the Foundry.”

“Yeah, because there was nothing else to do,” Stiles responds.

“Is there something else I can get for you?” Peter asks. “Something immediately available because I really do have work to be getting on with and I don’t get anything done on my office days, it’s just endless questions and Oh, Peter, how have you been?” He makes a disparaging noise that’s just a
little bit too dramatic and Stiles can’t help but smile in amusement.

“Reading is fine,” he says. He looks to the wall of bookshelves behind them.

“Oh, not those ones,” Peter tells him. “Read something in my room.”

“Why not those ones?” Stiles asks, intrigued.

“Because they need organising, they’re precarious at best, you pull the wrong one they’ll all come tumbling down,” Peter says, eyeing the stuffed shelves. “Maybe another time.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

Peter gets to his feet. “Would you like a drink?”

“I’m good,” Stiles tells him.

“With me then,” Peter says. He leads the way up the stairs and Stiles sits on the bed beside the cuff, lifting his leg for Peter to slip it on, locking it into place. “Help yourself,” he says, gesturing to the bookshelf. “Call if you need anything.”

He gives Stiles a fond little smile before turning and leaving the room. Stiles listens to his feet on the stairs and then turns, looking at the bookshelf. He gets to his feet, wondering if he and Peter can possibly have the same tastes. The first title he sees is Beowulf and he groans. He bets the pretentious idiot can’t even understand it. Stiles couldn’t when they had to read some of it in English class.

There’s Homer and Plato and Stiles is tempted to give up and go and stare out of the window until lunchtime. What kind of person keeps these books in their bedroom? He starts to spot some more modern titles though, classics that aren’t verging on pre-history. He picks out Gulliver’s Travels, taking it to the window seat. He remembers watching a cartoon of it when he was little so he imagines it can’t be too taxing. He doesn’t want to have to think.

He finds the book surprisingly engrossing, laid in the window seat not wanting to look up when Peter comes to collect him. He finishes the paragraph he’s reading, turning to see Peter looking at him with affection. He sits up, saving his place with a finger.

“I see you found something,” Peter comments.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, glancing at the shelves. “Do you only keep those books there to impress people?”

“I would hope that by the time I’ve got them to my bedroom, they’re going to be interested in something other than my bookshelf,” Peter responds, voice low and measured.

“Right,” Stiles mutters, looking at the books again as though it will hide his blush from Peter. “That’s like a college reading list though.”

“Hmm,” Peter says, considering the shelf. “I suppose it is.”

“Did you go to college?” Stiles asks.

“I did,” Peter agrees. “I wasn’t very interested in reading lists when I was there though.” He moves over to Stiles, taking the key from his pocket. “Ready for lunch?”

They eat at the island, perched on the stools that always make Stiles feel a moment away from
disaster. He likes that it feels more casual though. The dinner table is formal and loaded and filled with expectations that Stiles feels like he can’t meet. He’s not used to formality. His house didn’t have much of it.

“Were you enjoying that book?” Peter asks.

“Uh, yeah,” Stiles responds. “It was pretty good actually.”

“I like the classics,” Peter says.

“Yeah, I could see,” Stiles agrees. He looks at Peter, feeling drawn into him. “Where did you go to college?”

“What?” Peter asks, looking up at him like he didn’t hear, which Stiles is certain can’t be true.

“I was just wondering where you went to college,” Stiles shrugs, looking down at his plate. Peter doesn’t say anything. “I was waiting on letters from colleges,” Stiles goes on. “Acceptance letters. Or rejection letters. I don’t know. I hadn’t decided where I wanted to go even if I could have my pick.”

He feels that oppressive sensation in his chest, the homesickness. He thinks about those letters arriving to his house, his dad having to collect them from the mailbox. Would he look at them? Would he leave them unopened for Stiles when he came back? Or does he know that Stiles isn’t coming back? Maybe they’re already in the trash.

“College is overrated,” Peter tells him. “Are you done?”

“No,” Stiles says, his voice cracking, not wanting to let go. Then he realises that Peter is gesturing to his plate and he feels like an idiot. “Oh. Yeah. Thanks.”

Peter clears the plates away, turning to look at Stiles. “I think we should do something fun.”

Stiles looks at him, apprehension growing. “Like what?”

“Do you want to play cards?” Peter asks. “How about some poker?”

Stiles gives him a look. “I’m not playing poker with you, you can hear my heartbeat and smell my nerves, how am I supposed to bluff?”

Peter smiles at him, amused. “No wolf senses.”

Stiles shakes his head. “No way.”

“Alright,” Peter says, crossing the room towards Stiles as he thinks. “Do you play chess?”

“Not really,” Stiles dismisses.

“What does not really mean?” Peter asks.


“Let me teach you,” Peter says. “I think you’d be good at it. You’ve got that kind of mind.”

Stiles hesitates. He doubts that’s true but he would like to learn to play properly. He’d thought about asking his dad over the years but it never seemed like a good time. He guesses he has
nothing but time now.

“Okay.”

They go through to the living room and Peter places a folding card table by the window, setting up an expensive looking chessboard on top of it. Stiles is white and Peter is black, sitting on opposing sides. Stiles looks down at the board and it already feels overbearing.

“This is just a practice game,” Peter tells him. “Let’s get you up to speed.” He gestures to the board. “After you.”

Stiles shakes his head. “You go first.”


Stiles considers the board, scared of making some stupid mistake that will leave him open to ridicule and defeat. He chews on his lip, running through all the moves he knows. It’s not many. He shakes his head, turning the board around.

“Now you’re white,” he says. “Your move.”

Peter stares at him, a mixture of incredulity and admiration. “Alright,” he agrees, looking down at the board. He reaches forwards, moving one of his pawns before sweeping his hand over the pieces with a flourish. “Over to you.”

Stiles takes a breath, letting it out as a sigh. If that’s the move that Peter starts with then it must be a good one. He reaches for the corresponding pawn on his own side and moves it. Peter narrows his eyes at him, looking at the pieces before making his own move. Stiles nods like it makes sense to him, like there’s some kind of reason behind it. There doubtlessly is but he has no idea what it could be. He reaches for his own corresponding piece.

“Are you just going to mirror every move I make?” Peter asks him.

Stiles pauses, looking up at him. “Is that a good way to win?”

“It’s a good way to not play,” Peter says. Stiles says, pulling his arm back. “Make your own move. That’s how you’ll learn.”

Stiles drums his fingers on the edge of the table, contemplating the board. He has no idea what he’s doing and he doesn’t know why he doesn’t just admit that fact, Peter said he would teach him, but Stiles guesses that with Peter, teaching means being thrown in the deep end and learning how to swim. He thinks back to when he was little, sitting opposite his dad, but those memories are sepia tinged and far too distant. They’re from before.

He looks up to see Peter watching him, not with impatience but a certain amount of bemusement. He raises an eyebrow in question.

“I’m just trying to remember what can move where,” Stiles admits. “My mom used to help me with this.”

“Your mom?” Peter asks, a softness in his voice. “You’ve never mentioned her before.”

“No,” Stiles says, staring at the chess pieces. “She’s dead.”

“I’m sorry,” Peter says, sounding sincere. Stiles shrugs. What other response is there. “How old
were you?” Peter asks.

“Ten,” Stiles says. “She wasn’t… great at the end. But before that, I used to sit on her knee and she’d help me play. I don’t really remember it very well. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry,” Peter tells him. “Wait there.”

He gets up, going through to his study. Stiles watches the open door, leaning around slightly to try and get a peep inside. He can see the corner of a wooden desk but not much else. He waits but Peter doesn’t return and Stiles starts to worry about what he’s doing. Maybe sitting with his head in his hands at what terrible company Stiles is. He wonders if he wishes he’d gotten one of those Companions that had actually taken the etiquette classes. They probably knew how to do all these fancy things.

Peter emerges again with a piece of squared paper in his hands. He holds it out to Stiles. “This should help.”

Stiles looks down at it. It’s a little hand drawn guide showing all the moves that every piece can make and how they can capture other pieces. Stiles stares at it in awe. “Did you just make this?”

“It’s just the moves, it’s not the strategy,” Peter says, settling back in front of the board. “We can work on that together.”

Stiles stares at him. “But you just made this for me.”

“I did,” Peter agrees, clearly confused by how touched he is.

“Thanks,” Stiles says earnestly.

Peter smiles at him. “Shall we play?”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, looking at his guide, wanting to try it out. “Okay, so horse can do this,” he says, moving the piece.

“Stiles, that’s a knight,” Peter tells him.

“Then why don’t they make it look like a knight?” Stiles asks.

Peter gives him a weary look. “Would you like me to buy you a Batman set?”

Stiles’ eyes light up. “Do they make those?” he asks, imagining the possibilities. “Oh, do they do Star Wars ones?”

“You like Star Wars?” Peter asks.

“I love Star Wars,” Stiles enthuses. “The greatest movie, it is.” He grins. “That was Yoda.”

“Yes,” Peter says tightly. “I’ve never seen those movies.”

“You’ve never seen them?” Stiles asks incredulously. “You have to watch them.” He looks over at the TV set. “You have a DVD player, right?”

“I do,” Peter agrees. He gestures to the board. “Is that your move? Can I go?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, sitting back in his chair. “I’m putting the horsey there.”
“Horsey?” Peter groans.

Stiles laughs, ducking his head. This is more fun than he thought.

He has to use his guide for every move and he still has no idea what he’s really doing. Peter starts capturing his pieces but then eventually takes pity on his dwindling arsenal and gives him some tips on how to capture him back. Stiles knows he’s being handed them for free, but he promises he’s learning the moves that get him there.

“Check,” Peter says, placing his hands on the table in front of him.

“Wait, what?” Stiles asks examining the board.


“What do I do?” Stiles asks, looking at his guide.

“You need to move out of check, block me, or capture the piece,” Peter explains.

“Okay, how do I capture the queen?” Stiles asks.

“You can’t,” Peter says. “I wouldn’t have put her there if you could.”

Stiles frowns. “Then what do I do?”

“Move the king,” Peter tells him.

“Okay.” Stiles agrees, checking his guide to see what move he can make. He slides the king into a safe spot.

Peter instantly leans in to make his move. “Check.”


“You have to think further ahead,” Peter tells him.


“No,” Peter says. “Make a move.”

Stiles leans back in his chair, gesturing vaguely. “I don’t know what to do. I forfeit. Can I forfeit?”

“No, Stiles, you cannot forfeit,” Peter says, giving him a look. “Come on, I know you’re not a quitter.”

“I am a quitter,” Stiles tells him. “I’m very much a quitter. Just shows that you don’t know anything about me.”

Peter levels his gaze at him. “I don’t believe you.”

Stiles sighs, looking at the board. He picks up his guide, studying it. Peter went to all this trouble and Stiles can’t even see it through. If there’s one thing he never fails at, it’s letting people down. He wishes his mom were here to tell him what to do. He’s wished that so many times in the last eight years.

He leans over the board, holding the guide in one hand while he traces the moves with his finger.
“So if I go to this square, your queen can put me in check with one move,” he says, his voice shaky and uncertain.

“Right,” Peter encourages.

“And if I move here then your bishop can get me,” Stiles says. He twists his mouth, the frustration making him want to cry. “I don’t know,” he says, shaking his head.

“Work through it,” Peter tells him. “You’re nearly there. Look at all the squares.”

“I’m not smart enough for this,” Stiles tells him.

“Who made you believe that?” Peter asks. “I’ve seen nothing that suggests any such thing.”

Stiles looks at him. It’s a question he’s never asked, he just took it as the truth. He looks at the board again, studying it. “I can move here,” he says, touching the square. “But you’re still going to win, it’ll just take you two moves more.”

“You don’t know that,” Peter dismisses. “And frankly, I did not expect such a defeatist attitude from you.”

“Yeah, well, there’s no divine move to play,” Stiles says.

“That’s Go,” Peter tells him.

“Yeah, I know,” Stiles agrees. “I had to learn how to play that to beat a Nogitsune.”

“Well this should be a walk in the park then,” Peter states. “No one dies if you get this wrong. We just reset the pieces and start again.”

Stiles looks down at the board. A fresh start, everything clean and new, all your lost pieces back in place. “I like that,” he says, reaching out to make the move.

It takes three more moves for Peter to get him into checkmate. Stiles sits back in his chair, mentally drained and feeling delicate. He wants a hug, he realises. Maybe it’s just from thinking about his mom. He reaches out a finger, tracing the little drawings Peter made for him.

“Why don’t I take you upstairs,” Peter suggests. “Then I can start thinking about dinner.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. He pulls the drawings towards himself. “Can I take this with me?”

“It’s yours,” Peter tells him. “Go ahead.”

Stiles smiles at him. “Thank you.”

He follows Peter upstairs, sitting down by his cuff in the window seat so that Peter can lock it into place, the page still clutched in his hand.

“Not bad for a beginner,” Peter tells him, sliding the key into his pocket.

“A beginner who’s been playing since he was eight,” Stiles responds.

“You had a long hiatus,” Peter says. “I think it was a respectable return to the game.” He smiles at Stiles, his eyes shining for a moment before he turns to the door. “I’ll be back when dinner’s ready.”
Stiles takes his guide over to the bed, lying down on his stomach and studying it. He’s not paying attention to the information, instead looking at the drawings themselves, every little line of the pen. That’s someone taking the time to teach him something. That’s patience and a want for him to better himself. It’s a caring gesture and he can’t remember the last time he had something like it.

He’s still staring at it when Peter comes to collect him. “Are you ready to go pro?” Peter asks him.

Stiles pulls himself into a sitting position, putting the paper aside. “I don’t have the first idea what I’m doing.”

“You will,” Peter says, stepping into the room as he slides the key from his pocket. “It’s a shame your dad gave up on you.”

The words are jarring to Stiles, ruining the warmth he was starting to embrace. He wraps his arms around himself, frowning at Peter.

“A shame he stopped teaching you after your mom died,” Peter clarifies, as though his words aren’t always perfectly deliberate. “Though it does make his decision to sell you more understandable,” he goes on. “No one to talk him out of it. Nice and simple.”

“She died when I was ten,” Stiles points out. “If he wanted me gone so much, why did he wait all that time?”

“It’s not legal until you’re eighteen,” Peter dismisses. He looks at Stiles. “Are you eighteen?”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees reluctantly.

“And when did you turn eighteen?” Peter asks, the question clearly loaded.

“Two weeks ago,” Stiles says. “I mean, two weeks before…”

Peter nods knowingly, playing with the key in his hand like he’s toying with Stiles. “Two impulsive kidnappers grabbing a random kid in the woods couldn’t possibly know that,” he muses. “But your dad would. And two weeks is just a nice amount of time to set everything in motion.”

Stiles stares down at the ground, the dread creeping in. The timing checks out. Nothing about his being sold into the Foundry was legal though, why would they care if he was over eighteen? They found a kid, they sold him. It makes more sense than his dad deciding to sell him out of nowhere. But the timing does check out.

“Still, I think it ended up being the best-case scenario for both of us,” Peter says. Stiles looks up at him, at his gentle smile. “Sometimes things just work out.” He holds up the key. “Shall we go for dinner?”

Stiles stares at it and then looks down at his hand drawn guide. His dad would never have made anything like that for him. He wouldn’t have the patience to teach him chess, that’s why they never played after his mom died. He would just call Stiles an idiot and get exasperated and then angry and then probably leave him in favour of a bottle of whiskey. He wouldn’t talk him through it, wouldn’t tell him he could do it, wouldn’t give him so many chances to find the right move. It’s such a tiny kindness, but Stiles can’t help clinging to it.

He looks up at Peter and nods, too choked up to speak. Peter gives him an understanding look, unlocking his cuff.
At breakfast the next morning, Stiles pushes his food around on his plate, nervousness settling heavy in his stomach. He tries to convince himself that it’s anticipation. This is the opportunity he’s been waiting for. With Peter out of the house, it’s his best chance to figure out how he can make his escape. That’s not what he finds himself thinking about though. He just has this scared feeling, instinctively not wanting Peter to leave him alone.

“You need to eat, sweetheart,” Peter encourages.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees numbly, scooping some eggs into his mouth and chewing slowly.

“There’s no need to be nervous,” Peter tells him. “I think some time alone will be good for you. Clear your mind a bit. Reflect.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says again, but he’s not really listening, Peter’s words rolling right off him.

Peter reaches out, placing a hand on Stiles’ forearm. Stiles stares down at it, considering the warmth of his fingers, the weight of his touch.

“There’s been a lot of changes in your life lately and you’re still getting used to that,” Peter says. “I know it can be scary. This is when you need to be tough, baby.”

Stiles keeps his eyes on Peter’s hand, feeling like the touch grounds him. It seems so much more powerful than Stiles. He takes a breath, letting it calm him, but he’s already worrying what’s going to happen when Peter lifts his hand away. Will Stiles be untethered?

“I have to go,” Peter tells him. “I have responsibilities. Frankly, you’re going to need to suck it up.”

Stiles’ eyes flick up to look at him, wondering where the care and understanding has evaporated so quickly to. Peter gives him a kind smile, pressing down more firmly on his arm, and Stiles is even more confused.

“I’m walking out of that door whether you’re a mess or you’re smiling and waving goodbye,” Peter states calmly. “Don’t ruin my day by getting it off to a bad start.”

There’s something so familiar about the thinly veiled threat, the expectations that are beyond Stiles’ control. He doesn’t like the churning uncertainty, but maybe it’s more real than the dull acceptance he’s sunk into. This he can use, he thinks, but really all it makes him want to do is please Peter. He knows doing that will make it go away.

“I’ll be good,” Stiles finds himself saying.

“You’re very good,” Peter agrees. “I’m so proud of you.”

Stiles frowns at the words, not quite able to comprehend them. They make him uneasy but they also make him glow. He feels a tightness in this throat, overwhelmed at the thought that Peter might really feel that way about him. Stiles instinctively wants to please him.

Peter slides his hand up to Stiles’ wrist, lifting it from the counter and pressing a kiss to the back of his hand, keeping his eyes locked with Stiles’. He looks smug, self-satisfied, but it still makes Stiles go hot.
“You need to eat your breakfast, darling,” Peter tells him, placing his hand oh-so-carefully back on the counter.

“Yeah,” Stiles mumbles, still staring at him, his cheeks blushing red.

Peter nods pointedly down at the plate, giving him an expectant look.

Stiles nods, turning back to his food. “Right.”

When they’re done eating, Peter takes him upstairs and locks him in his cuff. He leaves him there to go and get ready and Stiles sits in the window seat, resting his head against the cool glass while he stares at the trees, trying to quiet his mind. He doesn’t want to think about how much Peter gets under his skin, how easily he knocks him off balance, how he’s somehow rewired Stiles’ brain to do whatever he says. It’s just fear, Stiles tells himself. He’s just smart enough to not want to deal with the consequences. Self-preservation. He’s in control of this response.

Peter returns carrying a tray that he places down on the dresser. Stiles lifts his head up, watching him.

“I made you some lunch and a couple of snacks,” Peter tells him. “There’s some water and some juice as well.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says.

“You doing okay?” Peter asks, coming to stand in front of him.

“Yeah,” Stiles responds. He feels more capable than he did in the kitchen twenty minutes ago. He’s not sure if that’s just because he doesn’t feel like pissing Peter off again.

“Good,” Peter says. He goes to sit down on the other half of the window seat, Stiles pulling his legs towards himself to make space. “Because I want you to do something for me while I’m gone,” Peter tells him.

Stiles stares at him, waiting, but it’s obvious that Peter is going to make him ask. “What do you want me to do?” Stiles finally says, feeling like he’s being pathetically played already.

“I want you to get yourself off,” Peter says like it’s the most reasonable thing in the world.

“Uh, what?” Stiles asks, gaping at him.

“I know you haven’t done it while you’ve been here,” Peter points out. “How about at the Foundry?”

Stiles shakes his head, still reeling from the request.

“Before that?” Peter asks. “The basement?”

“Definitely not,” Stiles says.

“So it’s a been a while,” Peter states. “That must throw your hormones right off. It can’t be good for you.”

“I, uh…” Stiles says, wanting to defend himself, but he’s not even sure about what.

“It must be contributing to all that tension you’re carrying,” Peter says. “It’s a great stress reliever, an orgasm, the best really. It releases a lovely flood of oxytocin and dopamine. That would take the
edge off anything. And you said it’s comforting, right? You deserve a little comfort, a little pleasure, a little reward. I want you to have that. Let yourself have it.”

Stiles squirms, shifting on the seat. Peter makes it sound so reasonable that any possible argument Stiles could come up with would sound petty and ridiculous.

“I want you to look after yourself,” Peter tells him. “Will you look after yourself for me?”

“Oh, yeah,” Stiles agrees uncertainly. There’s not really any other response, regardless of the context. He’s hardly going to do himself harm.

Peter places his hand beside Stiles on the window seat, leaning forward so that he’s practically on top of him. “And just to be clear,” he says, “because I think consent should always be explicit, I give you permission to touch your cock.”

Stiles stares at him, his mouth hanging open, face burning with… mortification? Lust? He doesn’t even know. It’s not the only place that extra blood is pooling though. Peter must be able to smell it. There’s no way he can’t. “Thanks?” he responds.

Peter smirks at him, eyes shining. “Thanks is right,” he agrees. “Don’t take it for granted.”

He moves back so quickly that Stiles gives a little gasp, watching him cross the room. He shifts and something occurs to him, the panic rising in his chest.

“Wait!”

Peter turns to face him. “Do you need something?”

Stiles looks down at his cuff and then back up at Peter. “Are you seriously going to leave me locked up here alone while you go out?”

“Oh, of course I am,” Peter responds. “I don’t really feel like having to chase you around the woods when I get home tonight.”

Stiles shakes his head. “But what if there’s a fire? I can’t get out.”

“I have an alarm connected to the local firehouse,” Peter tells him. “They’re aware I have a Companion living here. They’ll be prompt.”

“You notified the local firehouse that I’m here?” Stiles asks. For some reason that makes some of the panic subside.

“Of course I did, I’m a responsible adult, not a moron,” Peter says. “I also told the neighbours, my friends, I should imagine I’ll be mentioning it to my colleagues today now that you’re finally here. Oh, and the local police department.”

“Oh,” Stiles says, not sure how to process all that. Peter takes another step towards the door. “Wait,” Stiles pleads.

Peter turns to face him, giving him a seriously unimpressed look. “You’re going to make me late,” he says tightly. “I don’t like being late.”


“The doors and windows are alarmed too,” Peter tells him. “It’s monitored 24/7 by a security company and I get live alerts on my phone. You’re safe here. I would never put you at risk.”
Stiles looks down, feeling like an idiot. “Okay.”

“Can I go now?” Peter asks pointedly.

“Yeah,” Stiles says in a tiny voice, knowing he has absolutely no power to affect it one way or the other.

“Stiles,” Peter says, making him look up. “Remember what I said? Don’t let my day get off to a bad start.”

Stiles nods, taking a breath to compose himself, sitting up a little straighter. “Have a good day,” he says, trying to sound cheery.

“I will, sweetheart,” Peter responds. “You have a nice orgasm for me. That’s a good boy.”

Stiles tightens every muscle in his body to try and hold back the shudder but judging from the smirk on Peter’s lips, he’s not doing a very good job. He’s flushed all over, sweaty already, a wave of lust rolling hotly through him.

“I think that’s my favourite look on you,” Peter says, taking him in. “I’m going to have a very good day.” He turns around, practically swaggering out of the door. “Goodbye, Stiles,” he calls, his voice echoing in the hall.

Peter can’t see him anymore but Stiles lifts up his hand anyway, putting on a smile for the empty doorway. “Goodbye,” he responds with a wave, letting it drop down into his lap and his not quite soft cock. “Shit,” he mutters, pulling it away.

He clenches his hands into fists, grabbing at the cushions of the window seat. He hears the door close downstairs, hears the heavy lock turning, his stomach twisting with it. He tries to be still and calm but then he hears Peter’s car driving away and he feels a shuddering wave of hopelessness that he doesn’t understand.

He gets to his feet, unable to keep still, his nerves frayed. Peter has blown hot and cold on him so many times this morning that he doesn’t even know which way is up. He thinks maybe that’s the point, keep him so off balance that he can’t pull himself together. He paces up and down, running a hand through his hair, agitated and jittery and dangerously close to a panic attack. He doesn’t know what to do with himself. He literally doesn’t know how to get through the next few minutes.

His foot catches on the chain he’s dragging around as he changes direction and he trips, falling down hard on his knees. It makes him angry, cutting through everything else, and he grabs it in his fist, yanking it out of the way. He stares at the cuff that’s locked to his ankle, that he’s already started to just accept as a fact of his existence. This isn’t normal. None of this is normal. He’s supposed to be working out how to get the fuck out of here.

He gets to his feet with renewed purpose, looking around the room as though he might have missed something. It’s different now though. He doesn’t have to be quiet, doesn’t have to be sneaky. He can smash the mirror in the bathroom, use one of the shards to cut through his leather cuff. But then what? He can’t get out of the house without triggering the alarm. He doesn’t know where the controls are but maybe if he can find them he can work out how to disable it. Even if he could get out of the house, where is he supposed to go?

The implications of what Peter was telling him earlier come into focus. When he pointed out all the people who had been notified that Stiles lived here he wasn’t showing Stiles how much he cares. He was letting him know that whatever direction he runs in, whoever he asks for help, they’re just...
going to return him right back here. He belongs to Peter.

Maybe he can run further. Maybe he can run to Scott. He could be hundreds of miles away by now for all he knows and he wouldn’t even know which direction to go. Peter would find him before anyone else did. Peter would bring him back here and he wouldn’t be happy about it.

Stiles slumps into the window seat, defeated. He has to admit there’s a certain calm from knowing that he’s not going to run, that he’s going to sit here, that he’s going to wait for Peter to come home. He can’t fail at that. Nothing bad will happen to him if he does that. Nothing worse anyway.

Stiles closes his eyes and tries to concentrate on breathing in and out, tries not to think about what happens next because there’s always a next. Peter made it very explicit what is expected of him now. He has to get himself off and Stiles doesn’t want to think about how much he suddenly wants that.

Sex has been the furthest thing from his mind since he ended up in the Foundry, but that’s not true because ever since he realised what he was there for, what he was about to become, the idea has been uncomfortably close, just not in a pleasant way. He’s a third class citizen who exists purely to give his master pleasure. The videos he had to watch put it nicer than that but he knows what’s expected of him. He couldn’t help but picture how that might play out, what the person who bought him would demand that he do. Filthy images of being used that made him sick to his stomach, despite the heat that always spread through him. He’s so fucked up. No one is supposed to like this.

He tells himself the heat, the desire, came from the idea of being wanted. He remembers the grope in the back of the club, the desperation of it. It wasn’t the doing it, it was the having done. He was trying to put something into his past tense without living through the present. A drunken grope. The closest he’d ever gotten. Would ticking it off with some master who bought him really be any worse than that? Either way he’s a fraud who can’t get anyone to look twice at him without extenuating circumstances.

He grabs one of the cushions, hugging it to his chest as he draws his knees up. He feels like the least attractive thing in the world. It’s not how Peter makes him feel though. As creepy as his attention is, Stiles believes that it’s genuine. Peter wants him on some level, truly covets him, even if Stiles can’t quite work out in what way. He suspects that Peter is getting off on the psychological games rather than anything physical, that he’d get off on that long after sex became routine. Stiles doesn’t know if that makes him feel better or worse. He’d definitely rather have his body fucked than his mind.

He thinks of the way Peter leaned over him while he made his request, practically pinning him down in his seat. He could feel the heat from Peter’s body, could see the dark look of desire in his eyes. Was that for Stiles or just for the power he was yielding over him, the very specific way in which he was taking him apart.

Either way, it feels good to be wanted, to be the focus of someone’s attention. He’s always felt kind of like a background actor in his own life. His stories are mundane, supporting roles. This might not be the part that he wants to play, but at least he feels vital to the story. This is all about him, even if it’s just his downfall.

He closes his eyes, gripping the cushion, imagining that look in Peter’s eyes. It’s not quite lust but it’s something similar, something Stiles doesn’t understand the complexities of, but it’s directed solely at him. The heat of his body. The heat of his gaze. He wanted Stiles to be turned on, and despite himself, he is. He swallows thickly, trying not to notice the way his body reacts, because he feels like if he notices, it’s going to disappear on him.
He breathes in and out, his skin hot, flushed, prickling with sweat. His cock stirs, making him bite down on his lip, curl his toes, all the clichés. He wonders if this is a genuine reaction or if he learned it from trashy porn. When he does this with Peter, he’ll be able to tell the difference and Stiles will probably be found lacking. When. Stiles catches the word too late, the forgone conclusion in his mind that Peter is going to see him like this. That Peter is going to do this to him. He opens his eyes, grounding himself, because that is way too real a thought and he can’t handle it. He has the option to say no. He has a safeword. Peter won’t do this until he asks. Stiles knows he’s going to ask though. He knows that this is a slippery slope and one orgasm will have him tumbling hopelessly down it, right into Peter’s hands. He doesn’t want that and yet, if he’s honest, he does? Fuck, he does.

Peter has already gotten further with him than anyone else, practically by accident. The brush of knuckles against Stiles’ soft cock while he was measuring him. His body hovering over Stiles’ as he gave his instructions. The way he washes his hair and puts his hands on him to heal his ills. It’s an intimacy he’s never known. Stiles knows somewhere deep down inside that he’s going to give Peter everything.

He places the cushion aside, getting to his feet and crossing to the bed. He picks up the chess guide that Peter made for him, looks at the little drawings. Surrendering to this wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world, would it? It’s not like the cavalry’s coming any time soon. Stiles has to get himself out of this, but seeing as he’s apparently incapable of that, he’s going to have to survive it.

He stares at the drawings as he reaches his other hand down, pressing it against his cock through the soft fabric of his pyjama pants. Peter’s pyjama pants, he reminds himself. He’s worn these, has slept in them, has been vulnerable in them, has maybe done this in them. His own cock has brushed against this fabric and that fact is so inescapably intimate that Stiles lets out a little whimper.

He rubs his hand against his dick, feeling it harden, and it’s like he comes back to life. This switch was turned off as soon as he was taken down to that basement, survival kicking in, no room for trivialities. Peter has activated that part of him again though, flicked the switch like it belongs to him, and Stiles is helpless to do anything but feel. The idea is in his head now and he doesn’t know how to shut it down.

He keeps looking at the drawings, tries to connect what he’s doing with someone who cares. He’s never needed an emotional attachment to jerk off, but he needs it now. He finds it in the lines of Peter’s pen. He finds it in the way he promises to look after him. He finds it in his interest in Stiles as though he’s doing anything but building up an arsenal with which to destroy him.

Stiles shakes his head, pushing that thought away. He needs Peter’s care for him to be true, at least for the next couple of minutes. Peter who cooks for him with such care, who make allowances for the things that Stiles isn’t able to give him yet, who gave him a safeword so that he’s always protected. That one word, silver, is bigger and more powerful than Peter, but he gave it to Stiles anyway. He let him have that power.

Stiles lifts his hand away, moving his fingertips to his waistband. He slips them below the elastic but as soon as they brush against his pubic hair everything becomes real and sharp and he tugs them back out again. “Oh, god,” he groans, rolling his eyes up to the ceiling. He takes a breath, forces himself to be calm. He’s done this a million time, possibly literally, he can do it one more. He shakes his hand like he’s trying to knock some sense into it, as though it’s that and not his mind that’s making him pull back.

He gives a little nod and slips his hand back in again, fingers closing around his cock that’s already damp. He bites down on his lip, forcing himself to give a squeeze, but everything about this feels
very wrong. “Nope,” he says, yanking his hand away. He puts the drawing down, getting to his feet. “Come on, Stilinski, pull it together.”

He bounces on the balls of his feet, wriggles his toes, but the moment is well and truly gone. His cock’s not interested and neither is his mind. “Fuck,” he grits out, clenching his hand into a fist and turning to slam it into the bed. The only thing he was ever really, truly good at was jerking off and now he can’t even do that right.

He walks over to the tray Peter left him, grabbing the bottle of water and twisting the cap off. He swallows down the cool liquid and it makes him feel a little better. He’s still a failure but there’s a certain security in the familiarity of that. He looks over the contents of the tray. His lunch is in a brown paper sack like he’s an elementary school kid but there’s also some carrot sticks and some pretzels and a cookie. Stiles doesn’t feel like he deserves a cookie. He grabs the carrot sticks though and takes them over to the window seat with him. He’s not really hungry, but nibbling on them gives him something to do, an outlet for his nervous energy.

He stares at the trees out of the window and he wonders how far they can really go. As far as the eye can see, but how far is that? It could be an optical illusion. It was a long, empty road to get here, but that’s not the same as going straight through. Maybe he could pick his way past. Maybe he could find a road big enough to hitchhike on. If he can find someone who doesn’t know Peter, maybe he’d stand a chance.


He sighs, picking up another carrot stick. He’d probably get lost and go around in circles and then it would start to get dark and Peter would come home and he’d find him out there, probably not even that far from the house. He’d find him, bring him back, punish him. Stiles swallows uncomfortably. He still doesn’t know what a punishment would be. For running away, he’s sure it would be unpleasant. He can’t quite decide if it would be by physical or mental. He’s sure Peter could come up with something that would hurt his body and his spirit at once. He probably already has and he’s just holding onto it in case he needs it.

Stiles grabs his book, trying to distract himself. He doesn’t need to think about what ifs. If he’s good, he’ll never have to find out what lengths Peter will go to. That fact alone is terrifying though. He might not know exactly what Peter is capable of, but he knows enough about werewolves to know what kind of trouble he might be in. He reads the same sentence over and over as his mind refuses to drop the image of claws and teeth and ripping fresh. Would Peter consider turning him to be a punishment or a reward? Stiles doesn’t want it either way.

His mind falls back on the task he’s been set. If he can’t complete it, if he can’t get himself in the mood and get off, will he be punished for that? He tried. That has to count for something. Peter didn’t tell him to try though. He told him to do. It feels like an important distinction.

Stiles puts the book aside and leans back against the window, closing his eyes. He thinks about Lydia, she was his go to fantasy for years. He thinks about her strawberry blonde hair and her curves and her smile. He thinks about her sharp wit and her perfect lips that delivered the most devastating of insults. It doesn’t feel right to reduce her to that now though, not after everything they’ve been through. She deserves better.

He gives a frustrated sigh, trying again. Derek. Brooding Derek with his ridiculously hard body and abs that Stiles always wanted to lick, regardless of the situation. His pouty lips and his hard lines and the fact that he could and occasionally did throw Stiles against a wall. He hasn’t seen Derek since Mexico. He wonders what he’s doing now, where in the world he is. Probably playing with his wolf form and terrifying the locals. Stiles can’t resist the smile that pulls at his lips at the
thought of it. He opens his eyes, nothing but fondness there. He needs some new jerking off material. What the hell has he been fantasising about for the last year?

He reaches for a carrot stick, chewing idly. It doesn’t usually take this much effort, it’s instinctive, so wherever his mind goes, it goes there on its own and the imagined world fades away before he comes back to his senses. It’s not even people, he doesn’t think, just acts, touches, things he wished pretty much anyone would do with him.

He told Peter that he didn’t need porn, but right now he doesn’t know how he’s supposed to get there without it. He abandons it for now, turning his attention back to his book. He has time. Maybe it will happen naturally.

As he reads, he’s too aware of how quiet the house is. It’s always quiet of course, he can never hear Peter unless he’s coming up the stairs and sometimes he doesn’t catch that. Peter is stealthy, whether it’s deliberate or not. Maybe it’s a wolf thing. But now all he can hear is the silence that’s so complete it feels oppressive. He taps his fingers against the cover of the book just to hear something, the anxiety squirming in his belly.

He doesn’t like being alone out here all on his own. He doesn’t feel safe in the house without Peter. The more he thinks about the hours he still has to go, the more uneasy he feels. He’d be alone now anyway, Peter would be working downstairs, but Stiles craves company. He feels like he might blink out of existence without it.

He makes it to lunchtime and grabs his brown paper sack from the tray, taking it back to the window seat. Inside he finds a bagel, some chopped up veggies and cheese, some tuna and a little packet of crackers. He considers the care that’s gone into the preparation and feels a little bit overwhelmed. Lunch shouldn’t make him choked up but he doesn’t have a lot else going on for him right now.

He pulls himself together, eating every bite, playing around with different combinations. It kills some time if nothing else. It also makes him feel loved, which is absurd. He can’t remember the last time anyone make him a sack lunch though. He can actually, it was his mom, before she got sick. He’s been having school dinners ever since. Not that he cared. He didn’t think he cared. Suddenly it’s all he can think about.

He places the empty bag back on the tray, glancing at his little chess guide by the bed. Time and care and effort, all for Stiles. It’s not just fear that makes him want what to do what Peter says. He wants to repay the kindness. It feels like the right thing to do. Stiles can’t take it for granted that Peter hasn’t used his position as Stiles’ master to use his body however he wanted. It would be his right, legally at least, as much as that turns his stomach. No such thing as consent when someone buys you. Peter believes in consent though. Stiles remembers his words from earlier. They didn’t mean much in the oppressiveness of the moment but they mean everything now. Explicit consent. It gives him a little glow of gratefulness that he wants to return.

He doesn’t know how he’s going to go about that when his body won’t cooperate though. He’s never had this problem before, has never had to perform on demand. Literally no one has ever wanted to be a part of this process with him. The thought gives him pause. If he does this because Peter told him to, does that make it a shared sex act even if he’s alone when he does it?

He shakes his head. He doesn’t need complex thoughts that feel like moral dilemmas running around in his head. He needs to somehow, against all obstacles and his own better judgement, get himself off.

He goes over to the bathroom, considering the shower. There’s a glass screen and a rainfall head
that looks ridiculously decadent. Stiles would love to try it out. It would feel nice and safe in there, under all that cascading water and so much white noise. He doesn’t like baths, hasn’t had one since he was a kid, they never make him feel as clean as fresh water rushing over him, taking everything down the plughole and away.

He looks down at his cuff. He can’t even take his pants off with that thing in the way. Stiles considers the chain that trails out of the door. He could get his pants down and then slide them far enough along the chain that he can still get in the shower. He smiles to himself, pulling his T-shirt over his head. He pushes down his pants, balancing on one leg as he struggles to get his foot free, nearly falling headfirst into the sink. He steadies himself, untangling the pants and moving them out of the way.

His heart beats with anticipation as he slides the screen door open. He’s not sure if he’s supposed to be using the shower, but Peter never told him that he couldn’t. His only instruction was to get himself off and if this is how Stiles honours it, surely it has to be fair game. He feels mischievous, like he’s getting away with something. He felt like this a lot before Scott got the bite. Afterwards, nothing felt very frivolous.

He pushes the thought away, moving forward to reach for the controls. The chain slides on the tile floor, making a scraping noise, and Stiles looks down at it. His cuff. He’s probably not supposed to get that wet. He lifts his other foot up, rubbing against it. Is leather waterproof? Either way, drenching a metal lock with water probably isn’t a great plan. What if it won’t unlock again? What if he ruins it and Peter makes good on just welding him into some shackles.

He shakes his head. Not worth the risk. He looks down at his pants with a sigh at the thought of trying to put them back on again. This does not feel like his finest moment, naked in somebody else’s bathroom, cuffed at the ankle, chasing an impossible orgasm that he doesn’t even think he wants. Does he want it? No. Not here. But in general? Maybe. Getting off would feel good. It’s the great equaliser of moods. Nothing else matters in that moment, nothing. He wants that escapism. And, despite himself, he wants to be good.

He looks up at the mirror. He could still smash it, cut himself free, run. He looks at his reflection, not sure he even recognises himself. His face looks paler, the shadows darker, a quality there that he can’t identify. Maybe it’s just the lighting in here. He can’t have changed that much. It’s been so long since he’s really looked at himself though, faced up to himself and what he’s become. It’s easier to pretend this isn’t real when he doesn’t have to watch it happening to him.

He steps closer to the mirror, touching his cheek, half-expecting his reflection not to copy him. He feels so weak that he wouldn’t be surprised if he didn’t have power over that. He moves his head, examining his face from different angles, trying to connect with what he sees. It makes him feel nothing but disdain. He curls his hand up into a fist, going to punch the mirror, wanting to see himself shatter, but he pulls back at the last second. All he’s going to do is hurt himself and bleed a lot and he doesn’t want to have to deal with the consequences of that. He turns his back on the mirror instead, working on righting his clothes.

He goes back through to the bedroom, looking at his book on the window seat. He doesn’t know how much time he has left. He doesn’t know what time Peter usually finishes work, doesn’t know how many errands he plans on running. It could be another hour, it could be four. Stiles hates the uncertainty of it. He hates being alone in this house with nothing but his own frustrations for company.

“What am I supposed to do?” he asks helplessly.

He wishes Peter were here so he could ask him for real, so that he could explain that he was trying
but his body wasn’t cooperating, or maybe his mind, and he couldn’t do what Peter asked. He has a feeling he knows what Peter would tell him though. Suck it up. Work it out. This is Stiles’ task and it’s his responsibility to see it through.

The thought makes him feel strangely empowered. He has a purpose. He’s in charge of making this one tiny thing come to pass.

He looks at the bed, the ridiculously comfortable bed and the soft blankets and the warmth to hide within. He didn’t want to do it in the bed, it feels too intimate, but maybe he needs intimate. Random hook-ups clearly didn’t work out for him. As oversexed and horny as he always was, Stiles knows that what he really craves in life is affection. Intimacy. The act of knowing. He loved Lydia because he knew her, not because she was absurdly drop dead gorgeous. It was only when she realised that fact that she started to like him back.

So emotional connections matter to him, maybe more than anything else. He wants to be known like he’s known everyone else his whole life. He wants someone to pay attention to the details. But that’s what everyone wants, isn’t it? How revolutionary. He’s such a fucking cliché.

He shakes his head, moving over to the bed before he can stop himself, climbing inside. He sighs as the blankets weigh down on him, feeling safe for the first time since he had to get up that morning. His knee bumps against the barrier of pillows as he shifts, the line that divides him from Peter. He has the urge to pull them away but he knows that’s not safe. Still, he has to admit that this space is theirs. He can’t escape the sense of belonging that gives him.

“Okay,” he says to himself, pretending he’s at home in his own bed, his dad on the late shift, the house to himself. It’s far too familiar a concept. He swallows down the hesitation. “Think sexy thoughts,” he tells himself.

He uses his go to, a threesome, a boy and a girl that inexplicably both want to be with him. He rolls his eyes at himself. Even in his fantasies he has to be self-deprecating. He shakes his head, licking his lips. Focus on the visuals. Hands. Bodies. Mouths. It’s indistinct but he likes that. He doesn’t want to bring the people into focus, doesn’t want to risk getting caught up in real life. His past is what keeps pulling him out of this, his reluctance coming from a place of not wanting to be in the present tense. Just like in the club. He doesn’t have any alcohol to numb himself with now though so he’ll just have to make his own motion blur.

Small hands, long nails painted red, dragging up his thigh. Big hands, rough and strong, grabbing at his ass. He imagines rock hard abs pressing against his own skinny body, imagines pulling down bra straps, revealing breasts. There’s no logic to it, no narrative, but he likes that. His body likes it too.

He shifts his hips, frightened to slide his hand downwards in case he scares off his hard on again. He thinks about the heat building under the covers instead, how much hotter it would be with another person there. Lips pressing against his own. Or pressing against his neck. Hands sliding down his sides. In his fantasy he’s not ticklish. In his fantasy his flaws just disappear.

He opens his legs, imagines another person slotting between them. Hard cock against his own, or curved hips and wetness. He imagines friction and his hand makes its own way there to make it come true. He presses down, letting out a whine as he arches into his own touch. He imagines shiny pink lips sliding around his cock, his fingers gripping himself through his pyjama pants. Peter’s pyjama pants. He shakes his head, squeezes his eyes more tightly shut. He imagines a wet cunt around his cock.

He slides his hand inside his pants, and he’s damp but he’s not leaking enough to make that fantasy
feel real. He goes somewhere else in his head, imagines fingers sliding back, pressing at his hole. He has another hand, he could see it through, but he grips a handful of blankets instead, imagines a raspy voice in his ear.

*I want to fuck you.*

“Yes,” Stiles says out loud, hips riding upwards.

He squeezes his cock, stroking himself, his hand starting to slide slickly. He imagines a body pressed hotly against his own, weighing it down. He imagines hot breath against his neck, sweat against sweat, a hard cock pressing against his thigh as fingers are worked inside him. He whines, biting down on his lip, imagining precome dribbling down the inside of his thigh. His own wetness is dripping over his knuckles, coating him, and he lets out a shuddery, helpless moan.

It’s too hot under the covers but he likes the oppressive feel of it, likes not being able to move. He remembers the way Peter leaned over him, not quite touching him and yet it felt like was covering him completely, pinning him down. He remembers the feel of Peter’s breath on the back of his neck, making him shudder. He remembers Peter’s knuckles against his dick, Peter knelt by his feet as he told him to open his legs.

“No, no, no,” he mutters to himself, shaking his head, but the thoughts are already there. Maybe they were there from the start.

He thinks of Peter’s fingers inside him, Peter’s cock leaking against his thigh. He thinks of Peter’s face so close to his own, eyes dark, that smirk playing over his lips as he watches Stiles fall apart beneath him.

Stiles lets out a sob, squeezing his cock so tightly that it hurts, too much friction, but he’s wet enough to take it. He’s so fucking turned on all he can see is red. He moves, his hand shuddery, overstimulation bleeding into every pore of his body. He can feel it building in his gut and he wants to run but he knows he has to chase it. He can’t get this close and not see it through.

His body starts to tighten, muscles straining, right there on the precipice as he feels sweat dripping over him. He bites down on his lip, feeling himself shake, the pressure building in his head. He stops breathing, his chest starting to burn as he feels himself so perfectly on the edge, not wanting to upset the perfect balance he has for the fear that it won’t happen. But then it breaks, a hot flood rushing over him, releasing every bit of tension he has, shattering it into sunlight.

His mouth falls open, his back arching, come spurting over his fingers, painting the inside of his pants. He takes a shuddery breath that turns into a moan, feeling it roll over him again as his lungs fill with air. His body trembles, weakened by it, but it’s the best kind of surrender. It’s what he’s needed for so long.

He feels himself go molten as his hand falls away, clinging onto the feeling of utter bliss and contentment it gives him. Behind his closed eyelids he sees the fireflies and he looks up through them to the sky, feeling like maybe he could touch it.

He stays there for as long as he can, body singing and mind hazy and far away. It feels like perfection.

As the heaviness of his limbs seeps in, he feels the bed beneath him, the blankets pressing down on his sweaty skin. He feels the wetness cooling in his pants. He grimaces, feeling like he’s had a wet dream. This is just like waking up from something out of his control. He shifts, making a disgruntled noise. He doesn’t want to move, except maybe to kick his pants off and wipe himself
on the sheets, but he knows he has to clean up before Peter comes home. He can’t handle the thought of him finding him like this.

He groans as he sits up, unable to stop the pout that forms on his lips. He throws the covers back and pads to the bathroom, contemplating his pants. He tosses a towel down onto the floor and sits, not willing to even attempt to balance while he negotiates getting the pants down over his foot. His coordination leaves a lot to be desired but he manages to free them onto the chain, getting to his feet and rinsing the come off as best he can under the tap. He cleans himself off as well, really craving that shower now, but if he’s honest he doesn’t want to stand up any longer than he absolutely has to.

He takes the hairdryer from the cupboard, sitting down on the towel and leaning back on the wall as he uses it to dry his pants. He feels sleepy, his mind sated and stuck in some happy place that he doesn’t want to wake up from. He makes a contented noise, wanting nothing more than to snuggle up. He wants to surround himself with cushions and warmth. Or maybe a strong body to hold him.

He pulls his pants back on again, warm like they’ve just come out of the dryer. He loves that feeling. He goes back through to the bedroom, contemplating the state of the bed. Should he change the sheets? He probably should, but at the same time he’s worried about messing with Peter’s bed. He doesn’t want to overstep his bounds. Peter’s bed. That thought sinks in as he steps over to it, pulling the blankets back into place. He glances down at the bedside cabinet, his chess guide, a little smile curving on his lips as he straightens the piece of paper, keeping it safe.

He goes to sit in the window seat, curling his legs up under his as he retrieves his book. He’s not really paying attention to the words but just the act of reading them stops his mind from straying anywhere, probably into an overly analytical, self-aware crisis. The distraction lets him keep his fingertips on that happy feeling inside him until he finally hears Peter’s car pulling up.

He feels a swell of relief in his chest, having to hold himself back from jumping to his feet. He nestles further into his corner instead, his heart beating faster in his chest. When Peter doesn’t immediately come upstairs to see him, Stiles feels his anxiety building. He jiggles his leg up and down, listening intently for his feet on the stairs. With every second that ticks by he feels more and more on edge. It occurs to him that Peter is doing it on purpose, but when he finally hears those footsteps he doesn’t even care, so grateful that he’s not on his own anymore. In this desolate place, his own company feels like a slow unravelling.

As Peter enters the room, Stiles pretends to look up from his book as though he only just noticed him, but he’s always failed miserably at nonchalance. Peter is carrying a wooden chest, shopping bags balanced on top of it. He drops his load haphazardly onto the bed, turning to face Stiles.

“Honey, I’m home,” he says dramatically.

Stiles wants to roll his eyes but instead he finds himself fighting back a smile. “Hi.”

“Hello,” Peter returns. He takes a step closer to Stiles. “How was your day? Did you get yourself off?”

Stiles squirms uncomfortably, his face heating. He knows that Peter must be able to smell it. He just nods his head, not quite able to meet his eyes.

“That’s a good boy,” Peter praises. “Now don’t you feel better?”

Stiles shifts sideways to face him, resting his book on his lap. “Yeah,” he admits.
“Yeah,” Peter agrees knowingly. “I think that’s what we need to work on, levelling you out, getting you a steady little stream of happy hormones. It will make you feel a lot more settled.”

Stiles frowns, trying not to think about what that might entail.

“You see, this is why I had to ask you all those questions you hated so much,” Peter tells him. “I needed to know what we were working with, where your baseline was. That’s where we start. That’s stage one of your training.”

Stiles looks up at him. “What’s stage two?” he asks nervously.

“Let’s get you comfy in stage one first,” Peter dismisses. He turns to the bed. “Don’t you want to know what I bought you?”

Stiles nods, putting his book aside. He can’t remember the last time someone bought him something when it wasn’t his birthday.

“That was a question, Stiles,” Peter says pointedly as he moves the bags so he can get to the chest.

Stiles sighs. Somehow he’d forgotten how infuriatingly condescending Peter was. “Yes, please.”

“That’s better,” Peter says, turning around to present the chest to him, a proud smile on his face. “This is your toybox. You can keep all your things in here.”

Stiles watches as he places the box down by the dresser, wondering if he’s referring to kid’s toys or sex toys. He honestly doesn’t know which one would be worse. The box is nice though, a carved design on the dark wood. It fits in with everything else in the room.

Peter goes back to the bed, grabbing his shopping bags and taking them over to the chest. “I got you some comics,” he says, pulling them out of the bag. “It’s Nightwing. I talked to the guy in the store and he said this is Robin once he’s done being a sidekick and moves out of Batman’s shadow.” He looks at Stiles. “I thought you could benefit from that line of thinking.”

Stiles stares at him, incredibly touched. Not only did he listen to what Stiles said but he delved deeper and then he asked someone to help him get it just right. It’s a level of effort Stiles doesn’t feel deserving of. There’s also the implication that Peter wants to build him up, help him grow. He’s giving him the tools to better himself.

“Have you read it?” Peter asks, crouching down to place the comics in the chest.

“No,” Stiles says, getting off the window seat and moving over to him. “I’ve read some Teen Titans with him in but I haven’t read his own stuff.” He kneels down by the chest, facing Peter, watching him put the comics away. “Can I look at them?” he asks, not daring to reach out for them himself.

“You can look at them tomorrow when I’m working,” Peter tells him shortly.

Stiles nods. “Right, yeah.” He looks up at Peter, still not quite able to process the gesture. “Thank you. Seriously, I really want to read those.”

“I’m glad,” Peter says, smiling at him, and Stiles can’t help but smile back. “I got you a couple of things that weren’t on your list,” Peter tells him. “Things I think will be good for you.”

He reaches into the bag and pulls out a colouring book and some expensive looking coloured pencils. Stiles stares at them, not wanting to appear ungrateful, but he never said anything about art
and this seems like the kind of thing you would buy a kid. When Peter flicks through the pages, he’d glad to see that the designs are small and intricate, not the kind a child would colour.

“It’s good for mindfulness,” Peter says. “You seem like you could use some of that.”

Stiles can’t really argue with that. All part of Peter’s self-improvement plan for him. He thought the idea was for Peter to break him down, not encourage him to flourish. He’s not sure what to do with this, apprehensive about falling into it, but it gives him a warm glow he can’t quite fight.

“I also got you a journal,” Peter tells him, pulling the leather-bound book from the bag. “This is for you, not for me. It’s very important that you understand that. Everything in this box, this is yours. I’m not going to go in there, I’m not going to touch your things, I’m definitely not going to read your journal. Whatever you put in here is private. It’s the only thing that will be and I promise to respect that.”

He stares at Stiles, waiting for a response, so Stiles nods. “Okay.”

“This isn’t part of your training, it’s not an assigned task, it’s just somewhere to put your thoughts if you need them out of your head,” Peter says. “It’s somewhere you can sit with them and make sense of them. When your training gets going, I think you might need that.”

Stiles watches him put the journal into the chest along with a couple of pens. “I still don’t know what my training is,” he points out.

“That’s because I don’t believe that getting ahead of ourselves is useful or productive,” Peter responds. “All in due course. We’ll get there.”

Stiles feels that familiar frustration start to surface but Peter is looking at him so kindly that he can’t help but bite it back.

“This isn’t for your toybox, but I also got you some new bubble bath,” Peter says, pulling a fancy glass bottle out of the bag. “It’s a subtle fragrance, one I think will suit you, and it will make some good bubbles.” He unscrews the lid, wafting it under his nose and making a contented noise. “We can try it out tonight.”

He closes the chest, getting to his feet and crossing to the bed. He places the bottle aside and picks up the last item, a fancy black bag with matching ribbons for straps. It looks like the kind of thing he used to end up carrying around for Lydia when they went to the mall together. He knows the kind of shops those bags come from.

“I have some clothes for you,” Peter says, holding up the bag. “Don’t get too excited, this is your casual wear. Your nicer clothes will take considerably longer, but we don’t need them yet. I want you to be comfortable and these clothes will be very comfortable.”

He reaches into the bag, taking out a deep blue T-shirt with some kind of crest embroidered into it. He moves over to Stiles, standing above him.

“This is my family coat of arms,” he explains. “I want you to wear it because you’re family now.”

Stiles kneels up to get a closer look. There’s a wolf and fire and a tree. It looks pretty badass if he’s honest. “Like a pack thing?” he asks.

“Family,” Peter says firmly.

The word makes Stiles uncomfortable. He knows who his family is. There’s a certain acceptance
in it that he can’t help clinging to though. His whole life all he’s really looked for is places he
could belong. He reaches up, touching the fabric. It’s so soft that he wants to press his face into it.
He looks up, suddenly becoming all too aware of the fact that he’s on his knees in front of Peter.
He pulls his hand away, cheeks flushing as he sits back on his heels, looking at the floor.

“I have a confession to make,” Peter says, going back over to the bed and throwing the T-shirt
down. Stiles looks at him, bracing himself for the worst. Peter turns to face him with a little smirk
on his face. “I’m a bad Daddy. I bought take out.”

Stiles smiles, sagging with relief. “Take out I’m used to.”

“Let’s go eat then,” Peter says, reaching into his pocket for the key.

The thought of him carrying that around with him all day while he was out in the world makes
Stiles flush in a way he can’t quite identify. He pulls his legs from under him, presenting the lock
to Peter who moves the key towards it and then stops. He looks up at Stiles, considering him.
Stiles freezes. Peter’s scrutiny is always far too sharp and Stiles has spent most of his life being
found lacking.

“Did you miss me?” Peter asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles responds honestly, feeling himself stripped away. There doesn’t seem any point in
lying. Peter would know. He probably knew before he asked the question.

“I missed you too,” Peter says fondly. “But it’s only once a week and only until the summer.”

Stiles nods, looking down at his lap. “I hate solitary.”

“Baby, this isn’t solitary,” Peter says, the concern clear in his voice. “This isn’t a punishment or
whatever it is they were doing to you.” He reaches out, putting his hand on top of Stiles’, giving it
a reassuring squeeze. “This is just something we have to put up with. Together. But that’s why I
bought you nice things, to help you through that. And then I have to go earn money so I can buy
you more nice things.”

Stiles can’t help but smile. It makes him feel stupidly special. He lifts his eyes up, looking at Peter
through his lashes. “Okay.”

Peter tilts his head, pulling his hand away. “Thank you would have been fitting too,” he says
almost to himself, going again for the lock.

Stiles reaches out, grabbing his hand as he looks up at him fully. “Thank you,” he insists.

Peter studies him, looking genuinely thrown for a moment before he recovers himself. “You’re
very welcome,” he says.

When he doesn’t move, Stiles realises he’s still holding onto his hand. He pulls back like he’s just
gotten an electric shock. “Sorry,” he says, eyes wide.

Peter smirks, unlocking the cuff. “You can touch me anytime you want,” he tells Stiles, eyes
focussed on what he’s doing. “Anywhere you want.”

He puts the lock aside and slides the key back into his pocket, eyes shining as he stands over a
flustered Stiles, offering down a hand. Stiles wants to refuse, get up by himself, but pride seems
like such a stupid thing to hide behind when all he wants to do is fall into Peter with gratitude that
he came back for him. He takes his hand, letting Peter use all that strength to pull him effortlessly
When they get downstairs to the kitchen, Peter starts taking fancy containers out of a bag. Stiles stares at it.

“This is take out?” he asks. “I thought you meant, like, burgers and curly fries.”

Peter gives him a disparaging look. “Really? You thought burgers and curly fries? From me?”

“Okay, maybe not curly fries,” Stiles allows. He looks over Peter’s shoulder. This look like real, actual food. “Where is this from?”

“My favourite restaurant,” Peter responds. “You’ll really love it there, I can’t wait to take you.”

Stiles stares at him. “You’re going to take me to a restaurant?”

“Yes,” Peter says, giving him that look again. “Do you think you’re going to spend the rest of your life locked in this house?”

Stiles shrugs. “Kind of.”

“When you’ve finished your training, sweetheart, I’m going to take you everywhere, all over the globe,” Peter tells him. “So the sooner we work through it, the sooner we can start exploring.”

“Woah, really?” Stiles asks. He’s always wanted to travel. His mind fills with possibilities.

“Really,” Peter assures him.

Stiles smiles in wonder. “Yeah, I thought I was just someone to chain to a bed.”

“You’re my Companion,” Peter says. “Family.” He makes a shooing gesture. “Now go sit down, I’ll bring this over.”

Stiles shrugs, bumping into a chair in his haste to comply. He sits down, watching Peter take out plates and cutlery, portioning everything up. Stiles leans on the table, chewing idly on his lip, feeling all warm and fuzzy. It’s just the oxytocin, he tells himself. They call it the love drug. It’ll wear off. Peter’s training seems to be geared at keeping him topped up though. Maybe this is why.

Happy little compliant Stiles.

He can’t even seem to be worried about it as Peter brings his food over, placing it in front of him. Stiles just smiles at him. He watches Peter break his bread roll open with his hands, reaching for the butter, and Stiles remembers those hands in his fantasy, remembered what they were doing to him as he came.

He ducks his head, cheeks scarlet, part of him worried that Peter can somehow read his mind. He thought he was going to ask, thought there was going to be an interrogation about what he did and what he thought about, Peter writing down every detail in his little book of Stiles. He brushed straight over it though, content that Stiles had simply done what he asked. It makes Stiles feel like Peter trusts him, respects him even. Probably just the oxytocin.

“We’ll eat dinner,” Peter tells him. “Then we’ll give you your bubble bath, put you in your nice new clothes and tuck you up in bed. How does that sound?”

“Really good,” Stiles says honestly before he can even process the words.

Peter smiles, looking very pleased with himself. Stiles turns his attention to his food and pretends
not to notice.
The sound of the alarm cuts through Stiles’ slumber. He crinkles his nose and makes a disgruntled noise, snuggling down further into the softness.

He hears a soft sound from Peter that could be a laugh. “Rise and shine, sweetheart.”

Stiles pouts, opening his eyes to find Peter a couple of inches from his face. He lets out a startled noise, flailing backwards. “Oh god!” he complains, clutching at his chest. “What are you doing?”

“My?” Peter asks innocently. “I’m just lying here. You’re the one who was crossing our little divide.”

Stiles looks between them and realises he was wrapped around the pillows they keep down the middle of the bed. He huffs, settling himself further away. “Whatever.”

“It’s a sign of great character to be able to admit when you’re wrong,” Peter tells him.

Stiles hates that he feels so chastised by words said with such casualness. He twists his mouth, knowing he’s already lost. “I’m used to sleeping in the middle of the bed,” he says apologetically.

“Well, you have to learn to share now,” Peter says. “But if you’re a cuddler, I do have a better solution to that.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I’m not.”

“I’ve seen plenty of evidence to the contrary,” Peter tells him confidently. He stretches, sitting up. “Never mind, we won’t rush it, I just love the suspense.” He gives Stiles a look that makes his stomach roll over with something warm. “I’m going to take a shower.”

“Uh huh,” Stiles agrees, watching him go into the bathroom.

Peter leaves the door slightly open just like he always does. Stiles looks away, his eyes landing on the chest. His toybox. He smiles to himself, sitting up in the bed. Having his own things makes him feel like he hasn’t been tugged so hopelessly out of his own world. They’re not his things, not really, not the things that are in his own bedroom, or shoved at the bottom of Scott’s closet because he left them there, but Peter gave them to him. That makes them his. It’s more of an identity than he’s had in a long time.

He looks down at the T-shirt he’s wearing, the family crest over his heart. He reaches up to touch it, finger tracing over the raised embroidery. He doubts the intricate work was put together in a day. That means Peter had the patches ready, that he’s been planning this, waiting for the right Companion to show up at the Foundry. And then he saw Stiles and he decided to take him home. Stiles can’t help how special that makes him feel. He doesn’t think he’s ever been anyone’s first choice before. Even he and Scott originally found each other by default. Two losers who no one else wanted to hang out with. They might as well be best friends.

He trails his hand downwards, gripping the hem of his T-shirt and feeling the soft fabric between his fingers. He loves it. It’s like wearing a cloud. He knows he’s basically wearing pyjamas, the matching sweatpants finishing off the outfit, but for some reason it makes him want to preen. He
smiles to himself, feeling a swell of… something. He looks across the room again at his chest, running through the contents in his mind. He starts to push the blankets back, eyes still fixed on the chest.

“Not until after breakfast,” Peter tells him, emerging from the bathroom.

“Right,” Stiles says, settling back on the bed, but when he turns to look at Peter he realises he’s standing there in just a towel. “Oh,” he says, feeling his face flush red as his eyes widen.

Peter gives him a look. “It’s just a towel, Stiles.”

“Literally just a towel,” Stiles agrees, before he realises he’s still staring. “Oh god. Sorry.” He forces himself to look away, turning his body for good measure.

“If I minded you looking, I wouldn’t be stood here like this,” Peter points out as he opens his dresser. “Which, for the record, I’ve been doing every morning, but you usually go ahead and fall straight back asleep on me.”

“Yeah, I do that,” Stiles agrees. He watches out of the corner of his eye as Peter goes over to the closet, pulling out some clothes before giving the towel a tug. Stiles forces his eyes further away, an involuntary noise escaping his throat.

“You’ve never seen a naked man before, have you?” Peter says, voice thoughtful.

“I’ve seen myself naked,” Stiles responds. “I’m a man.”

“That’s not quite the same thing,” Peter says.

“Yeah, well, I’m good staring at this wall for right now, thanks,” Stiles tells him.

“You really are quite adorable,” Peter says fondly.

Stiles listens to him pulling on his clothes, trying his best not to imagine it. He doesn’t want to imagine it. He has no interest in this, expect for maybe a tiny bit of curiosity. Tiny. Microscopic.

“All ready,” Peter announces, walking into his line of sight. Stiles can’t help the way his eyes scan up and down. Peter smirks at him. “Get up. I’m going to make breakfast.”

“Right,” Stiles agrees, having no idea where to put his eyes now.

“And no touching your cock,” Peter tells him.

“Why would I…I…” Stiles begins. “I wasn’t…”

“Of course not,” Peter agrees with no sincerity. “But not today. You don’t have permission.”

Stiles watches Peter leave the room and then rolls his eyes, giving a little huff. He wasn’t even thinking about his dick until Peter said that, which he’s sure is exactly the point. Stiles hates how a few words can have him unravelling so quickly, Peter’s power of suggestion ridiculously strong. It’s like he can dig his fingers right into Stiles’ brain and put the ideas there himself as though they’ve sprung to life of their own accord. He pushes them aside along with the blanket, going through to the bathroom.

He sits back on the bed once he’s ready, leaning back on his hands. When Peter comes back he stands in the doorway, taking in the sight of him.
“That colour really does suit you,” he says appreciatively.

Stiles sits forward, playing with the hem of his shirt. “It’s nice,” he agrees.

“I made him go through every single swatch in the store because I wanted it to be perfect,” Peter says, eyes sliding shamelessly up and down him. “I think perfection has been achieved.”

Stiles feels himself blush, looking down at himself again. He’s not used to the attention and it makes him squirm as he pulls his lip between his teeth.

“Don’t touch your cock,” Peter says as he crosses the room towards him.

Stiles looks up at him, giving him an irritated look. “I wasn’t,” he insists, putting his hands down on the bed either side of him for good measure.

“I could do without the attitude, Stiles,” Peter says, standing in front of him.

Stiles tries not to glare at him, taking a deep breath instead. Peter gestures to the cuff, motioning for him to lift it up. Stiles places his foot on the bed in front of him, watching Peter unlock it.

“Why do you keep saying that?” he asks in a small voice, unable to stop himself.

“Because I think it’s important to reiterate the rules,” Peter says. “Especially after yesterday. I don’t want you getting confused by that delicious little orgasm and getting carried away with yourself. Your training has a very distinct trajectory. I am going to guide you through it. You have to trust me to do that.”

“But you don’t have to say it every two minutes,” Stiles tells him, his head still bowed.

“It’s not just about hearing it,” Peter says. “It’s about understanding it. It’s about internalising it so that it’s second nature and you pull away before you even realise why. That’s when I can stop saying it.”

Stiles lifts his head up, looking at Peter. “I’m going to level with you, that sounds terrifying.”

Peter smiles at him, soft and reassuring. “That’s where the trust comes in. I am going to take you to the safest, loveliest place that you are never going to want to leave. You’re going to have to take your own steps though, I can’t carry you there. I can only guide you.”

Stiles frowns at him. He wishes just for once the guy would say what he actually meant without trying to sound so fucking poetic about it. He doesn’t have the energy to untangle it anymore right now though.

Peter finishes unbuckling him and steps away. “I made French toast.”

Stiles can’t help the little smile that lifts up the corners of his mouth. “I love French toast.”

They sit at the island, Peter pouring Stiles a glass of orange juice like he always does, even though he’s never asked Stiles if he wants it. The French toast is delicious and Stiles finds himself curious again about Peter, his background, where he learned his cooking skills. He presents himself as cultured, worldly, but Stiles realises he’s never given any real evidence to back it up. Maybe he’s just a bachelor with too much time on his hands who spent his lonely evenings learning fancy recipes from cook books to make his meals for one feel a little less pathetic. Stiles feels like there’s as much basis for that theory as there is for him being a Michelin star chef. He finds it infuriating that he honestly has no idea, and that asking will just make Peter give some cocky response that
means nothing.

“This is good,” he says instead, as though not asking a direct question might catch Peter off guard and make him accidently share something.

“It is,” Peter agrees without the slightest hint of humility. Of course. “What would you usually make for breakfast?”


Peter stares at him for a moment. “How are you still alive?”

“That’s a really good question,” Stiles says. “I mean, poor diet aside, a lot of things try to kill me.”

Peter’s lips curve into a confident little smile. “Well, not anymore. Not when you’re with me.”

“Right,” Stiles says, looking down at his plate. “Big bad Alpha on my side.”

“I protect my pack,” Peter says fiercely in a way that makes Stiles feel a little bit taller.

“But you don’t have a pack,” Stiles points out.

“You’re my pack,” Peter says.

“Mmm,” Stiles agrees. “But, it’s just, it’s a little…” He looks up at Peter, the hard look in his eyes, and decides that he definitely doesn’t want to pursue this. “Never mind,” he says with a shake of his head, shoving some more food in his mouth so he has an excuse not to talk.

He can’t get his head around the fact that an Alpha wouldn’t want to have a pack. Between rival packs and hunters, it seems like a really bad idea to be out there on your own. Peter seems so removed from that life though. Maybe he’s passing. Maybe there’s a way to live a normal life, even if you have secret claws and fangs.

When he leaves Beacon Hills, Scott might be able to live that life. If he goes somewhere else, away to college, he might be able to blend in. They’d talked about going to the East coast together. He wonders if Scott would still go without him. The thought of him being so far away makes Stiles’ chest hurt. Maybe he’s already that far away. He might as well be on the moon for all the chance Stiles has of contacting him again.

He pushes his food around his plate, trying not to let the thought settle. He has to get through this, one minute at a time. He scoops up some food, thinking again about his own culinary skills.

“I did try and eat healthy,” he says, even though the conversation has moved on, died in the water, because the silence gives him too much space to think. Thinking isn’t his friend. “I was kind of the voice of reason with my dad.”

“Big responsibility for a small boy,” Peter says.

Stiles gives him a look. “I’m eighteen.”

“You shouldn’t have to look after him,” Peter points out.

“We looked after each other,” Stiles says sadly. He wonders who’s looking after his dad now. Maybe the stack of cash he got for selling Stiles. He shakes his head, looking at his food. “I like your cooking.”
“Thank you,” Peter responds. “I aim to please.”

When they get back upstairs, Stiles sits on the bed, pulling his foot up so that Peter can lock the cuff in place. Once it’s secure, Peter steps back, considering him for a moment.

“What?” Stiles asks, blinking at him. Where is he supposed to go? He just chained him here.

“I need to wash the sheets,” Peter says.

“Okay,” Stiles says, standing up and getting out of the way.

Peter starts to pull the blankets back. “You came on them, right?”

“Uh, yeah,” Stiles agrees. There’s no point lying, even as his cheeks flame with humiliation. “Sorry.”

“I asked you to,” Peter says easily. “And trust me, I had no objections to sleeping all wrapped up in your arousal last night.” He turns to face Stiles who is staring at him slack jawed. “Still, I think for the sake of cleanliness, we should probably wash them.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, shifting on his feet. “I’ll put fresh ones on. They’re in the closet, right?”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, still feeling slightly off balance. He watches Peter go and then instantly turns to the chest, smiling to himself. He rushes over, grabbing the first issue of Nightwing and clutching it to himself as he takes it over to the window seat.

He wants to pace himself because he has all morning and he’s promised himself he’ll only read one issue today, as much as he wants to devour them all. Peter only bought him five and if he reads them all in one day he has nothing else to do for the rest of the week. Stiles doesn’t even know if he’s getting any more comics the next time Peter goes shopping. Maybe he’ll buy him something else off his list next time. It’s not like Stiles can be a petulant brat about it and demand them. He has to take what he’s given and be grateful. Then he remembers Peter saying he could be feisty. Is that what he meant? Stiles still has no idea.

He curls up in the corner of the window seat, snuggling against the cushions as he turns the pages, drawn in by the plot. Comics have always been a comfort for him, a way to escape without having to leave the room. When his mom was sick, he used to read them in the hospital while she was sleeping. When he had no friends at school, he used to read them at lunchtime and pretend he didn’t care that he was eating alone. When he didn’t have a date on a Friday night, he used to lie on his bed and read them. Batman’s problems were bigger than his, but somehow still more desirable.
He gets lost in it just like he did then, the profoundness of the last page making him melancholy before he gets to the last panel and his lips pull up into a smile. It makes him giddy in that wonderfully nostalgic way. He wants to read the next one, wants to go back and dig through his old Batman comics, but he doesn’t have them of course. This is what he has now. He tries to hold onto that little spark of joy it gives him.

He puts the comic aside, retrieving his book instead. He’s nearly finished it but he can’t seem to be interested. Too many words. Too many metaphors. His eyes keep drifting out of the window, watching the trees sway in the breeze. It’s peaceful. In the end, he puts the book down, going through the comic again. He takes in all the details this time, studying the artwork, getting lost in it, indulging his inner child. It makes him feel like he’s being hugged.

He swings his legs down onto the floor, intending to put the comic back in his chest for safe keeping, when the colouring book catches his eye. His hands are always restless and his mind can’t focus on anything too complex right now. He’s not sure he entirely trusts Peter’s judgement but maybe it’s not the worst thing he could do with his time. He places the comic down beside him and grabs the colouring book and pencils.

Flicking through the designs makes his eyes go funny with all the tiny lines, but when he looks at them more closely he can see the beauty of the pieces. They’re too abstract to really pull him in any direction so he just lets the book fall open, the choice of where to start taken out of his hands. At first it feels a little tedious, but he doesn’t look away, the small shapes taking concentration. After a while he gets into the zone, shading carefully, mesmerised by watching the picture come together. He’s doing that. He’s in control of it. It never would have occurred to him but he finds it incredibly fulfilling.

He ends up laid on his stomach in the window seat, legs bent up, feet swaying above him as he hums a little tune to himself. As he works on filling in the pattern in front of him he realises that the warmth he feels isn’t from the sun coming through the window. He’s happy. He pauses for a moment to analyse it. He feels happy. It can’t be the oxytocin, that must be out of his bloodstream by now. He wonders if that makes it real.

“Having fun?”

Stiles whips his head around at the sound of Peter’s voice, his heart clenching in his chest. He gives him a weary look, sitting himself up. “Do you have to sneak?”


Stiles pushes it closed, suddenly self-conscious. “You made me jump out of the lines.”

“Sometimes it’s fun to colour outside the lines,” Peter says.

Stiles shrugs. He doesn’t know, something he heard somewhere, he guesses, but that seems like such an dumb answer.

“Would you like some music for when you’re alone?” Peter asks. “Something you can singalong to. Or something to dance to maybe.”

Stiles smiles despite himself. He dances like an idiot but he loves it. He wonders what Peter dances
like. Probably a snake. That thought shouldn’t be hot. He blinks, focussing on Peter. “Music would be good,” he agrees.

“Maybe I’ll buy you a little MP3 player the next time I have to go to work,” Peter says. “Put some positive association on my leaving. It’ll help you get through it a little better.” He reaches into his pocket for the key, contemplating it in his hand. “Of course, some people would think being free of the psycho holding you hostage for a few hours would be positive enough for you to breeze through my loss,” he says, his eyes locking with Stiles’ meaningfully, the beginnings of a smirk lighting up his eyes. “But you don’t think of me that way, do you?”

His voice is smooth in that way that melts into Stiles’ brain. It takes him a few moments to even process what Peter is saying, what he’s accusing Stiles of. Stiles doesn’t like Peter leaving him alone and that means Peter can’t be the bad guy. Stiles knows it’s nowhere near as simplistic as that, but then Stiles didn’t run. He didn’t even try. Stiles sat here like a good boy and waited for his master to return.

Peter looks at the window seat, the things Stiles has scattered around him. “Rule number two,” he says.

Stiles frowns slightly. “What’s rule number one?”

Peter gives him a painfully irritated look. “Are you serious? You get bitchy with me for saying it too many times and now you’re going to sit there acting dumb?”

“Oh, that,” Stiles says, his eyes falling down as his cheeks heat.

“What’s rule number one, Stiles?” Peter prompts, his voice still tight with annoyance.

“I’m not allowed to touch my cock,” Stiles says, wanting to hide beneath one of the cushions surrounding him.

“Are we starting to understand why I have to repeat myself so much now?” Peter asks, his voice gentler but still exasperated. “I’m trying to break it down for you so you can take it on board.”

“I’m not stupid,” Stiles mutters.

“No, you’re not,” Peter agrees. “But this isn’t a matter of intelligence, Stiles. You’re seeing things through a filter, they’re being processed differently. That’s why you have to let me hold your hand through it. You have to stop fighting me and let me lead.”

Stiles’ eyes fall on Peter’s hand, the key to unlock him held between his fingers. He thought he was letting Peter lead, he wasn’t exactly challenging his authority, but maybe that’s not the same thing.

“Rule number two,” Peter says again. “Are you with me?”

Stiles looks up to meet his eyes, nodding his head as he tries to look attentive.

“You’re responsible for the contents of your toy box,” Peter says. “That’s yours. You’re responsible for putting everything back in there before we go to lunch.”

“Oh, right,” Stiles agrees, moving to gather up his things. The coloured pencils are strewn over the cushions and he fumbles trying to get them back into the packet.

“There’s no rush,” Peter says with a hint of amusement. Or maybe fondness. “I don’t mind waiting. You put your things in order, sweetheart. Taking care of presents is the greatest sign of
appreciation.”

Stiles nods, taking a breath and forcing himself to slow down. He makes sure he puts each colour back in the correct spot, piecing the spectrum back together. He feels calm when he sees them all nestled in place, closing them up and moving to put them in the box with his comic and colouring book. He looks up at Peter for approval.

“Good boy,” Peter praises. He crouches down to Stiles’ level, unlocking the cuff. “Let’s go eat, baby.”

Lunch is tomato and mozzarella salad. It’s fresh and crisp. Stiles guesses Peter went grocery shopping when he went out yesterday. If he was putting groceries away when he came home, that would explain why it took so long for him to come up to see Stiles. The thought makes him smile a tiny bit. He likes the domestication. It’s kind of new to him.

He wants to look through the fridge, wants to know what else Peter bought, what might be for dinner, but he knows it’s not his place. He doesn’t move freely downstairs, doesn’t move at all unless Peter explicitly tells him to. He glances over at the fridge. He bets it’s fully stocked. He bets it’s carefully organised. He bets Peter would kill him for drinking out of the milk cartoon.

The thought amuses him and he ducks his head, putting a chunk of mozzarella into his mouth to distract himself. “Did you get much work done?” he asks.

“I did,” Peter agrees. “Sometimes it all just slots into place.”

Stiles nods. “Those days are the best.”

“They are,” Peter says, looking at him with something Stiles can’t quite identify. “What do you want to do this afternoon?”

“I thought afternoons were for training,” Stiles says. He’s pretty sure he doesn’t actually want that, but it also feels like the only way he’ll every find out what training is.

“When we get a little further into it,” Peter tells him. “Gotta break you in first.”

Stiles swallows his mouthful uncomfortably, looking at Peter. “Please tell me what that means.”

“He’s not curious about details now, he just needs reassurance. He needs to feel safe.

“I won’t hurt you,” Peter assures him. “Not ever. But you’re resisting, which I anticipated and which I respect. Breaking down a resistance doesn’t mean violence. You should know I’m more refined than that. And so we tiptoe. I offer the ideas, let them settle. One rule at a time. One task at a time. You liked the first one, didn’t you?”

“The…” Stiles begins haltingly, thinking about the way Peter had asked him to get himself off. Told him. It makes him feel shivery but not with arousal, with something else he doesn’t know the name for. “Uh…” he tries, but the words don’t come. All he has to offer is the thundering of his heart. Knowing that Peter can hear it makes it somehow feel like enough of a response.

“Stiles,” Peter says. “It’s okay to like it.”

Stiles grips his fork too tightly in his hand and he feels like he might cry. He feels like he might fall completely apart. “It doesn’t feel okay,” he admits.

Peter leans forward, putting himself in Stiles’ line of sight, waiting for Stiles to really look at him. “It’s okay,” Peter reassures him earnestly and there’s so much certainty in his voice that Stiles feels
something release in his head. He nods despite himself. Peter smiles at him. “And that’s how we do it. One tiny step at a time.”

Stiles frowns, everything still mixed up in his head. Peter is talking like they’ve achieved something but Stiles has no idea what it is. He doesn’t feel very accomplished.

“But seeing as we were apart yesterday,” Peter goes on, “I would very much like to just spend some time together.”

Stiles shrugs. “Okay.”

“What would you like to do?” Peter prompts.

Stiles shifts on his stool, uncomfortable with the question. It feels wrong whenever Peter asks him to decide something. It feels like a trap. He knows he has no power here. Peter is looking at him kindly though, waiting for his response, so Stiles decides to take a chance. “Could we play chess?” he asks.

“I was going to buy you something yesterday actually,” Peter says. “I never got to the bookstore though. Maybe I’ll go next week.”

Stiles looks at him, waiting, but the point of that story never becomes apparent. “What were you going to buy me?” he eventually asks.


“Oh,” Stiles says, looking down at his plate to try and hide his disappointment. Of course Peter doesn’t want to play with some idiot who doesn’t even understand the game. Stiles is embarrassed he even asked.

“What’s wrong?” Peter prompts.

Stiles shakes his head, still not looking at him. “Nothing.”

“Stiles, don’t lie to me, certainly not about your emotions,” Peter says testily. “It’s a waste of time, I can tell, all you’re doing is making me lose my patience. This doesn’t work without honesty. What’s wrong?”

Stiles sighs, looking up at him. Peter’s words are like truth serum. “I just thought you were going to teach me how to play. That’s all. It’s stupid. It doesn’t matter. I’ll read the book.” He shakes his head, his gaze skittering away.

“Baby, of course I’m going to teach you,” Peter says. “You told me you liked to study things. I thought seeing as we’d already started, you might want to study this.”

Stiles shrugs, still not looking at him. It’s such a kind gesture. He was paying attention. Now Stiles looks like an ungrateful brat and he wasn’t even trying.

“I’ll get you something else for your intellectual pursuits,” Peter tells him. “We’ll keep this strictly one on one. I always believe that people learn better by doing anyway. You definitely strike me as someone who responds to the physical.”

Stiles looks at him, wondering if that’s supposed to sound as dirty as it does in his head. He shakes it off, concentrating on finishing the last couple of bites of food. Peter clears the plates away, stacking them in the dishwasher before turning to Stiles with a smile.
“Shall we continue your education?”

“You mean chess, right?” Stiles asks.

Peter tilts his head, looking like he’s going to say something before straightening himself up. “Chess,” he agrees.

Stiles nods. “Yeah. Please.” They go through to the living room but as Stiles looks at the chess set his heart sinks. He looks at Peter. “I left my guide you made me upstairs.”

“Go get it then,” Peter prompts, nodding towards the stairs.

Stiles glances at them and then down at his uncuffed ankle. He turns back to Peter. “On my own?”

Peter sits down, looking over at him. “Are you worried you’ll get lost?”

“No,” Stiles says dumbly, still waiting for the other shoe to drop.

“I’m sure you can’t get into too much trouble,” Peter says. “Off you go. Hurry back.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, heading over to the stairs. It feels strange to be moving around untethered. Even when he’s not locked up, he’s never more than a couple of paces away from Peter. This is the furthest apart they’ve been without the cuff snug and secure around his ankle. He can feel his heart racing faster already.

When he gets to the landing he sees the artwork that he walks past every day, that he never gets a chance to stop and admire. He stops now, staring at the vivid colours, the abstract shapes, but then he starts to pick out the details, the figures. He thinks they’re telling a story.

“Why have you stopped?” Peter calls out.

Stiles flinches, starting to move again. “Nothing,” he responds instinctively. He grabs the guide from the side of the bed and then rushes back down the stairs. He sits opposite Peter, looking at him to see if he’s mad. He looks relaxed but Stiles isn’t about to take that for granted.

“What were you doing?” Peter asks.

“Sorry,” Stiles says automatically. “I was looking at the artwork. Those paintings.”

“They’re very striking, aren’t they?” Peter says, his attention turning to the board between them.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “Did you get them when you were travelling?”

“Guatemala,” Peter says, still studying the board, even though no one’s moved yet.

“Cool,” Stiles says. He looks over at the stuffed shelves, the artefacts nestled amongst the books. “How about those?” he asks.

Peter looks across, a distant look in his eyes. “They’re from all over,” he says. “I like collecting things. I’m very interested in cultures. The rise and fall. Why everything crumbles in the end.” He blinks like he’s snapping himself out of something and Stiles can see him putting his guard back up. He looks down at the board, tongue slowly tracing his lips before he makes his move. He lifts his eyes, meeting Stiles’ gaze with a smile. “Your move.”

They play two games and Stiles loses them both. He feels like he’s starting to get his head around it though, understanding why what he’s doing is apparently constantly wrong. He even captures a
couple of Peter’s pieces that don’t feel entirely handed to him. Maybe Peter is just letting him believe that to help his confidence. Stiles will take it.

He watches Peter putting the pieces back into place like he does at the end of every game, the familiar calmness settling in Stiles’ stomach. He likes that there’s always a chance to start over. His eyes follow Peter’s deft fingers, the way they so easily manipulate the pieces. Stiles’ own moves are always clumsy and abrupt, but Peter controls the pieces like he’s seducing them.

When Peter’s hands still, Stiles looks up to see Peter watching him, the beginnings of a smirk on his face. Stiles shifts in his seat, looking away across the room. He waits for Peter to speak, to tell him what comes next, but the silence stretches on. Stiles looks back at him to find Peter still watching him, that same expression on his face. Stiles frowns slightly, waiting, the anticipation creeping up his spine until he can’t stand it.

“Dinner time?” he guesses.

Peter smiles fully then, like he’s been suddenly reanimated. “Dinner time,” he agrees. “Let’s get you upstairs.” He leads the way up, pausing once he reaches the landing and looking at the paintings Stiles was studying earlier. “You like these?” he asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, standing beside him. “They’re really cool.”

Peter narrows his gaze, eyes darting around the artwork like he’s seeing something that Stiles isn’t.

“What do they mean?” Stiles asks.

“Oh, there’s lots of legends,” Peter says, turning to face him.

“I’d love to hear them,” Stiles prompts.

Peter purses his lips together. “We might be able to manage a storytime one day. Right now though, if you want to eat, you should probably get in the bedroom.”

Stiles wants to point out that Peter is the one who stopped, the one who started talking about the paintings, but he just starts walking again. Peter follows him into the bedroom, locking the cuff in place where he sits in the window seat. He straightens himself up, looking down at Stiles.

“I’ll be back when dinner’s ready,” he says, not waiting for a response before walking out of the room.

Stiles watches him leave, feeling unsettled. He usually checks that Stiles is okay before he goes. Stiles wonders if it’s because he got too close, because he asked too many questions. Peter never seems to appreciate that, dodges anything direct that Stiles asks him, and Stiles should know better, even if it’s frustrating. He doesn’t want to upset him. He very intrinsically wants Peter to be on his side, to like him, to be happy with him. It’s the smart thing to do to survive. He tells himself that’s the only reason he cares.

He pulls his legs up, leaning against the window and trying to shift the heaviness in his gut. Peter going cold on him means that he’s completely alone. He can’t be alone. But then he remembers the way Peter looked at him after the chess game, the way he was watching Stiles, and he didn’t look cold then. He looked… Stiles can’t place it. Hungry? He’s not sure if it’s wolf hunger or sexual hunger. He remembers Scott after he first got bitten, the way getting hot and heavy with Allison always made his wolf want to come out. Maybe they’re the same thing.

Peter has so much control, Stiles would never have noticed anything out of the ordinary if he didn’t
know about werewolves. He keeps that side of himself carefully contained but maybe lust would bring it to the surface. What would that do to him? Make him more powerful? Less refined? Stiles tells himself that he doesn’t want to know but the curiosity tugs at him. He’d like to see behind Peter’s façade. He feels like it’s more than just a wolf he’s keeping in check.

When Peter comes to collect him, Stiles is still staring out of the darkening window. He turns to face him, offering a tentative smile, but Peter doesn’t draw it out like he usually does, pulling the key straight out of his pocket. Stiles misses the preamble. He misses the bullshit that usually makes him grit his teeth.


“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, getting to his feet and following after him. They sit at the dining table, Peter presenting him with another amazing meal. “This looks good,” he offers.

Peter gives him a small nod. “Eat up, sweetheart.”

Stiles smiles at the pet name but it still doesn’t feel right. He does eat, mostly because he’s been told to, but when the silence between them stretches on, he can’t take it. “Are you mad at me?” he blurts out.

Peter looks up at him slowly, his eyebrows knitting together. “Why should I be mad at you?”

“I didn’t say you should be,” Stiles corrects quickly.

Peter continues to look at him suspiciously. “What did you do that would make me mad?”

Stiles feels his anxiety growing and he shakes his head, wanting to back out of this whole conversation. “Nothing. I don’t know.”

“Then why are you asking?” Peter presses.

Stiles sags with a sigh. “Because I’m really good at digging my own grave.”

“Darling,” Peter says grandly, something lighting up in his eyes. “We don’t dig graves around here. We strive for immortality.”

“Yeah, well, that’s easy for you to say,” Stiles responds. “I’m about 90% more likely to die at any given moment than you are.”

Peter looks around the room. “How are you going to die in this particular moment?”

Stiles’ eyes flit around, focussing on the opulent light fitting that hangs over the table. “That could fall on me.”

“Stiles,” Peter says, the word laced with playful condescension. “I hire properly qualified professionals from the top of their fields. That light is not going anywhere.”

Stiles laughs, ducking his head down, feeling his chest lighten. “Yeah, okay.” He looks up to see Peter watching him, eyes sparkling with fondness, and it makes him blush. He shifts in his seat, cutting a piece of meat. “I love your food.”

“I love to cook for you,” Peter says. “I think I might be a feeder. I always enjoyed throwing dinner parties, but I thought I just liked showing off.”

“I mean, the two aren’t mutually exclusive,” Stiles points out. Peter raises his eyebrows at him and
Stiles tries not to giggle, shoving the meat in his mouth.

“Tell me more ways in which I’m gifted,” Peter prompts.

“Seriously?” Stiles asks. Peter gestures for him to speak. “A bit conceited, but okay,” Stiles says. He expects a comment or a look from Peter but he just waits. Stiles sighs, looking around for inspiration. “You’re very rich.”

Peter scrunches his nose up. “Anyone can be rich. That’s just inheritance.”

Stiles sits a little further forward, intrigued. “You inherited it?”

“Some of it,” Peter says with a dismissive wave of his hand. “What else?”

“Uhm, okay, we’re really playing this game?” Stiles asks. Peter just gives him an expectant look.

“You’re intelligent,” Stiles says. “You’re…” His gaze settles on Peter, their eyes locking, and Stiles gets lost in it for a moment, his whole body warming with the intensity of it, the intimacy.

“You’re ridiculously good looking.”

“That’s just genetics,” Peter says, but he doesn’t look away.


Peter smiles. It’s not the cocky smirk that Stiles would expect after such a compliment, and with Stiles smelling the way he probably smells right now, but a genuine smile that looks touched. “I didn’t know you thought that about me.”

“I don’t think I knew either,” Stiles responds. It’s not a thought he’s let settle in his head before. It’s inescapable now though.

“Keep going,” Peter prompts.

Stiles rolls his eyes, breaking the connection. “Are you going to do me next?”

“You know I think you’re beautiful,” Peter says earnestly. “I tell you all the time. I tell you exactly what I think of you. You’re my special little boy.”

Stiles feels all the air go out of him, his face hot and his stomach light. It takes him a moment before he can meet Peter’s eyes again, feeling a shudder go through him when he does. His body melts, his brain flooding with some chemical that makes his skull tingle with happiness. He thinks he might make a little noise in his throat. Everything flies right out of his head except for the intense need to make Peter feel exactly as good as those words made him feel.

“You’re patient,” he says. “You look after me.” He fumbles for something else, something meaningful, but he can’t pull the words together. He looks into Peter’s eyes, feeling like he’s swimming through syrup. “You make me feel…” he begins, but he has no idea how he’s supposed to describe this. “You, uh… You make me…” He shakes his head apologetically.

“Take your time,” Peter tells him.

Stiles feels it all rolling through him and he wants to cry, overwhelmed. Why does every conversation with Peter seem to lead him here? And yet it’s not Peter he blames, it’s his own head, his inability to string some simple fucking words together. It’s the resistance, like Peter said earlier, the thing that Peter has to break. That’s what he’s trying to do, Stiles realises, that’s why he’s pushing this. He wants Stiles to push through and meet him on the other side. Stiles takes a deep
breath. He wants that too.

“You make me want to walk through fire for you,” he says, staring into Peter’s eyes. “And you make me feel like I could.”

Peter smiles at him like that’s exactly what he was waiting for. He extends his arm across the table, holding his hand out towards Stiles. Without even having to consider it, Stiles drops his fork and takes hold of his hand, gripping him tightly.

“You’re doing so well, baby,” Peter tells him. “I knew you had it in you, but I never thought you’d get this far, this fast. You’re perfect at this. You were built for it.”

Stiles feels himself glowing at the praise, watching Peter’s thumb stroking rhythmically over his knuckles. His heart slows in his chest, his breathing evening out, a calmness settling within him. He makes a pleased little noise, coming back to himself, his eyes dropping to his half-eaten dinner. He looks up at Peter apologetically.

“I can’t eat with one hand.”

“Amateur,” Peter quips, spearing a green bean on his fork and picking it off with his teeth.

Stiles smiles, amused. Peter grins back and then squeezes his hand before letting go. Stiles gives him a little nod of thanks, ducking his head to concentrate on his food.

When they go upstairs for bath time, Stiles watches Peter walking ahead of him up the stairs and he wants to take hold of Peter’s hand again. He wants to be guided. He tries to shake it off, not liking the vulnerable feeling it gives him. He wants to be stronger than that.

He stands in the bathroom doorway while Peter runs his bath, pouring in some of the expensive liquid from the glass bottle. It smells amazing. Peter swirls it around, tests the temperature of the water frequently, taking such care over such a simple task. It gives Stiles that glow again. There are so many tiny ways in which Peter is good to him.

Peter turns the tap off, dipping his hand into the water one last time before turning to face Stiles, wiping his hands off on a towel. “All ready,” he declares. “You get nice and comfy. I’m going to make the bed, then I’ll be right back.”

He closes the door after himself and Stiles pulls off his T-shirt, looking at the crest before placing it carefully in the hamper. He pushes his pants down next, tossing them aside and climbing into the bath. It’s perfect. It’s always perfect. He pulls the bubbles towards himself like he always does, protecting his modesty as if the things that Peter can do to his mind aren’t far more intimate than nudity. He tries not to think about it. He tries to just enjoy the warm water.

Peter is gone for longer than usual, putting fresh sheets on the bed, so Stiles lies back, sighing happily at the sensation of sinking into the water. He closes his eyes, playing a hand through the water, making it move in waves against his thigh. He likes the way it feels.

He opens his eyes when he hears the door click open, Peter coming into the room and placing some fresh clothes on the side for him. He looks down at Stiles’ relaxed form, smiling as he sits on the floor beside him.

“Hey there.”

“Hey,” Stiles responds, his voice slurring slightly.
Peter reaches across the bath, grabbing the washcloth. Stiles gives a little nod of understanding, sitting up, bubbles sliding down his chest. Peter doesn’t hand it over.

“I want you to let me do something.”

Stiles looks at him warily. “What?”

“You can wash below the water,” Peter tells him. “But I want to wash above. Chest, back, arms. That’s for me.”

Stiles looks down at himself, considering the line between above and below.

“Will you let me?” Peter asks.

Stiles looks up at him. It feels like a reasonable request, a natural progression. “Okay,” he agrees.

Peter passes him the washcloth. “Thank you.”

Stiles dips it beneath the water, focussing all of his attention on what he’s doing. He doesn’t need to think about what happens after. That part is Peter’s responsibility. It’s out of his hands. He wonders at the fact that makes him feel calm but then pushes it away. If Peter’s not asking him to analyse it, he decides it’s not worth thinking about.

He cleans from his toes, up his legs, over his crotch, until the washcloth breaches the water again. He watches it drip into the bubbles for a moment before he looks up, meeting Peter’s eyes. Peter holds out a hand and Stiles places the washcloth in it, letting himself go docile.

“Daddy’s turn,” Peter says softly.

He dips it into the water and then drips it over Stiles’ back, making him shiver. He presses it against his skin, washing over his shoulder blades, down his back to the water line, Stiles trying his best not to squirm. The cloth slides up again, cleaning the back of his neck, his hairline, the tops of his shoulders. Stiles closes his eyes as Peter dips the cloth in the water again, feeling it ripple around him. Peter cleans his chest next, sweeping the cloth over his flesh, giving just enough pressure that it doesn’t tickle.

“Up,” he prompts, and Stiles lifts his arms without even thinking about it, feeling water dripping from his hands all the way down. Peter washes his armpits and then takes hold of the arm closest to him, guiding Stiles to stretch it in front of him so that he can clean along the length. He places the arm into the water and then brings the other one towards himself, repeating the motions again. Once he's done, he slides a hand through Stiles’ hair, stopping at the base of his skull and cradling him there. “Lean back for me,” he says so quietly it’s almost a whisper.

Stiles doesn’t open his eyes, just follows him down, letting himself be looked after. Peter’s fingers massage his scalp, tickling at his brain, his happy centres, making him squirm in the water. He moves wherever Peter wants him until he’s finally resting back against the bath, water draining from his ears so he can hear. Peter touches his cheek with a damp hand.

“Baby.”

Stiles opens his eyes, squinting slightly against the overhead light. “Hmm?”

“Time to get out,” Peter tells him. He reaches into the bath, pulling out the plug, and Stiles doesn’t even flinch, he just stares at him. “Get dressed,” Peter says. “I’ll be back in a minute.”
Stiles nods, coming back to himself as the door closes behind Peter. He sits up, stretching his arms over his head before using them to lever himself out of the tub. He dries himself off, pulling the clean clothes on, identical to the ones he’s had on all day. They’re like a uniform, a team uniform. They mean he belongs.

He puts the wet towel in the hamper and then stands in the middle of the bathroom, waiting. Peter doesn’t come and so Stiles opens the door, not liking the feeling of being shut out. Peter looks over, standing at the dresser in just a pair of boxer briefs.

“Oh, sorry,” Stiles says, blinking like an idiot. What did he expect? He goes to close the door again but Peter stops him.

“It’s fine,” he insists easily, pulling a shirt out of the drawer in front of him. He puts it on, going over to Stiles. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, still embarrassed. “I was just ready. I should have waited for you.”

“Not at all,” Peter dismisses. “I quite agree with the sentiment. We don’t need unnecessary walls between us.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees vaguely. Was that his thought process? He doesn’t even know.

He watches Peter cross the room, retrieving his cuff. Stiles steps forward, watching Peter bend down to lock it into place. He’s gotten used to the snug feel of it, the weight. It calms some flighty thing inside him.

Peter gives him a smile, grasping his shoulder briefly as he stands up, giving it a squeeze. He walks around to his own side of the bed, climbing in, and Stiles follows his lead. As he settles himself down he considers the pillows Peter has placed back in the middle of the bed. He’d thought Peter might move them. He doesn’t know how he feels about the fact that he hasn’t.

Peter sits up in bed, grabbing his book from the nightstand. Stiles watches him, curling up on his side, his pillow grasped in his hand. “What are you reading?”

“Poetry,” Peter says.

“That’s… not what I expected you to say,” Stiles responds.

“What did you expect me to say?” Peter asks.

“I don’t know,” Stiles says honestly.

Peter looks down at him. “You can read your book for a while if you’d like.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I’m kind of sleepy.”

Peter nods. “I won’t be much longer.”

“I don’t mind,” Stiles assures him.

Peter goes back to his book, but Stiles doesn’t close his eyes straight away, watching the look of concentration on Peter’s face instead. He likes it. He stares at it until his eyelids get too heavy and he has to surrender and let them slip closed.

“Goodnight, baby,” Peter says, like he was aware of him watching the whole time. Of course he was.
“Goodnight, Peter,” Stiles responds.

He pauses. That’s the first time he’s said Peter’s name out loud and it slipped off his tongue so easily. He licks his lips like maybe he’ll be able to taste it there. He opens his eyes again, looking up at Peter to see if he noticed. If he did, he’s not letting it show. But then, that’s not what he’s waiting for Stiles to call him. Stiles bites down on his lip, feeling a hotness roll through him. He grips his pillow tighter. Tip toe. It’s easier than looking at the big picture.

Chapter End Notes

By the way, I'm gemjam on tumblr too. I've recently revived it after a hiatus, so feel free to come say hey/follow :)
Chapter 7

Expect updates on a Sunday from now on. I get most of my writing and editing done at the weekend so this is the easiest way for me to keep up. Thank you so much for all the support, I hope you enjoy!

Stiles looks at the paintings on the landing as he follows Peter back to the bedroom after breakfast. He wants to know more about them, wants to hear about Peter’s travels and how he got them and what they mean, but he doesn’t dare ask. The fact that Peter is so reluctant to share anything personal should probably be ringing alarm bells, but mostly it just makes him intrigued. He’s interested, not scared. He wonders when that happened.

He sits down in the window seat, pulling his foot up for Peter to lock the cuff in place. Peter gives a little tug on the padlock and then steps away, looking down at him.

“You have everything you need?”

Stiles glances around. “I think so.”

“Good,” Peter says definitively.

Stiles expects him to step away then, he knows he has work to do, but instead he sits beside Stiles in the window seat, body angled towards him. Stiles hugs his knee a little tighter, even though he can let go of it now.

“I think you should have an orgasm today,” Peter says, with the casualness with which he might suggest that Stiles maybe eat a piece of fruit. “What do you think?”

Stiles stares at him, eyes wide and jaw slack. “I, uh…”

“I think we should get you into a routine,” Peter goes on. “I know you’re used to twice a day, and we can certainly work you back up to that, but I’d like to start out slow. We don’t want it to be too much of a shock to the system after your little forced bout of chastity. Poor little baby, cut off in his prime. Daddy’s going to be so good to you now though.”

Stiles can feel the heat on his face, that squirmy feeling in his stomach. His dick is definitely taking notice and Stiles adjusts his leg in front of himself as though Peter can’t smell it dripping from every pore. He frowns, dropping his gaze, humiliation settling on his skin.

“For now though, I’m thinking orgasms every other day,” Peter tells him. “Let you get back into it, let your body adjust. When you start getting restless, start wanting more, that’s when we’ll know we’re doing it right.”

Stiles tugs his bottom lip between his teeth, staring at his own knee.

“Thoughts?” Peter prompts.

Stiles flicks his eyes up to look at him, slowly releasing his lip as he stares vacantly. “I don’t have
any thoughts.”

“You have no thoughts?” Peter asks, clearly unimpressed.

Stiles shakes his head, feeling like an idiot.

“Then I suggest that you take a deep breath, put some oxygen in your brain, and try to summon some,” Peter tells him shortly.

Stiles nods, closing his eyes and taking in a deep breath. He holds it for a moment so that it can flood his system before letting it out as a sigh. He has no idea how to process this. He wants to be offended by the way Peter is talking about him like he’s some kind of science project, but instead he finds himself touched. There’s so much care in what he’s proposing, making Stiles comfortable with his own sexuality again, letting him explore it, but it’s painfully obvious there’s an ulterior motive. He doesn’t just want Stiles to get himself off. This is stage one. Stage two might be where Peter gets his reward. But would that be such a bad thing? Stiles’ body, steeped in hormones, isn’t so sure.

He takes another deep breath and then opens his eyes, forcing himself to look at Peter, the reality of what he’s being asked hitting home. “I might not be able to do it,” he admits.

Peter looks curious which is a step up from disappointed. “Why wouldn’t you be able to do it?”

Stiles shrugs. “It took me a long time the other day,” he says. “Several attempts. I couldn’t… make it happen until after lunch, and that’s without you downstairs being able to hear me.”

“Stiles, I’m working, I’m not going to be listening,” Peter assures him.

“But you would be able to hear me,” Stiles points out. “And that makes me very self-conscious and honestly I don’t think I can do it.”

“I think you can,” Peter says confidently. “But I’m not going to force you. That won’t help anyone. It would be a shame though. You were so wonderfully calm after I let you come last time. You really are a treat when we strip away that anxiety. And now look, less than 48 hours without an orgasm and you’re a mess.”

It feels manipulative. Stiles is sure it is. But it’s also very true. This is exactly the kind of mood he’d take the edge off by jerking off in his bedroom. The problem is the thought of jerking off is giving him just as much anxiety as the thought of not. He wants to bury his face in Peter’s shoulder and he wonders where that instinct came from. He just wants someone to make it better.

“I want to,” he admits in a small voice.

Peter purses his lips together. “I wish I had some porn I could give you, but since the digital revolution it’s all online and I can’t leave you alone with an internet connection.” He gets up, crossing the room, and Stiles watches him. He opens up the drawer in his nightstand and takes out a bottle, moving back towards Stiles. “Do you want to try this?”

Stiles looks at the bottle. “Is that lube?”

“Yes,” Peter responds. “It feels good. Might make your pleasure seeking brain overpower your logic a little quicker than usual.”

“Why do you have that?” Stiles asks.
Peter gives him a strangest look. “Because I’m a grown man who likes to fuck. You’re the only virgin in this room, sweetheart.”

Stiles knows that he should drop it, that he’s making an idiot out of himself, but he just can’t let it go. “So, like, for fucking people? Here?”

“No, mermaids,” Peter quips.

“Mermaids would lay eggs, I don’t think you could fuck one,” Stiles says.

Peter gives him an exasperated look. “Probably just for fucking men then.”

Stiles’ eyes trail over to the bed, unable to stop himself.

“Give me your finger,” Peter says.

Stiles looks up at him, snapping out of it. “Why?”

“Hold out your finger, Stiles,” Peter tells him, flipping the lid off the bottle.

Stiles extends his index finger, offering it out to Peter who squeezes a small blob of the clear liquid onto it. Stiles touches his thumb to it, expecting it to be sticky, but it has a lighter consistency that he thought. He presses firmly against it and then his thumb slides comically to the side. He touches it back to the liquid, making little circular motions.

“It’s really slippery,” he says.

“Yeah, that’s kind of the point,” Peter agrees. He snaps the lid back on and holds the bottle out to Stiles. “I’m just going to leave that with you. Why don’t you climb into bed, have a play with it, see what happens?”

Stiles takes the bottle, looking at it uncertainly. “You just washed the sheets,” he points out.

“And I have no problem washing them again,” Peter tells him. “I want my baby to be happy. I think that bottle will make you very happy.” He tilts his head, raising his eyebrows. “You feel like giving it a go?”

Stiles continues to stare at the bottle because it’s easier than looking at Peter. “Uh, yeah. Thanks.”

“You can thank me after,” Peter says smoothly. “I have to go get some work done. Be a good boy for Daddy, get yourself off, you’ll feel much better.”

Stiles tries to hold in the groan until Peter leaves the room but he doesn’t quite manage it. He should not find those words hot. None of this should be hot. Peter’s right, he’s a grown man, of course he’s sexually experienced. Everyone Stiles knows is sexually experienced except for him. He used to think maybe he was a late bloomer but now he’s starting to suspect he’s a weed.
He remembers what Peter told him once, how one of the things he apparently liked doing was pretty little things that were much too young for him. Stiles imagines how smoothly he would pick them up in those upscale bars, how he’d drive them back here in his fancy car, how he’d bring them to this room, lay them out on his bed, do filthy things to them that Stiles can’t even imagine. Or maybe he can, he’s watched a lot of porn.

But that’s not Peter’s bed anymore, Stiles thinks indignantly. That’s *their* bed and he’s the only pretty little thing that’s going to be in it, whether he’s pretty or not. He recalls how Peter had called him beautiful yesterday, how it had been so earnest that even now, in the harsh light of day and all the usual self-doubt, Stiles believes it. Not that he’s really a ten out of ten, but that Peter feels that way about him. It gives him a warm glow. It makes him want to take the lube and climb under the blankets and claim the bed against anyone ever getting near it again.

The fire dies quick in his belly though. Peter calls him beautiful, sweetheart, baby, but he still hasn’t said he’s going to fuck him. Stiles doesn’t know what the end goal of all this is. He still assumes it’s sexual but Peter acts like he could take him or leave him. He’s suggestive, he leers, and Stiles thinks that he flirts, but he also suspects that’s just his personality. He’s never actually made a move on Stiles. They haven’t touched each other in a way that wasn’t for comfort or practicality. He’s Peter’s special little boy. That doesn’t mean there’s not going to be other people who fill different roles in his life, who fill that bed.

He imagines Peter setting him aside, coming home with some hot, experienced person who knows what they’re doing, taking them into that bed. He imagines being chained here like he is now, having to watch it all play out, because Peter wouldn’t allow him to be unsupervised. Stiles’ place is chained to this bed, but that doesn’t mean he’s going to be the one in it.

He tosses the bottle into the corner of the window seat before sliding down to the floor and moving over to his toy box. He opens it up, his eyes instantly going to the *Nightwing* comics. He promised himself he wasn’t going to read one today. He was in a better mood when he made that promise though. He shakes his head, grabbing his colouring book and pencils instead. He has to be disciplined with himself. He has to be tough. He’s beginning to understand what that means.

He takes the book back to the window seat where it falls open on the picture he was colouring yesterday. He looks at the place where his blue pencil had jumped outside the lines when Peter startled him. He’d worked so hard on it, had been so careful, discovering a level of patience he didn’t even know he possessed. It filled him with calmness and contentment. Now, as he stares at the mistake, he grits his teeth with irritation. He turns the page and then a few more for good measure, deciding to start fresh.

He sprawls out on the seat, laying his colours out next to him and starting to follow the swirling lines. He focusses all of his energy on making it neat, making it perfect, like that will somehow fix everything. He just wants one tiny thing that’s in his control, but he’s pressing down too hard on the pencil and he can see the frustration coming out on the page. He’s ruining it. He takes a breath, tries again, but he’s not in the right frame of mind for this.

He wants to scream, wants to throw the pencil across the room, rip out the page from the book, but some instinctive thing tells him not to. Peter wouldn’t be happy. Stiles doesn’t want him coming up here and giving him a lecture, or worse. Peter is not to be disturbed when he’s working. A petulant part of Stiles thinks fuck that, why is he the only one who matters? It dissolves into shame before he can even properly grasp the thought though.

He’s not upset with Peter, who showed him patience and encouragement over his sexual performance related anxiety, who gave him his own lube to try and make him more comfortable.
He’s upset with some imagined scenario that he doesn’t even know if he can credit to Peter. It’s not fair to put all his bullshit baggage on someone else.

Stiles supposes the main problem is that he doesn’t know what he wants. He wants Peter to keep being kind to him. He wants to be given more responsibility. He wants to get more presents. He wants a straight answer. He wants Peter to hold him and stroke his hair. He wants Peter to stop condescending him. He wants to be able to call his friends and his dad. He wants Peter to want him. He wants to want Peter back. Maybe he already does. He wants to go home.

He sits up, hugging his stomach, suddenly queasy. He thinks of his room and his bed, thinks about climbing under the same blanket his mother used to use to tuck him in at night. He imagines the night he went missing, Scott chasing the werewolf, hearing Stiles screaming his name, not able to get back to him in time. He wonders how long he searched the woods on his own before he called Lydia, Liam, Stiles’ dad. He wonders how long his dad stayed on the case before he went home and sat in Stiles’ empty bedroom. The thought of it hurts his heart. It’s not real, he tells himself. It’s no more real than imagining Peter would fuck someone else while he watched. Invasive thoughts. That’s what they are. Stiles is all too familiar with them.

He reaches over and picks up the bottle of lube, turning it idly in his hand. If he wants to know where he stands he could just ask Peter. It feels like he’s not allowed though. Peter either tells him he doesn’t need to know yet or he acts like Stiles is an idiot for not knowing it already. Neither gives him an answer. Neither gives him peace of mind.

He remembers how he felt at dinner last night, how he didn’t have any doubts. He’d felt so close to Peter, had wanted to cling to him because somehow it still wasn’t close enough. He grasped hold of his hand across the table like it was a lifeline to stop his washing away. He felt in that moment like it might save him. Sometimes it gets mixed up in his head and he can’t remember what he’s supposed to be scared of.

The way Peter had looked at him as they sat across from each other, hands joined together, was filled with so much affection that it hit Stiles somewhere deep in his soul. It was bordering on love. Stiles wants to feel that way again. He doesn’t want to fight it, doesn’t want to give in to the bad thoughts, the type that have always plagued him when he didn’t keep himself distracted enough. He didn’t procrastinate because he was lazy. He felt like it had literally saved his life a million times over. Tangents meant his brain didn’t get a chance to poison him against himself.

He wants to be better than that. He wants that happiness that pressed against his skull like it was something physical, something that he couldn’t escape, something that was as much a part of him as all the weaknesses. He wants Peter to always look at him like that, those blue eyes soft and proud.

He looks towards the bathroom, thinking of the way Peter had washed him in the bath, how Stiles had allowed it, welcomed it even. When Peter suggested it, Stiles didn’t just accept, he wanted. It felt so good, the care, the intimacy. It had been the washcloth, not Peter’s own hands, that slid across his body, but he can imagine that just as clearly. It makes goosebumps raise up on his arms.

He stands up before his brain can engage again, the bottle of lube still grasped in his hand as he climbs into the bed. He closes his eyes, nestling himself under the blankets, sliding a hand down to grasp at his cock through the soft fabric of his pants. He massages it, feeling it start to swell, giving himself permission. Thinking of Peter giving him permission gets him there even quicker though. He begs himself not to analyse that right now. The point of this has always been to put the neuroses on the backburner. Now more than ever, he needs that.

He shifts his hips, pressing up into his own touch with a groan. It sounds too loud in the quiet of
the house knowing that Peter, and his wolf hearing, are sitting right downstairs. He drops the lube into the bed beside him and pulls the blankets up over his head. It’s stuffy and hard to breathe but he likes the feeling of being cocooned. He uses it to make himself a little braver, slipping his hand beneath his waistband and wrapping his fingers around his dick. He lets out a shuddery noise, instinctively gripping himself harder.

He strokes himself slowly, like he’s a timid creature he doesn’t want to scare off. Slow is usually for when he wakes up hard and is still in the grip of his dreams, or maybe when he’s already come but he has the house to himself and nothing else to do so he might as well get worked up again. Such a lonely, pathetic thought. He’s not that kid anymore though. This is something between he and Peter, something shared, whether they’re in the same room or not.

He bets Peter would go slow. He bets he would tease him and draw it out. Stiles likes the idea of that, all that attention on him. He’s never been treated like that, like he was worth the time and the effort, like he deserved it. He can’t imagine being the object of someone’s affections, the focus for their desires. But isn’t that exactly how Peter looks at him? Stiles doesn’t understand the intricacies of it, but for the sake of this moment, he decides to go with it.

He reaches for the lube. Peter would use the lube. He’d want to teach Stiles how. Stiles pushes his pants down to midthigh, letting himself get caught up in the momentum. He shoves at the blankets, trying to make himself some space as he spreads his thighs. He flips open the bottle, unsure what to actually do with it, where to put it, how much to use. He decides to just dribble a bit directly onto his cock but he ends up making a mess of his stomach as well. It’s cold and he winces, feeling put off, but as it starts to drip he swipes his fingers through the liquid pooling on his belly and then wraps them around his cock.

It’s otherworldly. Total gamechanger. Why the hell hasn’t he been doing this since puberty hit? Sure, his precome has always been enough to stop him chaffing, has made his hand slide on his cock, and in a pinch he wasn’t adverse to a little bit of spit to get him the rest of the way there, though it was rarely needed. His dick was like an eager puppy, it didn’t need much encouragement.

Right now, he feels like he’s been doing it wrong his whole life. The way his hand slides over himself, the wetness of it lighting up something primal in him. Is this what fucking is like? He grips himself and lifts his hips experimentally, thrusting into his hand. He moans, arching his neck as his entire body tenses at how slick it is, no friction, just pure liquid sensation, like molten pleasure. He’s pretty sure he could come in about 30 seconds like this. If this wasn’t something Peter wanted him to explore, he’d probably let himself.

He slows down, tries to keep his hips still as his hand falls into a rhythm of languid strokes. This is how Peter would touch him, he thinks. He hopes. He puts in a little twist of his wrist, plays a thumb over the head, makes himself shiver and keen. He doesn’t usually have this much patience with himself, would never treat himself with such reverence, but he wants to explore every possibility the lube has to offer. He wants to feel experienced.

The liquid was cool when it first touched his skin, when he smeared it with his hand, but it warms up with every motion Stiles makes and it just gets better and better. His hips lift from the bed again, fucking into the heat, and Stiles can hear the wet noise, the slide and slap, the occasional squelch. He’s pretty sure that’s supposed to embarrass him, but he has a lot of positive reinforcement going on right now so he’s pretty into it. He’s into everything. He never wants to stop.

In the back of his mind, he knows what the real purpose of this is. The slick slide of his cock in his own hand is just a bonus, but it isn’t what Peter intends to use it for. It isn’t what he has used it for.
Stiles pushes those other people, the pretty little things, out of his mind. Peter gave this to him. Now it’s his turn and he doesn’t want to let Peter down.

He slides a finger from his free hand through the excess slick and opens his legs wider, tilting his hips upwards. He’s done this before, he reminds himself, though never with much intent. He’s touched himself here so that part shouldn’t shock him, but he still gasps as his wet finger slides over the tight ring of muscle, his other hand clenching around his cock in response, but he’s too slick to gain any purchase. He moves his finger away, resting his hand on his thigh, begging himself not to lose this mood.

He strokes himself steadily, willing his lust to override everything else. He plays his thumb over the slippery head, his sensitivity heightened by the fluidity of his movements, and he could definitely come just like this. He wants more though and he gathers his resolve. He wants to try, to explore. He wants to grow and learn like Peter knows he can.

He takes a deep breath, but it’s muffled by the blankets so he’s not sure how much good it does. He keeps the hand on his cock steady as he reaches back again, rubbing his finger over his hole. A noise gets caught in his throat as his hips stutter and he can’t tell if he’s trying to get closer or jerk away. He tries again, presses a little harder, tracing the rim. It feels better than it did the few times he tried this with precome or spit. That had felt rough and kind of nice, he saw the potential, but it didn’t rock his world so he didn’t pursue it. He figured he’d let someone else show him how all that worked. He’d never found a volunteer though.

Would Peter show him? He imagines Peter’s hands on him just like his own are. They’d be surer than his own though. They’d be so much more skilled too. Stiles has always been a fumbler. Peter does everything like he’s born to it. The thought makes his moan and he presses his finger down against his hole, failing to get any give. It feels good like this though, finger sliding wet and smooth over all those nerve endings he’s read so much about. He feels them coming alive now, making his squirm, sending hot waves over his body. The sheets are drenched in his sweat. The lube and precome are definitely a problem too. He imagines the combined scents to Peter’s nose when he comes back in. Would that turn him on? It feels dangerous, but in that moment, Stiles still wants it.

He kicks with his feet, trying to move the blankets down, finally managing to get some fresh air as it falls away from his face. He gulps it in, tilting his head back, feeling it fill his lungs. It stops the burning but it feels like it also awakens some part of his brain that makes everything sharper. He’s not sure he can handle this in high definition. He forces himself to breathe, stroking himself with that same comforting rhythm that has his body singing, his finger tracing around and around his hole in a hypnotic way until he starts to feel it give.

It sends a thrill through him, that his body is capable of this, that he could unlock it all by himself. It’s so empowering, to not feel shy about his wants, to actively explore them, one tiny increment at a time. He starts to press his finger inside and then whines, pulling back. He takes more breaths, does more happy touching, and then he tries again. He manages to get it in to the first knuckle and it feels incredible. It lights something up in him, mentally as well as physically, a milestone that he wants to embrace.

He rocks his finger oh so shallowly as he grips his cock harder, does all his favourite things, every one of them feeling like they’ve been turned up to 100. He imagines Peter’s body over his, imagines Peter’s mouth on his neck, and he comes into his hand with a helpless sound, hips jerking upwards. It floods his body, the endorphins that make everything go away, drowning him in wave after wave of pure, mindless exhilaration until his hands still and he had the dumbest grin on his face.
He pants, pulling his sticky hands away from himself and wincing slightly. The come down is never as fun. He closes his eyes, wiping his hands off on the sheets because Peter is going to wash them anyway. There’s no way he can hide this so he might as well embrace it.

His body spent, he rolls onto his side, pressing against the pillows in the middle of the bed, throwing an arm over to hug them to him. Behind his closed lids, he sees his fireflies, feels like their wings are tickling at his skin. His over sensitive body shudders, even at the imagined sensation, and he makes a happy little noise, staying there with his little glowing bugs and the night sky beyond.

He doesn’t know if he passes out or just gets lost in his daydream, but when he rouses himself he feels heavy and his mouth is dry. He opens his eyes, his gaze falling on Peter’s pillow in front of him. His mind catches on the intimacy of doing this in a shared space. He reaches out, touching the place where Peter lays his head. His toy box, his bed, they give him such a deep sense of belonging. It’s not home, but he feels at home right now.

He thinks again of his dad in his empty bedroom but then he rewinds the memory. If Peter is right, if his dad set all this in motion, what would he have done when Scott came to him to say that Stiles had been taken? Would he play along to save face? Would he launch an investigation that deliberately never got to the truth? Or would he just tell Scott the truth, Stiles was gone. It’s not like Stiles was ever going to amount to anything, there’s no great potential that’s been wasted. His dad would get the money he needed to get out of debt and, without having to carry a deadbeat son, maybe he could actually live comfortably.

It makes sense. It makes so much sense that Stiles’ hand curls into a fist. Scott wouldn’t give up though, he’s certain of that. Even if he knew the truth, he’d look for Stiles. Would Stiles have ever found out if Scott came looking for him at the Foundry, Lydia in tow, kicking up a fuss. They wouldn’t have been allowed to see him. The thought hurts so much, being so close to his friends but in another world. His dad wouldn’t risk that though. What he did was legal but for a public figure, selling your own son wasn’t the quickest way to re-election. He would have kept it quiet. He would have let Scott look, knowing he’d never get on the right trail.

Stiles looks at his hand still clenched into a fist and he forces himself to unfurl it. The thought of Lydia and Scott out there looking for him, caring about him, it calms something inside him and he has to make himself focus on that. He has friends. He’s loved. Maybe his father just didn’t quite love him enough. Stiles was basically nothing but a problem he had to constantly solve anyway. He smooths his hand over Peter’s pillow, taking a deep breath. He’s not a problem anymore and if he keeps being good, maybe Peter won’t need to go looking for those pretty little things. He chews on his lip, hating the doubt that creeps in. He wants to be everything for Peter, but he just never knows what he’s thinking.

As he shifts against the pillows, he’s forced to face up to what a mess he’s made of himself. He pushes the blankets back, trying not to get it on his pants as he makes his way to the bathroom. He washes up as best he can, knowing that some of it will have to wait until his bath tonight. The thought of Peter watching him doing that, no matter how subtly he manages to pull it off, makes a little thrum go through him. He doesn’t know if it’s a good or a bad thing. He decides he doesn’t want to know.

He gulps water from the tap before going back through to the bedroom and half-heartedly tidying up the bed. The sheets are just coming straight back off again and Stiles isn’t sure if he’s even allowed to make the bed. He’s not allowed to change the sheets. Is there any contribution he can make to the household? He decides to err on the side of caution, tossing the blankets unevenly back over the sheets. He thinks about putting the lube away, but if he opens the drawer on Peter’s
nightstand, will Peter think he’s been snooping? He doesn’t want to cross any lines. Instead, he places the bottle down on the messy blankets in offering, heading back over to his window seat.

He looks down at the picture he was working on and he can see the negative emotions pressed into the page. He tries not to let them get to him. He clings to that warm happy feeling he had wrapped up in those sheets and his afterglow, not wanting to be faced with the mess of frustration and insecurities that came before. He flicks through the book and finds a new picture, settling down with it. This one he’s going to take his time with, make perfect. He wants to be able to show it to Peter, express his appreciation for the gift. He wants to make him proud.

He’s still working on it when Peter comes up at lunch time. He strolls over to the bed as Stiles sits up, closing his colouring book. Peter picks up the bottle of lube before looking over at Stiles.

“Did you like it?”

Stiles nods, feeling himself blush. “Felt good,” he admits.

Peter smiles at him, slow and satisfied. “Feels very good,” he agrees, walking around the bed. “You’re welcome to use this,” he says as he opens the drawer of his nightstand. “When I give you permission to come.”

Stiles swallows down the flush of arousal those words really shouldn’t give him. It’s not hot that someone has such total control over him. Is it? He blinks, looking at Peter who turns back to face him. “Thank you.”

Peter comes back around, sitting on the edge of the bed, and Stiles can’t help the way his eyes go to the rumpled sheets behind him, evidence of what he’s done. Peter knows that, can smell the subtleties of it, and he’s chosen to sit there anyway.

“Did you try anything new?” Peter asks.

Stiles looks at him, an uneasy feeling in his stomach as his cheeks burn red. “Uh…”

“I’m not asking for details,” Peter assures him. “Just a yes or no will suffice.”

“Yes,” Stiles says.

Peter does that smile again, the one that’s pleased but somehow also smug. “Good boy. I’m proud of you.”

“It wasn’t much,” Stiles amends quickly. The thought of Peter thinking he did more than the experimental little breach of his own body, that maybe he fucked himself on his fingers, makes him panic that Peter thinks this is progressing quicker than it really is. He doesn’t want to inadvertently make promises he can’t keep.

“Don’t do that,” Peter tells him, his voice serious. “I will have nobody diminishing my baby’s achievements and I will certainly not allow you to do it yourself.”

“I just…” Stiles protests, still wanting to set the record straight, ignoring the way Peter’s words make him want to melt.

“No,” Peter says shortly. “Be proud.”

Stiles smiles despite himself. He’s never going to win an argument with this man, but then why is he arguing against kindness? “It felt pretty empowering, to be honest,” he admits.
Peter’s smile looks more genuine this time. There’s a real warmth behind it. “That’s what we want. That’s what my baby deserves.”

Stiles feels a little glow as he watches Peter stand up and start to strip the sheets from the bed. He turns back to his own things, picking up the coloured pencils and placing them careful back into their packet. He pauses when he hears Peter inhale deeply as he leans over to pull the bottom sheet free.

Stiles wrinkles his nose. “That’s disgusting.”

Peter turns to face him, smug amusement clear on his face. “It’s not disgusting. You smell delicious.”

Stiles glances down at himself. “Can you smell it on me too?”

“I don’t know, I haven’t come over there and sniffed you yet,” Peter responds.

There’s something about the yet that gets to Stiles. He busies himself with organising his coloured pencils so that he doesn’t have to reply. He puts everything back in his toy box and then sits on the window seat, waiting for Peter. When he has all the dirty laundry piled up, the bed in total disarray, he turns to Stiles, taking the key out of his pocket. Stiles already has his foot propped up on the seat in offering. Peter leans over to it, breathing in deeply as he unlocks the cuff. Stiles tries to shy back but there’s nowhere for him to go. Peter unhooks the padlock and then looks up at Stiles.

“It smells even more delicious on you.”

Stiles frowns, feeling trapped in the small space. But isn’t this what he wanted, Peter’s attention purely on him. The reality of it is always a little overwhelming though and Stiles still can’t predict it.

Peter unbuckles the cuff, standing up. “Learn to take a compliment, sweetheart,” he says before turning towards to gather up the bedding. “Let’s go.”

Stiles gets to his feet, following after him, just like he always does. He wants to correct himself, wants to explain that he likes Peter’s compliments, even the disgusting ones, but the words get stuck in his head just like every other jumbled thought. It’s getting crowded up there.

When they get to the kitchen, Peter goes through to the utility, loading the laundry into the machine and setting it going. It’s only when he returns that Stiles realises he was alone with a door to the outside and he didn’t even look at it. Running is the furthest thing from his mind. But if he stays, then what? He just wants it laid out for him so he knows if he’s following Peter to somewhere he actually wants to go or if he’s walking blindly into his own personal hell.

He sits down at the island, trying to distract himself with his food. He stares at it like it’s taking up all of his concentration, because he wishes that it would. He eats, and it’s good just like always, and it only makes his affection to Peter grow. He wishes that made it simpler but it just makes the churning insecurities rear up again.

“What’s wrong with you?” Peter asks.


“Stiles,” Peter says, a note of warning in his voice. “What did I say about lying to me?”

Stiles sighs, feeling himself sag. “It’s not a lie,” he says. “I’m just… I don’t know.”
“Tell me what’s wrong,” Peter insists.

Stiles looks at him, considering his options. He doesn’t feel like any good can come of this. Either Peter refuses to answer and Stiles has given away something he doesn’t want to part with, or he ends up setting something in motion that he might not be able to keep up with. But what’s the alternative? He gets in trouble for hiding things now and then and he lets all of his uncertainties grow until they’re too big to deal with and they explode in some way that fucks everything up. Stiles can’t let that happen, which makes this his only option, even as he fights back the urge to fold in on himself.

He faces up to Peter. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Go ahead,” Peter agrees easily.

“But I need you to answer me,” Stiles says. “And I need it to be a real answer, because I’m kind of losing my mind over here. I can’t handle being brushed off.”

Peter considers him for a moment, a thoughtful expression on his face, which isn’t really what Stiles was hoping for from his moment of honesty. He was hoping for mercy. He’s clearly not going to get it.

“I’ll answer your question,” Peter says, “If you agree that I can ask you anything in return and you’ll do me the same courtesy.”

Stiles chews on his lip. He thought Peter was allowed to do that anyway. That means that whatever he’s going to ask is bad. He looks up at him hopelessly. “But I really need to know this.”

“Then make the deal,” Peter tells him.

Stiles can’t help himself, he lets all of his frustration out in a scathing look. Peter raises his eyebrows at him like he’s skating on very thin ice. Stiles bows his head down, picking at his food. Can he afford to not ask his question? No. He needs this. He needs something to cling to, whether it’s the answer he wants or not.

“Fine,” he says begrudgingly, not looking up.

“Anything?” Peter prompts.

“Anything,” Stiles agrees.

Peter grins at him, making a grand gesture. “What’s your question?”

Stiles takes a deep breath that comes out shuddery as his heart beats too fast in his chest. “Okay,” he says, trying to psych himself up. “So, I was just wondering, what’s the endgame here?”

Peter frowns slightly, genuine confusion on his face. “What is that supposed to mean?”

Stiles says, “Okay, so, why did you buy me? You went to buy a Companion because you wanted…?”

“A Companion,” Peter states like he’s an idiot.

“To do what with?” Stiles demands, knowing his tone is bordering on unacceptable.

“Ask what you really want to ask,” Peter says wearily.
Stiles considers him, feeling his unease grow. It’s like walking into a trap. “What do I really want to ask?”

“You want to ask if I’m going to fuck you,” Peter says, perfectly matter of fact. “I’ve already answered that, Stiles. If you don’t want me to, then no.”

“That’s… that’s not exactly what I was going to ask,” Stiles says, the heat rising on his face again, and he hates himself for it, it makes him look weak. It makes him feel weak as well.

“Then ask,” Peter says.

Stiles nods. He wishes he could have that nurturing, coddling side of Peter right now, but he needs the push. “What if I do want to have sex with you?” he asks, not meeting Peter’s eyes.

“Then we have sex,” Peter states. “It’s not rocket science.”

“But, what if I want to have sex with you but not for long time?” Stiles asks. “Or what if I’m not sure but I don’t…” He looks up, meeting Peter’s eyes, and he feels himself break, his eyes filling with tears. Peter seems to understand, his posture changing, leaning in to Stiles like they’re a team. “I don’t want you to have sex with someone else,” he admits. “And I know I have no right to ask that of you and it’s stupidly unreasonable because really, I don’t know if or when I can do that with you, I’m having a lot of feelings right now and they’re very conflicting and I just don’t want you to do that with someone else. Please. I’m sorry.”

“Baby, it’s okay,” Peter assures him. “You are my only focus right now. I’m not looking at anyone else.”

“But you have sex,” Stiles says. “Which, cool, good for you. You shouldn’t have to become celibate because the Companion you bought is undertrained and dysfunctional and, it turns out, maybe kind of a prude.”

Peter smiles, amusement shining in his eyes. “You are perfect for me. I couldn’t have wished for anything better.”

Stiles rolls his eyes. “I don’t believe you. Tell me the truth. That was the deal.”

“You don’t believe that you could be enough for somebody?” Peter asks. “That makes me want to go back through your life and destroy every person who’s ever hurt you.”

“As heartening as that strangely is, it doesn’t answer my question,” Stiles says.

Peter gives him a weary look. “What on earth is your question?”

Stiles sighs. “I don’t know.”

“Sweetheart, you are going to overthink yourself into an aneurysm,” Peter says. “The stress and anxiety coming off you right now is, frankly, overbearing.”

“I’m sorry,” Stiles mumbles, dropping his head down.

“Don’t be sorry,” Peter tells him. “I just wish you didn’t have this crippling low self-esteem. I was literally raised by wolves and I’m more balanced than you are. What was your father doing?”

Stiles grits his teeth at the mention of his dad. “Counting down the days until he could sell me.”

“Apparently so,” Peter agrees.
Stiles squeezes his eyes shut, feeling himself start to shake. There’s still that little voice that tells him it’s not true, but it’s getting smaller and smaller. What are the chances of a random attack? It makes so much more sense that his father did this to him. He’s never been anything more than a burden. Peter reaches out, placing a hand on his shoulder, a heavy weight that calms something in Stiles.

“Look, we made a deal and I’m going to expect you to hold up your end of the bargain, so I’ll try and answer what I think you’re asking me,” Peter says. Stiles lifts his head up, not having the energy to be embarrassed by his wet eyes. “As I said, you are my only focus right now, aside from my work,” Peter tells him. “I’ve made a commitment to you and I take that seriously. The nature of our relationship will always be in your hands, however. We can be companionable, that would fill your role perfectly adequately. You would be money well spent and I do enjoy your company, Stiles. If you were comfortable with more, then I’d like to do more. We can take it as far as you want to go, and it sounds like you want to go there.”

Stiles makes a frustrated noise in his throat. “But…”

“Daddy’s talking now,” Peter says firmly.

Stiles presses his lips together, his skin feeling like it’s being pricked with a million needles, and he tries very hard not to shudder. That should not be fucking hot.

“I don’t want you to feel embarrassed or shameful about wanting that,” Peter tells him. “I also don’t want you to feel like there’s something wrong with you that you want to take a little time to get used to the idea. I can wait. And I can not fuck anybody else while I’m waiting. It wouldn’t be my longest dry spell, I’m sure. Whatever happens between us, it needs to unfold naturally, I’m not going to force my hand on it. I know you were apparently in solitary at the Foundry, but I’m sure you learnt at least a little about what a Companion was expected to do.”

“Whatever their master wanted,” Stiles agrees. “Fulfil their desires and say thank you.”

Peter nods. “I want to fulfil your desires,” he says. “I’d still quite like you to say thank you, though.”

Stiles smiles despite himself. “I’m scared I might change my mind when I’m in too deep,” he admits.

“So long as you communicate with me, we won’t have a problem,” Peter says. “Obviously, if you decide you don’t want our relationship to be sexual, I will be looking outside of our home to meet that need.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “But would you keep it outside our home?”

“You don’t want me bringing people back here?” Peter asks.

Stiles winces. He’s asking too much. “It’s just… that’s our bed.”

“And we’ll keep it that way,” Peter agrees. He squeezes Stiles’ shoulder and Stiles had forgotten his hand was even there he’d gotten so used to it. It feels like an extension of himself. “Okay?” Peter asks. Stiles nods his head, feeling a little lighter. Peter lifts his hand away. “Finish your lunch, then we can tackle my question.”

Stiles turns back to face his food, taking a bite. “You can ask now. I’m okay.”

“It’s going to be a little more involved than that,” Peter tells him. “I want to fill up another page in
my little book of Stiles.”

“Oh,” Stiles says, feeling nervous already.

“Eat up,” Peter says, a little too enthusiastically.

When they’re done and Peter has cleared everything away, Stiles follows him through to the living room with a certain sense of foreboding. He got what he needed from Peter. He has to pay it back now. It’s only fair.

“Sit,” Peter says, gesturing to the couch as he heads through to his study. He returns with the notebook in hand, sitting down and angling himself towards Stiles. He looks up at him in a way that makes Stiles feel like he’s a fly caught in a web. “I would like you to tell me, in explicit detail, about a sexual fantasy of yours.”

Stiles gives him an incredulous look before letting his head fall back against the couch. “Oh, come on.”

“I’m afraid it’s non-negotiable,” Peter tells him. “We made a deal.”

“You don’t have to be such a pervert about it,” Stiles mutters.

“I’m not being a pervert,” Peter tells him. “I’m simply an interested party.”

Stiles lifts his head up, looking at him. “I hate this stuff.”

“You said anything,” Peter reminds him.

“Yeah, I did,” Stiles agrees, voice full of resignation.

“So,” Peter prompts. “I want a real one. A go to when you’re getting yourself off.”

Stiles takes a breath, trying to work out what might be the least humiliating thing to share. It has to be about a girl, he decides. If he talks about things he wants to do to boys, or have boys do to him, Peter’s going to read far too much into it. Talking about a girl gives him a little distance, a place to hide. Peter can’t instantly slot himself into the scenario.

“Okay, so, this is from freshman year,” Stiles says.

“Go on,” Peter encourages, already writing something down.

“I was kind of in love with this girl, I thought I was in love with this girl, I’d known her since third grade,” Stiles explains.

“What’s her name?” Peter asks, not looking up.

Why do you need to know her name?” Stiles asks defensively, feeling an instinct to protect her. Peter looks up at him, raising an eyebrow. “For the sake of the narrative. Humour me.”

Stiles give a little huff. “Lydia. And yeah, she’s in the pack, but this was before all that.”

“Continue,” Peter says, making a note.

“In freshman year, well, past freshman year too…” He stops himself. Get to the point, Stilinski. “She had a boyfriend. And he was an ass. I thought she could do better.”
“With you,” Peter says knowingly.

“I guess,” Stiles says begrudgingly.


“Right, yeah,” Stiles agrees, trying to focus. “I just, I used to think about how he was so oblivious and arrogant that he probably wasn’t… very attentive to her.”

“Stiles, we’re about to get into every minute detail or what you’d like to do to this girl,” Peter says. “Let’s not get shy about the word orgasm.”

Stiles feels his cheeks heat, curling his legs up under him. “Wanted,” he says. “Past tense. This was freshman year.”

“Fine, but you’re still going to be saying some dirty things,” Peter tells him. “It will be over with a lot quicker if you’d like to get to the point.”

“I thought he probably sucked in bed and I could give her a real orgasm and he’d hate me for it and the combination of all that got me off, okay?” Stiles blurts out.

“So he was there?” Peter asks.


“Maybe?” Peter asks, raising an eyebrow. “What’s his name, by the way.”

“Jackson,” Stiles says. “And he wasn’t really a part of the fantasy but I liked the idea of him knowing about it.”

“You said that in porn you liked boy, boy, girl threesomes,” Peter points out.

“Yeah, in porn,” Stiles agrees. “But this wasn’t that. Jackson wasn’t… doing anything.”

“He was watching?” Peter asks.

“No,” Stiles insists. “Jackson is not the point.”

“Fair enough,” Peter says in a tone of voice that suggests he doesn’t believe it. “Tell me what you wanted to do to Lydia in freshman year.”

“I wanted to… kiss her,” Stiles says lamely.

Peter gives him an unimpressed look. “Not even a fourteen-year-old boy gets off on the thought of kissing someone.”

“No,” Stiles agrees.

“I want a specific fantasy,” Peter reminds him. “I want you to play it out for me. Start to finish.”

“Right,” Stiles says. He closes his eyes for a moment, trying to conjure one up. There’s an embarrassing amount of them, all well-worn but unused for a while now. He loves her in a different way than he loved her back then. In fact, he realises now that it wasn’t love at all. He opens his eyes, giving a little nod. “So, I’m in the boy’s locker room,” he says. “I’m alone and Lydia comes in looking for Jackson.”
“He plays lacrosse too?” Peter guesses.

“He was captain before Scott,” Stiles says.

“Is he in the pack?” Peter asks.

“No,” Stiles responds. “He was a Kanima who tried to kill us all, then he turned into a werewolf and moved to London. So never really in the pack.”

“Teenagers are exhaustingly dramatic,” Peter says.

“You bought one,” Stiles responds.

“I bought the best one,” Peter says confidently. Stiles doesn’t want to be charmed by that but he really fucking is. “So, Lydia comes into the locker room…”

“Right,” Stiles says, getting back on track. “I tell her it’s just me. I was working out late. Which is a lie, I was scrawnier then than I am now. But she likes my dedication and she kind of stalks towards me. She tells me that Jackson never puts the extra effort in. Which is also a lie, but whatever.”

“It’s a fantasy, it’s all a lie,” Peter points out.

“I guess,” Stiles agrees begrudgingly. “Does that mean get to the point?”

“It would be nice, darling,” Peter says smoothly.

“I tell her I need to take a shower,” Stiles says. “She’s really close to me now. She asks what else I put extra effort into. She kind of gets up on her tiptoes and whispers it in my ear. And, I don’t really know, we start kissing. I was fourteen and I had my hand around my dick, it doesn’t flow great.”

“That’s okay,” Peter assures him. “Just play it out like you did then, horrible porn dialogue included if you’ve got it.”

Stiles gives him a look but keeps going. “We’re kissing and she’s really into it, she’s pressed up against me and moaning. Then she tells me how wet she is and how Jackson never knows what to do with her. He can’t handle her. Which is probably true, no one could handle Lydia. I pity anyone who tries.”

“We all find someone who can keep up with us eventually,” Peter says.

“Hmm,” Stiles responds. “So, anyway, she’s wet and moaning and I ask her if she wants me to try, or something like that. Something lame probably. But she says yes and I stick my hand up her skirt and into her panties and then, because I was fourteen and had no finesse or clue, I just stick my fingers inside her. And she’s really wet. And she’s hot. And she’s moaning my name while I fuck her with my fingers.”

He’s getting into it now, he can feel his dick stirring at the familiar scenes playing out in his head. He wonders if this was the point of this exercise rather than anything he says. Does Peter just want him turned on and squirmy? Does he want him vulnerable? He already came once today, he should not be reacting like this to something he doesn’t even want anymore.

“Keep going,” Peter encourages.
There’s no questions, no seeking clarification. He knows where Stiles is and he wants to keep him there, right in his head. He wants to get him deeper. Stiles doesn’t get to refuse.

“She’s pressed up against me,” Stiles says. “I can feel her thigh against mine, feel her breasts against my chest. She’s panting and it’s kind of rocking her against me and all of that sensation is coming in waves. Her face is lifted up towards mine and it’s just pure pleasure and she says my name when she comes.”

He shifts on the seat, waiting for Peter to say something, but he’s writing in his notebook. Stiles wonders if it’s anything to do with what he’s actually saying, or observations he’s making based on the way he says it.

“You didn’t get off yet, so clearly that’s not the end,” Peter prompts, still not looking up at him.

“No,” Stiles agrees. “No, I hold up my hand, which is disgusting, but whatever, I watched a lot of porn, and I hold up my wet hand and tell her I really need to take a shower now and she says that she needs to take one too. So we strip and she takes my hand and she leads me through to the showers. She’s beautiful and she’s all curves and she looks even better wet. We kiss again and she grinds up against me and she tells me that she wants my cock. She reaches down and she strokes it and she begs for it. So I lift her up and she wraps her legs around my waist, which I’m pretty sure would have resulted in both of our deaths had I attempted that in real life, even if we weren’t in a shower, but I guess in my fantasy I’m Superman.”

“Not Batman?” Peter asks.

Stiles smiles. “Maybe Batman.” He gives a little shake of his head. “So we fuck like that in the shower and I give her another incredible orgasm, or maybe two, because I’d learnt about multiple orgasms and obviously I thought that would be easy. I probably still couldn’t do it. But that’s when I’d usually come, during the shower scene, so it’s kind of indistinct after a certain point. But I’d carry it on afterward, while I was laid in bed coming down. I’d imagine us kissing and washing each other and grabbing a couple of towels to wrap around ourselves as we came out of the showers. And Jackson would be there and he’d ask what we were doing in his typical Neanderthal way and Lydia would tell him how good I was and how hard I made her come and how many times and how Jackson was never getting near her again because he wasn’t qualified. Then, I guess, in fantasyland, she was my girlfriend and I gave her amazing multiple orgasms forever. The end.”

Peter looks up from his notebook and smiles proudly at him. “I barely had to prompt you at all once you got going there,” he says. “I didn’t have to stop you for clarification or make you get more specific. You knew what I wanted and you gave it to me. That’s what a good boy does.”

Stiles feels himself glowing with the praise. He was just trying to get it over with, but he’ll take it.

“A couple of notes,” Peter says. “You said fuck. You’re not allowed to use that word. I’m letting it go because it fit with the narrative you were submerged in, but I’d like you to be more careful with your words.”

“I’m sorry,” Stiles says. “I didn’t even realise.”

“I know, I could tell, that’s why I’m not upset,” Peter tells him. “But I do expect better. Keep that in check next time.”

Stiles nods. “Okay.”
“Second note, you ramble a lot when you’re nervous,” Peter says. “I don’t mind it in conversation, it’s quite endearing, but in storytelling it can take away from the focus. Try to be aware of that. You made it through this time, but if your message gets lost, you’ll just have to start all over again.”

“I’ll try,” Stiles agrees, though he’s not sure how he’ll ever rein that in.

“Other than that, I am very impressed,” Peter tells him. “I really thought that was going to be more difficult for you. You’re getting used to sharing already. I think that’s something we can expand on.”

“You’re going to make me do that again?” Stiles asks, trying not to make it sound like whine.

“You’re so good at it,” Peter says, that indulgent tone in his voice that makes Stiles desperate to do his bidding.

“You heard how lame it was,” Stiles says. “My sexual fantasies are garbage.”

“That’s why we should amend them, detail by detail,” Peter says, closing up his notebook. Stiles stares at him, terrified and intrigued by what that would entail. “That’s for another day though. You’ve worked hard enough for Daddy.” He places his notebook aside, focussing on Stiles. “How do you feel?”

“Right now?” Stiles asks. It’s not what he was expecting to come next. “I don’t know.”

“I don’t know has never been an acceptable answer with me, has it, Stiles?” Peter points out. “I really wish you would consider engaging your brain before you answered me. I don’t mind waiting while you take a breath and analyse it. I would appreciate it.”

“Okay,” Stiles says.

“Dig deep,” Peter tells him. “All those accumulated emotions from today, high and low, how do they balance out?”

Stiles does as he’s told, taking a breath and thinking it through. The jealousy, the petulance, the homesickness, the affection, the pleasure, the high, the floaty afterglow, the uncertainty, the anxiety, the frustration, the reassurance, the calm, the embarrassment, the humiliation, the arousal, the acceptance. It’s a rollercoaster just in his head and he wants to hug one of the cushions and bury himself in it. He wants to make a blanket fort.

“Delicate,” he tells Peter. “And kind of… off balance? Like when you feel dizzy from going on the carousel too many times, but with emotions.”

Peter nods thoughtfully. “You liked the carousel?”

“I love the carousel,” Stiles says emphatically.

Peter smiles at him affectionately. “Do you want to play chess?”

Stiles glances at the board. “I don’t think I could handle it right now.”

Peter nods. “Do you want to watch TV?”

Stiles looks at it. He’s never even seen it on. He kind of wonders why Peter even owns it. TV is easy though. He can zone out. It won’t challenge him. It won’t ask anything of him. He can’t fail at
“Yeah,” he says. “TV sounds good. Thanks.”

Peter opens a small drawer in the coffee table and takes out the remote. It’s so pretentious but so Peter. Stiles kind of loves it. He watches Peter pick out a show, some nature documentary, the scenery soothing something inside Stiles.

“Do you want a hug?” Peter asks.

Stiles turns to look at him. “A hug?”

“I’m sure you know what a hug is,” Peter says despairingly. “Do we remember what I said about engaging our brain before we answer questions.”

“I just didn’t expect you to ask that,” Stiles says. “You took me by surprise.”

“You said you felt delicate,” Peter states. “I thought you might like a hug.”

“I do,” Stiles agrees, not quite realising it until it’s on the table.

“Come here then,” Peter prompts, holding out his arm. That makes it too real for Stiles and he feels the fear roll through his belly, making him shy away. “Why does that scare you?” Peter asks. “You said you wanted it.”

“I don’t know,” Stiles says, shrinking in on himself.

“Do you think if you let me touch you, I’m going to fuck you?” Peter asks.

Stiles’ lips quirk into a smile. “So you’re allowed to say that word?”

“I can say whatever fucking words I want,” Peter tells him with a smirk.

“Good to know,” Stiles responds.

“Do you want a hug or not?” Peter asks him.

“Yeah,” Stiles sighs, shifting over to him.

He fits himself to Peter’s side, Peter bringing his arm down around him. It’s like a perfect fit. Peter’s fingers stroke up and down his arm and Stiles makes a happy sound, melting into him. He rests his head on Peter’s chest, wishing he was sat at the other side so he could hear his heartbeat. This is good though, this closeness, this contact. It feels nice. It’s the most intimate he’s ever been with anyone, he realises. Just having a cuddle. Just being held. That’s kind of pathetic. He can tick the milestone off now though. He tries not to let his mind rush ahead to what comes next.
Stiles is aware of the fact that he’s wrapped around the pillows in the middle of the bed, but he can’t seem to care. He keeps his eyes closed and snuggles in closer as Peter turns off the alarm.

“You comfy there?” Peter asks, the amusement clear in his voice.

“Uh huh,” Stiles confirms.

“We can move those if you want,” Peter says.

Stiles opens his eyes, pouting at him. There’s hardly any space between them. “I’m comfy,” he states.

“My cuddles aren’t comfy?” Peter asks.

Stiles’ pout melts away as he thinks about the way Peter had held him for nearly an hour yesterday, Stiles tucked protectively under his arm. “They’re comfy too,” he agrees, unable to stop the edges of his mouth from curling up. He pushes them back down with a serious expression. He wants to be heard. “But not in bed.” He’s not ready to push that boundary quite yet.

“Fair enough,” Peter says easily. “If my services aren’t required, I’m just going to jump in the shower then.”

“Have fun,” Stiles tells him absently, closing his eyes as Peter pushes the blankets back.

“I always do,” Peter responds in that familiar almost-leer.

Stiles freezes. He thought about the possibility of Peter wanting to have sex with other people, of him having those urges, but he never really thought about what his current outlet might be. He kind of just assumed that jerking off was the reserve of hormonal teenagers, not worldly older men who are so perfectly in control of everything it feels like they make the sun rise and set. It might be the most naïve thought he’s ever had.

He opens his eyes and looks towards the bathroom where Peter has left the usual sliver of an open door. Stiles still isn’t sure if it’s an invitation or a tease or just Peter not giving a fuck. Probably a combination of all three. Stiles can’t see anything from this angle but he hears the water start up, imagines the waterfall shower cascading over Peter’s skin. Does he jerk off in there? Has he been doing it every day? Has he been thinking about Stiles?

Stiles shakes his head, closing his eyes as he snuggles back into the pillows. It’s none of his business. He remembers the conversation they had about masturbation though, how Peter had sung the praises of jerking off in the shower. It was practical, and Peter was all about practicality. It felt good too. Stiles loved the heat and the steam like another touch while his hand slid wetly over himself. It gave him that dizzy high just to think about it, forehead pressed to the cold tiles as his body convulsed and his come went down the drain.

He thinks about Peter being that vulnerable, that out of control. He looks towards the sliver of an opening and strains his ears but all he hears is water. What kind of noises would Peter make? Probably low and reverberating, growls rather than the whines and whimpers that Stiles makes.
He’d be fierce in his orgasm. Wild, maybe. Stiles wonders why that thought doesn’t scare him.

He shifts against the pillows, ignoring the heat in his body as he closes his eyes again, willing himself to doze off. This is not something he needs in his head right now. He’s barely accepted the fact that sex with Peter is something he actually wants, something that he’s maybe invited now. Sexual fantasies about Peter are not something he wants to get carried away with. Fantasies do not equal reality and he wants to approach this properly. Safely. He wants to be smart. He wonders if he really gets a say in that now that it’s out there though.

Does this mean they’re boyfriends? Are they dating? Are they partners? Does this really change anything or is he still just a Companion to his master with the roles redefined? Stiles finds Peter so hard to gauge that it’s impossible to come up with a meaningful answer. Maybe that’s why he likes the idea of him coming apart in the shower while he touches himself. He wants that relatability factor. He wants to know that something can get under his skin. If he’s honest with himself, he wants that something to be him.

The water shuts off and Stiles peeps as he hears Peter come back into the room. There’s a towel wrapped low on his hips, his flesh slightly flushed, hair still damp. Stiles watches his back muscles shifting as he opens and closes drawers, takes things out of the closet. He looks like he’d be strong even without the werewolf advantage. Stiles wonders if he works out. What would his routine be like if Stiles wasn’t here? It’s weird to think Peter has given things up to accommodate him. The thought had never occurred to him before.

He doesn’t look away this time as Peter pulls the towel off, tossing it towards the bathroom. He lets his eyes scan down his sculpted back to his pert ass and his strong thighs. Maybe he didn’t choose this, but he thinks he probably would have done if it was offered to him on a plate. He wonders if that’s how Peter felt when he looked through the window into Stiles’ room at the Foundry. On a plate. And Peter snapped him up.

Peter pulls on his underwear, the familiar snug boxer briefs, followed by his jeans. He turns around, looking right at Stiles, a smirk on his face. Stiles feels his face heat, knowing it’s too late to look away.

“Today is a no orgasm day for you,” Peter tells him.

“I know,” Stiles agrees.

Peter nods. “Just making that clear before you get yourself too excited over there.”

Stiles pouts. “I’m not excited.”

“Nothing wrong with storing ideas up for tomorrow though,” Peter goes on, grabbing his T-shirt. “I’m going to let you come then.”

The words send a wave of arousal through Stiles that make him want to squirm, but instead he deepens his frown.

“If you keep sticking your bottom lip out at me, I’m going to bite it,” Peter tells him.

Stiles stares at him, some tiny part of him wanting to call Peter’s bluff, make him come over here. He imagines Peter’s teeth tugging at his lip, that devilish look in his eyes. He imagines him taking the opportunity to lick into his mouth. Does he mean wolf teeth though? Does he mean drawing blood? Stiles tugs his lip between his own teeth to protect it.

“That’s a good boy,” Peter praises. “Get out of bed. I’m going to get breakfast ready.”
Stiles waits until Peter leaves the room and then pushes the blankets back, groaning at the loss of warmth. He forces himself out of bed, wondering if Peter is ever the kind of guy to luxuriate in a lie in. Probably not. As he steps into the bathroom he can see that there’s still water droplets on the inside of the shower screen.

He reaches in to touch them, tracing patterns between them as his mind conjures images of Peter, water running down his sculpted back, head tipped back as he runs his fingers through his hair. Stiles knows what that feels like against his own scalp, fingers digging in and massaging. He wonders if Peter touches himself in the same way.

The image in his head switches to Peter hunched over, once hand braced on the tile, the other wrapped around his cock. Would he touch Stiles in the same way he touches himself? The thought makes Stiles blush, his dick stirring. He pulls his hand away, looking up at the showerhead. He’s so jealous Peter gets to use it and he doesn’t. If he suggested they shower together, would Peter let him in there then? He takes a step back. His dick likes that idea, but his brain doesn’t. His brain is the part he needs to listen to right now. Peter has an unerring ability to shut it down however.

Stiles shakes his head, getting washed up for breakfast. He goes to sit on the bed to wait for Peter, looking idly over at his toy box. He can’t have an orgasm today, but he can read a comic. That’s almost as good. The fact that all his pleasures in life come under strict parameters from Peter is a glancing thought that he bats away. He has nice things. He enjoys them. It beats being locked in a basement and constantly worrying about his fate. He knows what comes after now and it’s not like any of his worst nightmares. He wonders if that’s really something to be grateful about. Does pleasant make up for losing all his dreams and ambitions?

He drops the thought as Peter comes into the room, pulling his foot up onto the bed.

“You’re so patient,” Peter says, smiling at him fondly from the doorway.

“I’m not,” Stiles tells him. “Like, ever.”

“You’re patient for me,” Peter states confidently. “I think having a routine settles you.”

Stiles shrugs. He’s not sure patient is the right word. Obedient would be a better fit. Either way, his father wouldn’t believe either of them from him. He never put in the effort that Peter does though.

“Such a good boy,” Peter says softly, almost to himself.

Stiles fidgets on the bed. He feels like Peter’s praise makes him weak but it also makes him glow. It lowers his defences. Stiles feels like maybe they’re useless here anyway.

Peter crosses the room, leaning down to unlock Stiles’ cuff. “I made omelettes.”


Peter smiles slow and predatory at him, still leaned in close. “You’re such a quick learner,” he says. “I really appreciate that.” He straightens himself up, dropping the cuff down on the bed beside Stiles. “We really need to think about your intellectual wellbeing.”

“What do you mean?” Stiles asks.

“I don’t want those wheels spinning on nothing,” Peter says. “You’re smart. I like that. And you told me you enjoyed research. Projects. I think we need to get you one.”

Stiles frowns. “Like homework?”
Peter shakes his head. “A passion project,” he states. “Like the ones you used to lose yourself in. I want you to feel fulfilled here. Mind, body and soul. I’m going to work all three until you’re the most contented little boy there ever was.”

Stiles stares up at him, wide-eyed. There’s always some element to everything Peter says that seems laced in darkness or menace. The fact that Peter wants to make him happy should make him grateful, but he’s wary of taking anything at face value. Peter is acting as the architect of his own fantasy and nothing more. He wants Stiles to be happy, but it comes down to those parameters again. He wants him to be happy with whatever Peter moulds him into.

“Think about it,” Peter tells him as he leads the way out of the room, Stiles getting to his feet and following after him.

Stiles eats his omelette, perched on his stool at the breakfast bar, his eyes gazing over at Peter’s hands as he cuts up his food. His mind keeps trailing back to yesterday, sitting in these same seats, giving away more to Peter than he ever intended to. That’s not fair though, it wasn’t dragged from him, Peter didn’t manipulate the confession, Stiles volunteered it. He can’t be in this halfway.

“What are you thinking?” Peter asks him.

Stiles looks up at him, startled. It always feels like Peter can read his mind, but more likely Stiles’ scent just went sour. He shrugs, looking back down at his food. “Nothing.”

“Well I don’t believe that,” Peter says in his carefully measured tone.

“I was just thinking about yesterday,” Stiles says honestly.

“Ah,” Peter responds, as though that explains everything. “Don’t worry about that. Things will slot into place on their own. What is meant to be, will be.”

Stiles looks over at him. “Do you really believe that?”

Peter meets his eyes, smiling at him. “You’re here, aren’t you?”

“So my whole life was leading towards this moment?” Stiles asks.

“I don’t know,” Peter responds thoughtfully. “Where do you think it was heading?”

Stiles feels himself sag. He has no idea. He never really cared about where he went or what he did. He just wanted to keep everyone together. It was the people in Stiles’ life that had always mattered the most. No more Scott though. No more Lydia. It physically hurts, a tightness in his chest. Peter is his people now. Peter is everything.

Stiles stares at Peter’s hands again and he wants to take hold of one of them. He wants to cling to his arm and lean into his body. He wants to bury himself in his chest, strong arms wrapped around him. He needs Peter to look after him because he doesn’t think he can get through it on his own. It’s not the time for that though. He has to eat his breakfast. Peter has work to do and Stiles has a responsibility not to hold him up.

If Peter notices that he never answers his question, he doesn’t mention it. He clears away the breakfast dishes, watching Stiles finish his orange juice before taking the glass away. He leads Stiles upstairs, locks him back into his cuff on the bed. He looks down at him fondly and Stiles thinks he’s going to touch him, trail his hand down his cheek or run his fingers through his hair. He doesn’t though. Stiles wants to curl into a ball at how lonely he feels.
When Peter leaves the room, Stiles climbs off the bed and goes over to his toy box. He reaches for the comics but his eyes land on the journal Peter bought him. He hasn’t used it yet. He hasn’t even thought about it. Peter had suggested it was something he could use to get his thoughts out of his head. Stiles needs so desperately to be rid of them right now. Peter is always one step ahead of him.

He grabs the journal and a pen, curling up in the window seat as he opens the cover. A blank page stares back at him. Stiles hates blank pages. Sometimes starting is the hardest thing. At least there’s no flashing cursor mocking him right now. Paper seems like more of a commitment though. He can’t backspace ink.

He taps his pen against the page, wondering what the hell he’s even supposed to write. He doesn’t want his usual anxiety ridden stream of consciousness. He wants it to make sense. He needs it all to just make sense.

He takes a breath, resting his head against the window as he stares out at the trees. What thoughts does he need to quiet? He’d be quite happy if all of them shut up. He likes it when he looks into Peter’s eyes and some instinctive part of him lets it all go. It’s such a peaceful feeling. When Peter held his hand across the dinner table after drawing the truth from him. When Peter washed him in the bath, caring and attentive, making him feel like he’s the most precious thing in the world. When Peter tucked him under his arm as they watched TV and he’d never felt safer.

That’s the state he wants to be in all the time and he knows he’s the one holding himself back. It’s not as simple as just stepping into this new role though. It means letting go of everything that came before. It means surrendering to the fact that, if he accepts what Peter is offering, it’s all he’ll ever get. A cuff. A chain. Everything his heart desires if he learns to ask nicely enough. What feels a lot like unconditional love.

Is it worth the trade off? Stiles has already been snatched out of his old life though, that’s not Peter’s fault. He didn’t steal him away. He gave him a second chance. Stiles wants to take it.

He looks down at the paper. He wants to leave a trail. A starting point. An obituary.

My name is Mieczysław Stilinski. Stiles. My father is Sheriff Noah Stilinski with the Beacon County Sheriff’s Department. My address is 129 Woodbine Lane, Beacon Hills, CA 95351. I attend Beacon Hills High School. I’m number 24 on the Lacrosse team. My best friends are Scott McCall and Lydia Martin.

Stiles stares at the words. It’s all the truths he can come up with. Not much when it’s all laid out like that. Not a tragedy to let it go. The part that really hurts is his friends. He doesn’t want to give up on them. He doesn’t want them to give up on him. They’re ghosts now though, he knows he needs to accept that. He has a nice house. He has someone to take care of him. He’ll be okay without them. They’ll definitely be okay without him.

He bites down on his lip as he reads their names over and over. Tears fill his eyes and it feels like a betrayal to Peter when one slides down his cheek. He wipes it away, forcing himself to turn the page. That was who he was. He needs to move on to who he is.

At the top of the page he scrawls the words With Peter. That’s his truth now. He doesn’t know who that makes him, doesn’t have the details worked out, but just seeing the words there calms something in him. It’s an identity. It’s something to build on. He can work it out from here. He closes the journal, feeling a calmness settle in his stomach. Starting a fresh page puts everything into perspective. It frees him up to find out what comes next.

He gets up, placing the journal back into his toy box and finally reaching for his comic. He smiles
to himself, giddiness bubbling up. He feels like he deserves this. He feels like he’s earned it. He stretches his legs out along the window seat, resting back against the cushions as he starts to read. It quickly consumes him, drawn into the adventure, turning each page eagerly.

It makes him nostalgic, watching Dick Grayson going over his past. He’s lucky he was adopted by Batman. The parallels aren’t lost on Stiles. He doesn’t think Peter could possibly have known that though. He thinks of how awkwardly out of place he must have looked in a comic book store picking these up for Stiles and it makes him smile. It was so thoughtful of him to go out of his way like that, and to not just pick the first obvious thing he saw. He went to a lot of trouble to get these. It makes Stiles feel incredibly special.

When he reaches the final panel, dragged deep into the story, his instinct is to grab the next comic that’s sitting right in his toy box. He’s worked out a schedule though, a way to make them last until he maybe gets some more, and he has to stick to it. To sate his craving, he turns the comic over and starts again from the beginning, letting it all sink in, appreciating the subtleties. Too often he lets them pass him by.

Eventually he’s gotten all that he can from the issue and he goes over to his toy box, putting it carefully away. He takes out his colouring book and his pencils, lying on the window seat and finding the picture he started working on yesterday. He hasn’t messed this one up yet. It still feels like it’s worth finishing. He smiles to himself as he starts to shade in with his purple coloured pencil. He’s used all three things from his toy box today, all the things that Peter has given to him. It gives him a sense of purpose. It makes him feel at home.

He’s still colouring when Peter comes to get him at lunchtime. Stiles smiles at him warmly, letting himself embrace it. His new truth.

“You look happy,” Peter comments.

“Yeah, I think I am,” Stiles agrees.

“I’m glad to hear it,” Peter responds. “You have such a beautiful smile.”

Stiles smiles wider at that, ducking his head. Peter sits down on the edge of the bed and Stiles looks over at him, considering the space between them.

“What?” Peter prompts.

Stiles shrugs. “You’re kind of far away.”

“There’s no space for me over there,” Peter points out.

Stiles looks at the colouring book and pencils taking up all the seat that his prone body isn’t. “Oh, sorry,” he says, sitting up and collecting his pencils. He’s supposed to tidy up when Peter comes to collect him. Peter isn’t sat there because he wants to make small talk, he’s waiting for Stiles to get his shit together. Stiles is seriously lucky that he’s so patient.

He gathers everything together and puts it away in his toy box, closing it up. He turns towards Peter, looking at him expectantly from his place on the floor. Peter pats the bed beside him and Stiles goes to him.

Peter moves to angle his body more fully towards Stiles. “What is it you wanted me close for, darling?” he asks smoothly.

“Uh,” Stiles says dumbly, feeling his cheeks heat. “I like being near you.”
Peter smiles at him. “I like being near you too,” he says. “How near would you like me to be?”

Stiles looks down at the gap between their thighs. He looks down at Peter’s hands. His brain wars with his body over what he wants, what he can handle, what the smart thing to do might be. “This is good,” he finally says.

“Well, you keep me updated,” Peter says, sliding the key from his pocket.

Stiles nods. Don’t fight it. Just don’t go so quick that you’ll do something you regret because there’s no backing out of it. It’s that balance that scares Stiles the most. He feels like Peter knows exactly how to navigate this. Stiles just needs to trust him. His brain will be quiet when he knows he has that. Peter can make the decisions for him.

Meal times always make Stiles feel the most cared for. Meal times and bath time. Peter has made something just for him, has put that time and effort in to make sure he eats well. Stiles doesn’t know how to interpret that as anything but love. It comes in many forms, he’s learnt that over the years, and rarely in ways he expected.

“Are you enjoying your colouring book?” Peter asks him.

Stiles blinks, pulled out of his own thoughts. “Yeah. You were right. It’s peaceful and productive, which are two things I’m usually not.”

Peter nods. “I think stability will suit you. You’ve had a lot of upheaval in your life.”

Stiles looks down at his food, wondering what Peter means by that. The biggest upheaval he’s ever faced was getting kidnapped. Or his mom dying, but at least then he still got to keep his own life. He knows that’s not true though. He lost more than a parent that day. He resisted his new life then just like he did now. You really can only fight for so long though before you’re just beating yourself up.

“I read a comic today, too,” he tells Peter, wanting to focus on what he has. It’s more than he deserves. “I’m pacing myself. I’m really enjoying them though.”

“That’s smart,” Peter says. “Do you want me to get you some more when I go to town next?”

Stiles looks up at him. He’d been so shy about asking. “Do you mind?”

“I wouldn’t have asked if I minded,” Peter says. “I want my baby to be happy.”

Stiles ducks his head down, the words giving him that familiar warm glow that bubbles under his skin. “I want you to be happy too,” he says earnestly.

“You make me ecstatic,” Peter assures him, reaching out to place a hand on his forearm. Stiles gives a little laugh, amused. “That’s funny to you?” Peter asks, but his voice is light.

Stiles lifts his eyes up to meet Peter’s, seeing them shining. “Ecstatic isn’t something I associate with you,” he admits. “That’s so uncool. You’re the epitome of cool.”

“Am I?” Peter asks, looking amused. He squeezes Stiles’ arm before pulling his hand away. “Well, I might not be jumping up and down, but trust me, I am ecstatic with you. You are perfection, dear boy.”

Stiles rolls his eyes because he has no idea what to do with praise like that. His brain can’t quite process it.
“I’m going to keep saying it until you believe it,” Peter tells him. “I’m going to keep showing you.”

Stiles smiles to himself. Just those words make it real to him. He doesn’t say anything though. He wants Peter to prove himself over and over until Stiles’ brain wouldn’t dare argue.

Peter leads him through to the living room after lunch, turning to face him. “What do you feel like doing?”

Stiles’ eyes betray him, flicking over to the television. He tries to play it cool, like he hasn’t been craving the press of bodies all day. “We could watch TV,” he suggests casually.

“You are not watching TV every day,” Peter tells him. “Absolutely not.”

Stiles stares at him, deer in the headlights. “No?”

“That’s a treat,” Peter says. “You were a good boy. You went to that vulnerable place for me. You needed it.”

“What, so I’m only allowed a cuddle if I let you take me apart first?” Stiles asks, trying to temper the frustration in his voice.

Peter considers him for a moment, the beginnings of a smirk lighting up his face. “You didn’t ask for a cuddle,” he says. “You asked to watch TV.”

Stiles shrugs, shifting on his feet, shoulders hunched up.

“A cuddle you can have,” Peter assures him, dropping down onto the couch and looking at Stiles expectantly. “Any time you want.”

Stiles looks at him and he can feel the pout on his face. “It’s weird to just sit there and cuddle in silence.”

“No TV,” Peter tells him firmly in a warning tone of voice, just in case this is some elaborate ruse to be able to watch another boring nature documentary.

Stiles sighs, looking over at the chess set. Maybe they could just play. He likes playing chess with Peter. They missed yesterday and Stiles wants to get better. He wants to be someone Peter can actually enjoy playing with.

“I mean, if you wanted to help me fill in another page in my little book of Stiles, maybe I can make an exception,” Peter says in a tone that suggests he’s making up his mind, but Stiles knows he never speaks without knowing exactly what comes next.

Stiles sighs, sitting down on the couch beside him. “I hate that book. Why do you have to write everything down?”

“It’s important,” Peter insists. “It tells me how to take care of you.”

Stiles gives him a look. “I’m not an exotic animal. I don’t need a care manual. I’m just a human.”

“In my house growing up, humans were very exotic,” Peter says with a smirk.

Stiles smiles. “So you’re from some big, powerful werewolf family?”

Peter’s expression stalls in that way that Stiles knows means he’s hiding something. “They’d probably put it that way. I’m much more modest,” Peter tells him, trying for self-deprecation, but it
“I know there’s consequences that come with that,” Stiles says solemnly. “Hunters. People who want genocide.”

“Genocide?” Peter asks, raising an eyebrow. “That’s a bit dramatic, don’t you think?”

“I’ve seen it,” Stiles tells him. “Indiscriminate people who think they know best. Or who are willing to do it for the money. That I can kind of understand though. But the ones who treat werewolves like they’re less than, who don’t consider that they have families and most of them aren’t really that bad.”

Peter stares at him, something on his face that’s unreadable. Stiles is probably bringing up bad memories. He’s such an idiot. Peter lifts his chin, giving a stiff shake of his head.

“I never had much trouble with hunters,” he says.

“That’s good,” Stiles says carefully. He doesn’t believe him though.

Peter sits up straighter, his eyes brightening as he looks at Stiles. “Do you like to dance?”

Stiles frowns at him. “Dance?” he asks, feeling utterly thrown.

“I don’t know what you expect my response to be,” Peter says wearily. “I’m kind of tired of repeating my questions while you stare at me. Engage brain, then talk to Daddy like a big boy.”

That just short circuits Stiles’ brain even more. Peter has to know that, doesn’t he? Stiles has never responded to the Daddy thing though so maybe he doesn’t. He shakes his head as though to loosen his thoughts. “Uh, yeah, I like to dance. I’m bad at it though. Really bad. I flail around. I’ll probably give you a black eye.”

Peter smiles at him. “I don’t bruise easy,” he assures him.

“Right, no, I guess not,” Stiles agrees. “We’re probably safe then.”

Peter gets to his feet, going over to the cabinet that holds his record player. Stiles watches as he sorts through his vinyl, selecting something and placing it on the turntable. It’s much more upbeat than the classical music he played before but it still doesn’t sound like it’s from this decade. Stiles kind of likes it though. It’s fun and he likes that it has no association yet. Music is such a powerful thing, evoking memories from deep down inside. Stiles needs new memories now.

Peter walks over to him, offering down a hand, eyebrow raised in silent question. Stiles smiles at him, feeling like he’s being courted. He takes Peter’s hand, allowing himself to be pulled to his feet, Peter leading him around the table to stand in the centre of the room.

“I’m really not good at this,” Stiles tells him.

“Just follow my lead,” Peter assures him, pulling Stiles’ hand up onto his shoulder. “Move your body with me.”

Stiles nods, looking down as Peter steps closer, placing his hand on Stiles’ waist. He takes hold of Stiles’ other hand, giving a tug to start them moving side to side. It’s a simple enough move, Stiles can’t mess it up too much, watching his feet to make sure he doesn’t stand on Peter. He’s barefoot, he can’t do too much damage, but he’d really rather not make an idiot of himself.
“Don’t look at your feet,” Peter tells him. “Look at me.”

Stiles looks up, feeling himself falter now that he can’t tell where Peter’s feet are, struggling to find his footing.

“Trust me,” Peter says, gripping his waist a little tighter, putting more strength into moving him. “Let me guide you.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, letting himself relax as he looks into Peter’s eyes. They’re so blue. Striking. He could get lost in them.

Peter feels the give in his body and starts to move him a little quicker. Stiles likes the security of it, knowing that Peter has him, that he’s in control. All Stiles has to do is let himself be led. It’s easy when Peter is looking at him with such easy confidence. Stiles thinks he could manoeuvre him into anything right now and he’d go with it. He kind of wants him to try. He wants to be swept off his feet.

Peter lets go of his waist, reaching up to take Stiles’ hand from his shoulder. He tugs Stiles by the hands, stepping his own body to the side so that they basically hip check each other. He then pushes back, swinging Stiles to the other side of him and bumping their hips together again.

“Oh,” Stiles says, getting into the rhythm of the motion. He laughs, trying not to think about it too hard, letting Peter throw him from side to side. It’s fun. And he’s not fucking it up at all. Peter’s hands are firm on his, his strength and sureness manipulating Stiles so easily around him.

The next time Peter pulls him in he holds him there, hip to hip, spinning them around before releasing him and pulling him back into his other side. They bump and spin, bodies pressed momentarily together as the room whirs briefly around them, Stiles not taking his eyes off Peter. It makes Stiles feel hot every time they’re in contact, the heat of their bodies like burning together. Peter holds his gaze, smiling, looking at Stiles in that way that makes him feel like he’s the most precious thing in the world. Stiles lets himself eat it up. This is who he is now. Special. Peter’s.

As Peter pushes him back he lets go of one of Stiles’ hands, lifting up their joined hands and spinning Stiles underneath their arms before pulling him in tight again. It’s such a fluid motion Stiles barely feels like he moves, his feet not stumbling like they would if he tried to think about it.

“You are so smooth,” he says, as Peter swings him around to his other hip.

“We’re just getting warmed up,” Peter tells him, spinning him around the other way and tugging him back in close. It gives Stiles such a rush, unable to hold back his grin.

Peter swings him and spins him, Stiles feeling like he’s in Peter’s orbit, caught in his gravitational pull. Peter lifts both of their arms up, spinning Stiles again but without letting go of him, pulling him so that his back is pressed against Peter’s front, his own arms crossed over his waist. Stiles feels the heat radiating through him, trying to look over his shoulder at Peter, but he’s already been spun back away from him, held at arm’s length.

He’s still trying to get his head around it when Peter tugs him again, mixing it up now, confident that Stiles can keep up. He does, somehow, following Peter’s every move, letting himself be swung around Peter’s body at will. He keeps his eyes locked on Peter’s, that safe place, warmth spreading through him as Peter takes total control of his body, bending it to his will, and okay, it’s really fucking hot. Ridiculously hot.

Stiles wonders if this is what sex with Peter would be like, Stiles going pliant in hands that know
exactly what to do. Then he tries very hard not to think about that because their bodies are so close, pressing together in different ways, and Stiles really doesn’t want to humiliate himself with a hard on. From the look in Peter’s eye though, he’s not sure he’d mind.

Stiles gets a little breathless every time he’s pulled snug against Peter, his ass pressing to Peter’s warm body. It’s such a secure feeling, wrapped up in him like that, but it never lasts long enough to savour, spun back out again, following the trajectory Peter effortlessly sends him on.

After a while, it’s not a romantic catch of his breath, he’s just panting from exertion. He’s sweating and his legs feel wobbly but they still move him wherever Peter wants. He doesn’t know how many songs they dance to, everything except for Peter fades away. When Peter pulls him up against his body the next time he simply holds him there, Stiles’ chest heaving as he rests his weight back against him. Peter smiles at him gently, rocking them from side to side. Stiles melts, resting his head back on Peter’s shoulder.

“How about we slow things down?” Peter suggests.

Stiles nods. “Before I have a heart attack would be good.” He looks at Peter. “You’re not even a little bit out of breath, are you?”

Peter smirks. “You’ll learn to keep up.”

He spins Stiles back away from him, giving a little bow before letting go of his hands. Stiles watches him lifting the needle from the record.

“Shall I sit down?” he asks a little too hopefully.

“Stay there,” Peter tells him shortly, so Stiles does.

Peter selects a new record, placing it on the turntable. It’s slow, not dreamy like the classical music they listened to the night Peter gave Stiles the Reiki massage, which now that he thinks about it, Stiles really wants to do again. This music has a beat to it though, a rhythm that’s designed to move your body to, sensual and soaring.

Peter turns to face him, holding out his arms, and Stiles meets him halfway, placing his hands on Peter’s shoulders as Peter’s arms go around his waist. They sway together, Stiles able to look into those blue eyes so much more clearly now. Peter gazes back at him and then lifts up a hand, pushing Stiles’ sweaty hair back from his forehead.

Stiles makes a disgruntled noise, looking down, embarrassed by how out of shape he is. “You’re ruining the moment,” he says petulantly.

“Not at all,” Peter dismisses with ease. “It’s adorable.”

He touches Stiles’ cheek until Stiles lifts his gaze again, meeting his eyes. Peter smiles at him, dropping the hand back down to his waist, tugging him in closer. Stiles goes with him, pressing their bodies together, letting Peter take all of his weight. He rests his head down on Peter’s shoulder with a contented sigh, closing his eyes as Peter continues to rock him. He feels Peter nuzzle at his temple.

“We need to work on your stamina,” he murmurs, placing a kiss against Stiles’ skin before holding him tighter. “I have some ideas.”

Stiles makes a little noise of agreement, a thrill going through him despite how relaxed his body is, his mind, everything. He feels like he’ll melt to the floor in a puddle if Peter lets go of him. Peter
won’t let him go though. He’ll hold him tight and keep him safe. Stiles burrows into him, feeling secure in that fact.

They stay together like that until the record finishes, but they’re barely moving by the end of it. Peter strokes up and down his back and Stiles feels like that means he has to come back down to earth but he doesn’t want to. They’re not even dancing anymore, they’re just holding each other, they can do that in silence. He presses his face more firmly into Peter, feels Peter’s hand slide up, playing with the hair at the nape of his neck. He shivers, a moan catching in his throat, and he can see his fireflies behind his closed eyelids. He’s not alone now but it takes him a moment to realise it’s not his dad who lifts him up out of the wet grass to bring him closer to the sky. It’s Peter, cradling him close and showing him all of the magic.

“Sweetheart,” Peter says quietly into his ear. “Are you with me?”

“No,” Stiles says, the word a plea. He pushes further into Peter, trying to keep the fireflies. When Peter lifts him up, he feels like he can fly with them.

Peter wraps him up tightly, starting to rock him back and forth. It’s not like the dancing though, it’s something much more primal than that. It feels so intrinsically comforting. “Let’s go sit down,” Peter says. Stiles knows it’s not a suggestion but he really doesn’t want to move. He doesn’t think he can. “Do you want me to carry you?” Peter asks.

That makes something heat in Stiles’ belly. “Yes.”

Peter shifts against him, knocking Stiles off balance as he bends, grabbing him behind the knees and lifting him up, cradling him in his arms. Stiles makes a happy noise as Peter walks with him, sitting down on the couch with Stiles still cradled to him, sitting in his lap. Stiles doesn’t open his eyes, just leans into Peter, pressing his face into his neck.

“You are so beautiful,” Peter tells him, petting his hair. “But you are way too far gone. I need you to come back, baby.”

Stiles shakes his head, hands twisted in the fabric of Peter’s shirt.

“I could do literally anything to you right now,” Peter says fondly.

Peter chuckles gently, kissing the top of his head. “Come back, baby boy. I’ll take you here again, I promise. But you’re skipping all the steps. You’re peeking behind the curtain.” He sighs, hand resting on Stiles’ hip. “I have never met anyone who went down as easy as you did.”

Stiles can’t tell if it’s a compliment or not. He rubs his cheek against Peter’s neck, wanting to be petted again, but he doesn’t have the words to ask. Peter just holds him and Stiles makes a little pleading noise.

“Stiles,” Peter says, his voice firmer.

The word gets through, connecting to Stiles in an intrinsic way that all the pet names didn’t. He takes a breath like he’s waking up but he doesn’t want to. It’s warm here. Everything is soft. He has a floaty feeling that he’s only ever experienced before in a fever.

“I’ve got you,” Peter assures him. “Just open your eyes.”

Stiles does, unable to resist, but everything is too bright, the window practically blinding him. He
presses his face back into Peter neck, scrunching his nose up. Peter starts to stroke his hair again, fingertips caressing his scalp, and it gives Stiles the strength to try again. He looks down at his lap first, letting his eyes adjust, considering his fingers tangled in Peter’s shirt. They don’t feel like they belong to him.

When he manages to lift his head up, looking at Peter, Peter looks back at him with so much fondness that Stiles almost has to close his eyes again.

“Do you know where you just were?” Peter asks him.

Stiles frowns, looking to the middle of the room where they’d been dancing.

“In your head,” Peter clarifies, touching his temple before trailing his hand away. “Where did you go in your head?”

“Fireflies,” Stiles says.

Peter smiles at him. “Fireflies?”

“Uh huh,” Stiles agrees.

“I’ve not heard that one before,” Peter says. He looks at Stiles, meeting his eyes. “You went somewhere special. Somewhere Daddy can only take you if you trust him, if you’re open to it. It’s a pretty big deal. And you just went deep. I barely had to nudge you. You’re a natural.”

Stiles frowns at him. None of that makes sense to him. All the words are too much.

“We’re going to talk about it later,” Peter tells him, Peter who lives inside his head and always knows what’s best.

He looks down at Stiles’ hands and reaches up to ease his fingers out of the fabric of his shirt, guiding them away. Stiles is kind of grateful. Much as he wants to cling to Peter, his fingers were starting to strain from holding on so tight. As he looks down at his hands he feels a strange sense of déjà vu. He counts his fingers. Ten. So this isn’t a dream. It moves the floaty feeling just out of his reach.

“I need to make dinner,” Peter tells him.

Stiles looks at him, wondering how long he was out of it for.

“I need to take care of my baby first though,” Peter says.

Stiles shifts in his lap, trying to sit up a little more. “I’m okay.”

“I always have time for this,” Peter assures him. “Always.”

Stiles’ lips lift up into a smile. He believes him. He wants to get up though. He wants to work out where his own body ends. It feels like a momentous task to climb out of Peter’s lap but he finally manages to shuffle himself onto the couch, Peter easily relinquishing his hold.

“No drop?” Peter asks.

Stiles doesn’t know what that means. He didn’t fall on the floor so he’s counting that as a win.

“How do you feel about being upstairs on your own?” Peter asks.
“I don’t love it,” Stiles admits.

“But you can handle it?” Peter asks. “Tell me the truth.”

“Just while you make dinner, right?” Stiles says.

Peter nods. “Just while I cook us something wholesome up.”

“I can do that,” Stiles agrees.

“That’s a good boy,” Peter tells him. “You want me to carry you?”

Stiles smiles, amused. “I can walk. Probably.”

Peter gets to his feet, gesturing for him to follow suit. Stiles still feels a little shaky but he can put one foot in front of the other. Peter walks close behind him as he makes his way up the stairs and Stiles feels so safe and loved. He sits on the bed by his cuff, watching Peter lock it into place.

“I won’t be long,” Peter promises.

“Mmm,” Stiles agrees, dropping back on the bed. Being upright feels like far too much effort.

Peter gives him an indulgent look before leaving the room.

Stiles loses all sense of time and perspective as he stares at the ceiling. He tries to think of one word, a single word, that could sum this up. It’s more powerful than an emotion, more like a state of being. It’s woven into who he is now and that’s why he wants to be able to grasp hold of it. He turned the page on all his old truths. He needs a new one.

He slides down off the bed, crawling across the floor to his toy box. He takes out his journal and pen, looking at the page he started. With Peter. It’s where he is now. He chews on the end of the pen, staring at the words, looking for his truth. He slips the pen from his mouth, putting it to the paper. I belong. It’s not something he’s ever felt as strongly as he does now. He belongs to Peter. He belongs to this life. Accepting that makes him glow from the inside out.

He puts his journal away and lies back on the carpet, waiting for Peter to come and get him. It takes him a second to spot Stiles when he comes into the room. He moves to stand over him.

“Are you alright?”

“I’m perfect,” Stiles tells him.

Peter smiles fondly at him. “You truly are.”

He offers down both his hands and Stiles lets himself be pulled up to his feet. Peter takes him to the bed, sitting him down before unlocking his cuff. He leads him downstairs, placing a plate of delicious food in front of him. They don’t talk over dinner but it’s a comfortable silence, the air full of acceptance.

Stiles stands in the doorway while Peter runs him a bath, watching the care with which he prepares it. He’s left alone to climb in, Peter coming to join him once he’s nestled amongst the bubbles. He washes below the water, handing the washcloth for Peter to clean above. Stiles surrenders to it completely, bowing his head down and handing himself over. Peter washes him in that same firm but careful way he always does, every wet swipe of cloth and trickle of water making Stiles feel overstimulated. He leans back so that Peter can wash his hair and then Peter lets him just lie in the
water for a while, floating almost like he did in Peter’s arms. They gaze at each other through the rising steam.

“You’re so much more affectionate on the days I don’t let you come,” Peter muses. “I might write that down in my little book of Stiles.”

A multitude of thoughts flit thought Stiles’ head; that he hates that book, that he doesn’t want Peter to take his orgasms away, that it’s the balance rather than the orgasm or the denial, or maybe it’s just the want. In the end, all he says is, “Okay.”

Peter smiles, reaching his hand into the water, pulling out the plug. Stile is disappointed that Peter’s fingertips barely graze his thigh.

He’s left alone to get dressed, still feeling off balance and like he needs someone to look after him. Peter returns with his cuff, locking him in, and Stiles grips hold of his arm as he straightens up, not having to say the words for Peter to guide him to bed.

Peter climbs in the other side, sitting up against the headboard with his book. Stiles presses himself against the pillows between them, watching through eyelids that threaten to close.

“Are you still reading the poetry?”

“I am,” Peter agrees, not looking up from his book.

“Will you read one to me?” Stiles asks.

Peter looks at him for a moment and then turns back to his book, starting to read.

_Already my gaze is upon the hill, the sunny one, at the end of the path which I've only just begun._

_So we are grasped, by that which we could not grasp, at such great distance, so fully manifest—_

_and it changes us, even when we do not reach it, into something that, hardly sensing it, we already are; a sign appears, echoing our own sign . . . But what we sense is the falling winds._

Stiles closes his eyes, letting himself fall asleep surrounded by Peter’s words.

Chapter End Notes

The poem Peter reads is _A Walk_ by Rainer Maria Rilke.
Stiles doesn’t wake to the alarm like he usually does but to Peter softly saying his name. He opens his eyes to see that it’s not fully light yet. It must be early.

“Are you hard, baby?” Peter whispers.

Stiles shifts his heavy body against the mattress and, yeah, definitely hard. He makes a noise in his throat as he closes his eyes again, his skin feeling too hot. “Yeah,” he says. He wonders if Peter could smell it, if it woke him up. “Sorry,” he mutters.

“You’re allowed an orgasm today,” Peter assures him. “Do you want to have it now?”

Stiles opens his eyes again, looking at him through the blue tinged dawn. “Here?”

“If you want to,” Peter says casually, like it’s of no consequence to him. “Would be a shame to let it go to waste. You usually listen to your body when you wake up like this, right? That’s what you told me.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. He shifts again, hard dick rubbing against the bed. It gives a little throb, definitely liking that idea. His brain doesn’t seem to mind either. Maybe it’s because he’s half-asleep. Or maybe it’s because Peter makes him feel safe.

“Only if you want to,” Peter says again, his voice so easy and calm.

Stiles blinks at him, eyelids still heavy. He belongs to Peter. What’s the point in hiding this?

He rolls onto his side, drawing one leg up as he reaches a hand down to palm himself through the soft material of his pants. He feels a surge of heat go through him, colouring his cheeks. His mouth falls open and his eyes fall closed, squeezing his cock in a rhythmic motion. He pushes his hips into his touch, feeling that familiar instinct take over. This has always been one of his favourite things, getting off half-asleep, not weighed down by all the thoughts that usually try to fight their way through. Just pure sensation, his body awake before his mind, taking what it wants.

He loves waking up like this. He especially loves it when he has time to fall back asleep afterwards. He wonders if Peter will let him do that. Peter. Stiles opens his eyes as he rolls his hips into his own touch. If Stiles had imagined this scenario, he would have put money on Peter saying something filthy by now, or maybe just killing him with praise. He didn’t expect silence that, now that Stiles sees it, looks an awful lot like reverence. Peter is watching him like he’s something holy. Stiles doesn’t really trust his brain to connect the dots right now though. Maybe this is still a dream. He’d count his fingers but they’re a little busy.

He presses the heel of his palm against the head of his cock and a little oh escapes his mouth. A shudder rolls through him as he does it again and he presses his face into the pillow, closing his eyes. He can feel the dampness of precome soaking into his pants already, making him bite down on his lip with a groan. He’s not usually one for delayed gratification, but even in his current soft focus, getting his cock out with Peter so close feels like a step.

Peter wasn’t judging him though, Stiles could feel that intrinsically in the softness of his eyes as he’d watched Stiles touch himself. Stiles has permission. Peter wants him to do this. The fact that he can be a good boy and get off gives him a little rush of giddiness.

He shoves his hand past the waistband of his pants, whining as his fingers close around his cock.
It’s slick as he strokes it, but now that he knows what lube feels like, his fingers seem to drag. He thinks about asking Peter to pass him the bottle from the nightstand but words are too hard to string together, even in his head, and he feels like the request would open him up to some vulnerability that he doesn’t want to invite. It would be like handing power away when he gets to choose how this plays out. This is how it’s always felt. Early mornings, hard dick, dripping precome. It’s comfortable, familiar, safe. Why change the formula?

Stiles plays his fingers through the leaking drops at the head of his dick, knowing it’s not just the familiarity that feels safe. It’s this room, this bed, his proximity to Peter. It’s the cuff around his ankle and the chain that shifts as he rolls so that he’s mostly on his back, body still irresistibly angled towards Peter like he’s his centre of gravity.

He can’t push his face into his pillow from this angle, leaving him exposed, so he presses it into the pillows that lay between them instead. It brings him closer to Peter and he’s aware of the way his neck is bared, imagining sharp canines, wondering at the thrill that goes through him. He wraps his hand firmly around his cock and strokes, not playing now, feeling the lust settle hot in his belly, demanding attention.

He listens to his body’s instincts, always louder in the quiet of the early morning. He tugs firmly on his cock, hand twisting at the head, catching more precome and smearing it down his length. The better it feels, the wetter it gets, one feeding into the other until he can’t imagine why he’d even need lube. This feels so homey and wonderful, that artificial slickness more of a gimmick. Until he can get his hands on it again. Or maybe unless they’re using it for something else.

His mind catches on the word they, gripping himself as he lets out a moan, his free hand scrabbling for purchase, clinging to the pillows in front of him below where his face is pressed into the fabric. He fists at it, almost dragging it towards him, knowing that he wishes it was something else. The thought of Peter’s body up against him. The thought of burying his face in Peter’s neck instead of Egyptian cotton. It makes him burn up all over.

He pumps his hand on his dick, hips pushing forward into his own touch. He loses any kind of finesse, occasionally managing to swipe his thumb over the sensitive head of his cock and send a little jolt of pleasure to his balls, but mostly it’s just desperate, sweaty tugs accompanied by noises that get caught in his throat like they might choke him.

He can feel it all winding up deep down inside him and he doesn’t want to hold onto it, doesn’t want to draw it out. He wants to surrender to his primal urges. With Peter beside him, it feels like the natural thing to do. Stiles has never felt that wildness in him, not like he did with Scott during that first full moon, or with Liam while he learnt to control it. Not even like he did with Derek who rarely let it slip but still felt animalistic under the surface, grabby and pushy and rough. He doesn’t get that feeling from Peter, but he can still sense that power, the call of the wild bubbling inside him, and it makes Stiles want to howl.

He moans instead, feeling his orgasm start to crest as his hand moves rapidly over his dick. His back arches, biting down on the pillow as he teeters there, the pressure building in his skull like white noise. He sucks in air, wishing he had some werewolf senses, that he could smell Peter, know how he was feeling, if he was enjoying this. He wants to drown himself in his scent. The only thing Stiles has to go on is the visual, and he feels like if he opens his eyes and looks at Peter right now, he’s going to literally shatter.

The thought of dark eyes, a cocky smirk, a proud expression, it makes Stiles’ orgasm crash down with a strangled noise in his throat, hand sliding slickly through his own come as his body vibrates with the intensity of it, shuddering through him like he’s wired up to a current.
He feels like Peter is doing this to him, even though he’s not even touching him, even though Stiles could feasibly pretend he wasn’t there. He fills a room with his presence though and Stiles always feels him pressing down on him. He wants to be pressed against him, wants to be cradled in his lap like he was yesterday, and he suddenly doesn’t have a single clue why he would be doing this on his own when Peter is right there.

He releases the pillow from his teeth, pressing his forehead against the damp fabric, his whole body shaky and too sensitive. He whimpers as he shifts, pulling his sticky hand out of his pants, wiping it absentely on the sheets. Peter is going to wash them anyway. Peter is going to clean up his mess. Just like he always does.

Stiles feels himself brimming over with affection like it’s a physical sensation. He opens his eyes, peering at Peter over the pillows. He looks so pleased, eyes bright and shining, like he’s more awake than he’s ever been, something primal and alert in his expression. Stiles expects them to start glowing red.

“I knew you’d look beautiful when you came,” Peter says, voice low and gravelly like he’s been the one moaning.

Stiles smiles at him widely, unable to fight it. He shakes his head, still half-hidden behind the pillow.

“So beautiful,” Peter assures him.

Stiles makes a needy little noise, the praise making him want to bury himself in Peter. “I want to kiss you,” he says without really meaning to.

“Then kiss me,” Peter says easily.

Stiles feels that floaty, off balance sensation. His body is heavy as he moves forward, pressing against the pillows between them as he arches his neck to bridge the gap. Peter doesn’t meet him halfway like Stiles had expected. He waits.

“Just a bit,” Stiles mutters, half-certain his body couldn’t even handle making out with Peter. He’s pretty sure he would just straight up combust.

Peter gives a tiny nod and Stiles brushes their lips together, the faintest of touches, more breath than anything else. It still makes him shudder. The intimacy is unbearable.

“Just a bit,” he repeats, before pressing his lips to Peter’s again, more firmly this time.

He expects to be swept off his feet. He expects Peter to ravage him, all teeth and tongues, kissing him breathless. He barely moves though, lets Stiles kiss him, brushing their lips together like some kind of idiot who’s never done this before. He knows how to kiss properly. This is so intense though that it sets his skin on edge, gives him that feverish feeling like his whole body has come undone. It evokes fireflies.

He can’t see them though because he never fully closes his eyes, watching Peter’s lips between each tender press, watching his out of focus eyelashes as he moves in close, watches his cheeks to see if the flush he thinks he sees there deepens or if he’s imagining it. Peter follows his lead, moves his own lips just as softly, never tries to lead, even though Stiles wishes he would. He wants to be pushed back onto the bed, wants to be covered by Peter’s body, wants his tongue in his mouth. He knows he could pull Peter onto him, could kiss him like that, but he also knows that he won’t. He doesn’t want to lead. He wants to be led.
As his body sings he pulls back with a whine, overstimulated and yet somehow unfulfilled. He presses his face back into the pillow, shuddering as Peter’s fingers stroke through his hair.

“Completely and utterly beautiful,” Peter says.

And there are his fireflies, behind his closed eyelids. He watches them as Peter’s fingers keep caressing his scalp, jolting when the alarm cuts through, forcing him back into the room. He blinks his eyes. It’s brighter now. He must have been out.

Peter’s fingers trail down his cheek as he smiles at him fondly before pulling his hand away. “You okay?”

Stiles nods.

“Good,” Peter tells him affectionately. He’s still stroking Stiles’ hair, watching his own fingers slide through the strands. “I think you’ve graduated from stage one with flying colours,” he says, looking down to meet Stiles’ eyes. “Do you want to know what stage two is going to be?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, apprehension bubbling in his stomach. He wants to squirm but he’s so comfortable.

“We start stage two when you ask Daddy to get you off,” Peter says.

Stiles stares at him, his mouth going dry, his cock giving a little throb in his pants.

“Whenever you want it, you just ask and I will gladly put my hand down your pants for you,” Peter tells him. “I’ll make you come. Make you feel so good.”

Stiles chews on his lip, a little noise escaping his throat. He can’t help imagining it, Peter reaching across the space between them, fingers closing around Stiles’ cock. He’d be so good at it. He’d know exactly what he was doing.

“You’re in control of when that happens,” Peter says. “You decide when you’re ready for it. Until then, we’re just going to keep doing what we’re doing. You understand?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, the word coming out breathy.

“That’s my good boy,” Peter praises. He pulls his hand back, moving to sit up. “I’m going to take a shower then.”

Stiles shifts against the bed, the mess in his pants cold and wet, bringing him unpleasantly back to earth. “Can I take a shower too? Please?”

“You can have a bath tonight,” Peter tells him easily.

Stiles’ eyes flick down and then back up at Peter. “I, uh…” he begins awkwardly. Peter just stares at him expectantly. “Can I have some clean pants?”

“Of course,” Peter says, getting to his feet. “After your bath tonight.”

Stiles gapes at him. “Peter,” he says indignantly.

Peter turns to face him, a smirk on his lips that looks dangerous. “You know that’s not what you’re supposed to call me.”

Stiles shuts his mouth. He’s not saying that. He can’t.
“If you’re willing to ask nicely, I’ll get you some clean pants,” Peter says.

Stiles squirms, which just reminds how gross his pants are. He frowns deeply, chewing on his lip. “Please can I have some clean pants?” he asks. “Please?”

Peter makes like he’s considering it and then spins around on his heel. “Not nice enough,” he says decisively, moving towards the bathroom.


Peter pauses, turning to look at him with a raised eyebrow, waiting.

“I came in my pants,” Stiles admits dejectedly, as though that weren’t painfully obvious already.

“And whose fault is that?” Peter asks him, not even the slightest hint of sympathy.

Stiles sags. He should have saved himself the humiliation, he’d already lost.

“Are you done?” Peter asks. “Can I go take my shower now?”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, as though it really has anything to do with him.

He watches Peter going into the bathroom, glares at the gap in the door, listens to the shower raining hot, clean water down onto Peter’s body. He makes a miserable noise, trying not to move. His pants are wet and sticky either way, but when he moves it feels worse.

When Peter comes out of the bathroom, Stiles stares at the ceiling as he listens to him getting ready, trying his best not to visualise it. He just lies in his filth and misery, waiting for Peter to leave so he can try and do something about at least one of them.

“Grumpy boys don’t get nice things,” Peter tells him.

“I’m not getting anything nice anyway,” Stiles bites back before he can stop himself.

“No,” Peter says tightly, his voice turning dark. “You’re not.”

Stiles lifts his head up, watching Peter’s retreating back as he leaves the room, dread making his blood run cold. “Wait,” he says, struggling to throw the blankets off himself so he can go after him, which of course he can’t, he’s chained to the bed. “I’m sorry,” he calls, getting to the doorway in time to see Peter start to descend the stairs. His chain pulls taut. “Don’t be mad,” he pleads.

There’s no response from Peter. Stiles wants to cry. He’s so stupid and thoughtless. Why couldn’t he keep his mouth shut for once. He sits as far into the doorway as the chain will allow him, lying back so that his body’s in the hallway, staring at the top of the stairs.

He waits for Peter, concentrating on breathing in and out, on getting his resting heartrate down. Peter will hear it as soon as he’s near. Stiles wants it to be calm. He doesn’t want to be a brat who has emotional outbursts. He wants to be a good boy. He wants Peter to call him that. He needs it.

When Peter gets to the top of the stairs he stops, staring down the hallway at Stiles. “What are you doing?”

Stiles swallows down his apprehension. “Waiting for you.”

Peter gives him a scathing look. “Get in the bedroom.”
Stiles tries to stand up but makes the mistake of pulling his feet towards himself, the chain yanking at his leg, not letting him move. “Ow,” he says, shifting himself back into the room, crawling the rest of the way before sitting on his ass in the middle of the carpet.

Peter follows him in, looking down at him. “Get up.”

Stiles does, standing in front of Peter, swaying slightly. All the work he did on lowering his heartrate was for nothing, it’s thundering in his chest again now.

“What are you doing?” Peter asks him again.

“I don’t want you to be mad,” Stiles tells him.

“I’m not,” Peter responds, which isn’t nearly enough reassurance for Stiles whose brain is threatening to unravel on him. “Let’s go get breakfast.”

“Peter,” Stiles implores. “I’m sorry I spoke to you like that. I didn’t mean to.”

“I know,” Peter says easily. He reaches into his pocket, taking out the key. “Time for breakfast.”

Stiles nods, still feeling unsteady as Peter unlocks him, walking him downstairs. He sits in his place at the island where his orange juice is already waiting for him. Peter walks past him to the counter, picking up two plates. He places a single piece of toast in front of Stiles, spread with butter and cut into four little triangles. Then he sits down beside him with a full cooked breakfast in front of him. Stiles looks at Peter’s place and then at his own. He looks up at Peter.

“You said you weren’t mad.”

“I’m not mad,” Peter responds, smiling at him. “Eat your toast.”

Stiles frowns, looking down at his plate. Is this some kind of mindfuck? Is this how Peter is going to punish him? He picks up one of the little triangles, feeling like it’s a trick. He nibbles on the corner of it, looking over as Peter starts to dig into his huge breakfast. It looks so good. He doesn’t dare ask for any.

He eats his toast in silence and then he just sits, waiting for Peter to finish. With nothing to distract him, Stiles realises that he didn’t just miss out on cleaning up when he waited for Peter in the doorway, his pants a sticky mess that he’s trying very hard not to think about, but he didn’t go to the toilet either. Once he reminds his bladder of that fact, it’s impossible to think of anything else.

He presses his thighs together which makes him a little too aware of the state of his pants. He bites down on his lip, holding back the disgruntled sound, trying to centre himself. He’s not a little kid. He can wait. He leans on the island in front of him, hands clasped together, leg starting to bounce up and down. He glances at Peter’s plate. He’s only halfway done. He can’t bite back the frustrated sound that escapes him that time.

“What’s wrong with you?” Peter asks him.

“I have to pee,” Stiles tells him. “Sorry. I’m cool.”

Peter turns to face him, eyes sliding pointedly up and down before he raises his eyebrows at him.

“I can wait,” Stiles says, gritted with determination.

Peter nods. “Drink your orange juice.”
Stiles makes a pathetic noise. “I don’t think I can.”

“Vitamin C is important,” Peter says. “I’d like you to drink it.”

Stiles picks up the glass, staring down at it like it’s his nemesis.

“I’d also like you to not piss on my kitchen floor,” Peter adds.

“Well, those two things are kind of mutually exclusive right now,” Stiles tells him.

“Drink your juice, Stiles,” Peter says.

Stiles nods. He takes the first sip and it already feels like he’s about to burst. He pushes the thought out of his head. The liquid can’t possibly go through his system that quick. It’s just sat in his stomach. It’s not overflowing his bladder. His brain doesn’t quite believe him though. He takes another sip, swallowing it down, fighting back the urge to run to the bathroom. He probably wouldn’t even make it. The thought makes him clamp down on the sensation, willing his body to control itself. It does make him wonder whether Peter would give him some clean pants if he pissed himself though. Probably not. There’s no way he’s counting that as a viable option.

He manages to get nearly half the glass drunk by the time Peter finally finishes eating. Stiles makes an appreciative noise, placing the glass on the counter in front of him.

“You need to finish that before we go upstairs,” Peter tells him.

Stiles gives him a pleading look. “I can’t.”

“Just drink it, then we’ll go upstairs,” Peter says.

“Can’t I take it with me?” Stiles asks. “I’ll drink it, I promise.”

“No glassware upstairs,” Peter says. “I’m not leaving you alone with anything sharp. Not after last time.”

Stiles feels himself start to crumble. “I wouldn’t ever do that. Not now. I like my cuff.” He doesn’t realise how true the words are until they’re out of his mouth. Peter was right. He likes the security of it. It makes him feel tethered and safe.

“I know you do, baby,” Peter soothes, as though that’s the thing Stiles needs comfort over right now. “But no glass. I want to keep you safe. Drink your juice.”

How can Stiles argue with that? He scrunches his nose up in frustration and then grabs the glass, downing it. He looks up at Peter, eyes wide. Peter nods.

“Let’s go.”

Stiles takes a deep breath, steadying himself before he gets to his feet. He tightens every muscle in his abdomen until they burn, climbing the stairs one at a time. When he gets to the bedroom his instinct is to run straight through to the bathroom but instead he picks up the cuff from the middle of the floor, holding it out to Peter. Peter smiles at him, taking it out of his hand as he nods towards the window seat. As much as he wants to hop from leg to leg, Stiles obeys, sitting in the window seat and pulling his foot up to be cuffed.

Peter leans over him, securing it in place, but then he doesn’t move back, reaching out to place his fingers under Stiles’ chin, lifting his head to look at him. “You’ve done so well today. I’m really
proud of you.”

Stiles frowns. “You’re not mad?”

“Baby, I’m not mad,” Peter assures him. “You make Daddy very happy.”

“Then why did you punish me?” Stiles asks.

Peter draws his eyebrows together. “When did I punish you?”

Stiles hesitates. Is his mind playing tricks on him? “You didn’t give me a proper breakfast,” he says uncertainly.

“Toast is a proper breakfast,” Peter says.

“But…”

“I had more,” Peter agrees. His face softens, his thumb rubbing over Stiles’ jaw. “You did that, not me.”

Stiles furrows his brow. He really feels like he’s going insane now. “What?”

“You’re a self-fulfilling prophecy,” Peter tells him. “You told me you weren’t getting anything nice so you didn’t get anything nice. You need to believe that you deserve nice things, because you do. I want to give them to you. You have to let me.”

Stiles nods his head, even if the words don’t really make sense. He was being a brat. He should have been punished. “You’re not mad?” he asks again.

“If I was mad, you’d know about it,” Peter says. “And you have not seen anything even resembling punishment yet. Let’s hope we never get there.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, feeling a shiver go through him. Peter lets go of his chin and Stiles makes a noise at the loss. Peter is going to leave now. Stiles isn’t ready for that. He’s way too vulnerable to be left on his own. “Can I have a hug?” he asks.

“Anytime you want,” Peter assures him.

Stiles reaches for him, wrapping his arms around Peter’s shoulders. Peter encircles him in his strong arms, so much power behind them, but he’s bent over and there’s so much distance between them. Stiles shifts, getting onto his knees and pushing himself closer, but they still don’t meld like he wants them to. He pushes his face into Peter’s neck with a needy little whimper.

“You’re okay,” Peter murmurs, stroking a hand through Stiles’ hair. “Daddy’s got you, baby. You’re alright.”

Stiles nods his head but he clings to him tighter, scared he’s going to let go. He mashes his face against Peter’s skin until he can’t breathe, dampness threatening his eyes behind the closed lids. He ignores the burn of his bladder, even as it feels like it might be doing permanent damage, because this is worth more to him right now.

Peter keeps petting his hair, his other hand stroking up and down Stiles’ back in long smooth motions, from between his shoulder blades to the curve of his lower back and up again. It’s so soothing, a steady pressure that releases something inside him. Peter must feel it, feel the tension drain from Stiles in his arms, hands stilling as he tugs him close. Stiles makes a noise of loss before
Peter has even moved away.

Peter pulls back, holding Stiles at arm’s length before easing him back down to the seat. “You feeling okay?”

Stiles nods. Shaky, but okay. He can get through the next few minutes, and if he can do that, then he can go beyond them.

“Go take a piss,” Peter tells him. “And go clean up a little. You smell like a whore, which works for you, we’re going to revisit it, but I don’t think it’s what you want right now, is it?”

Stiles shakes his head.

Peter smiles softly at him. “Bathroom.”

Stiles clambers to get to his feet, nearly falling over himself in his haste. He’s incredibly grateful he doesn’t have any buttons or zippers to contend with as he shoves the elastic waistband of his pants out of the way, barely getting clearance as he starts to pee in earnest. It’s almost a sexual experience, the amount of relief that he feels. He groans, his head falling back, all of his anxiety seeping away. If only it was always this easy.

When he’s done, he peeps out of the bathroom doorway but Peter is gone. He goes back through to the bathroom, running a sink of warm water and contemplating the mess in his pants. He grabs a washcloth and cleans it up the best he can but it’s all seeped into the fabric by now and all he really achieves is a bigger wet patch than he started off with. He hopes it’s at least a cleaner wet patch now.

He steps out into the bedroom, looking at the unmade bed, the sheets that are also smeared with his come. He looks at Peter’s side where the blankets are rumpled but clean, and Stiles can’t help himself. He climbs in, tugging the blankets around himself, pulling one of the pillows from the middle of the bed against his chest. He hugs it as he presses his face into Peter’s pillow, inhaling deeply. He can smell something, but maybe he’s just imagining it. He wishes for wolf senses again, is jealous of Peter being able to pick up on all the subtleties. He’s still surrounded by Peter though, whether he can smell it or not. He breathes in deep again, closing his eyes and letting himself drift away.

When he wakes up, his pants are mostly dry and he’s wrapped up in cosy, warm contentment. He tugs the pillow he’s hugging closer, rubbing his face against Peter’s pillow with a happy noise. He wants to stay here all day, but he knows he needs to move. Reluctantly, he eases his grip on the pillow, stretching his body against the mattress. This is where Peter’s body was when Stiles had kissed him earlier. That thought isn’t making him want to move.

He remembers the gentle brush of lips, the soft focus of it all, the way he’d felt so fragile but so safe. His body was about to shatter but he wasn’t scared. Peter had treated so carefully, had let Stiles show him how much he could take. Peter had respected him. It makes Stiles glow, chewing on his lip, wondering if he might be able to taste Peter there.

Then he remembers what Peter had said next. Stage two. Peter is going to get him off. The thought is terrifying and thrilling. No one has ever touched him like that before. He wonders how different it will feel, somebody else’s hand against him. Peter’s hands are nice. They’re so strong and sure. They never falter. They’d be relentless on his dick.

Stiles bites down on his lip until it’s painful, his hand edging down his body before he catches himself. He’s not allowed to touch his cock without permission. He smiles at himself.
nature. He’s getting really good at this. He kind of wants to preen about it to Peter.

He forces himself to get out of the bed, leaving it in the same mess he found it in. He goes to his toy box and takes out his colouring book and pencils, settling himself on the window seat and turning to the picture he’s been working on for the past couple of days. He feels like he can get it finished today. It gives him a sense of purpose.

He lies in the sun that streams through the window, warming him through to his core as he carefully colours in each tiny section of the picture. He works methodically, cycling through his colours, trying to make each one complement the one next to it. He wants it to look aesthetically pleasing. He wants it to be impressive.

He shades in the last little shape in a deep blue that matches his clothes, making sure every last bit of white is gone before he places his pencil aside. He stares at the picture for a while, admiring his work, letting himself feel proud. It feels like an accomplishment. He had to start over a couple of times but he finally saw it through to the end.

He sits up, resting against the cool window as he looks out at the trees. It really is beautiful out here. Stiles is used to small town life, but not like this. He doesn’t even know how far the closest small town is. It’s just wilderness, wild land, a world of their own. It feels so romantic.

When Peter comes up to collect him for lunch, Stiles turns on the window seat to face him, giving him a smile. Peter smiles back, looking pleased.

“Hey there, beautiful.”

Stiles smiles wider. He can’t help himself.

“You doing okay?” Peter asks.

Stiles nods.

“Good,” Peter tells him.

Stiles reaches across the seat, picking up his colouring book and holding it up to Peter. “I finished this.”

Peter walks over to him, taking the book and looking over the picture. Stiles twists his hands together as he waits for a response. Peter nods appreciatively.

“You’ve put a lot of work into this,” he says. “Pride is very important. Good boy.” He looks up at Stiles who glows at the praise. “Do you want me to stick it on the fridge?”

Stiles considers him for a moment. “I can’t tell if you’re making fun of me or not.”

Peter smiles. “Not if you want me to,” he says. “I will go out and buy a magnet, just for you, baby.”

Stiles laughs, ducking his head. “No thanks.”

“We’ll just keep it in the book for now then,” Peter says. He looks over it again, eyes alert and attentive. “You’ve done a really good job. It must have taken patience.”

Stiles nods. He doesn’t feel like he has any of it now. “Can I have a hug?” he blurs out.

Peter lifts his eyes, an amused expression on his face. He closes the book, holding it out to Stiles.
“Tidy up first.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees.

Peter steps back as Stiles collects up his coloured pencils, putting them all away and placing them in his toy box with his book. He stands up, looking at Peter, knowing he’s being too needy. Way too needy. Peter likes it though. Peter eats it up. That makes it okay, doesn’t it? If it works for them, it must be okay.

Peter beckons him over and Stiles goes to him, lifting his arms and wrapping them around Peter’s neck. Peter pulls him in close, strong arms wrapped around Stiles’ waist, pulling their bodies flush. Stiles makes a happy little sound, closing his eyes as he rests his forehead on Peter’s shoulder. He feels little and safe. Peter nuzzles against his temple and Stiles hums in agreement.

“You love showing off your new trick, don’t you,” Peter murmurs in his ear.

Stiles smiles, lifting his head to look at him. “That’s not my newest trick,” he says, eyes fixed on Peter’s lips that curve up into a smile.

“Oh yeah?”

Stiles loses his bravado, resting his head back down but still looking up at Peter. At those blue eyes. “My newest trick is learning to ask,” he realises. Asking gets him hugs. Asking gets him kisses. Asking is going to get him so much more. It gives him the power to tell Peter what he needs, to let Peter take care of him.

“Soon you’re going to learn how to ask nicely,” Peter says.

Stiles’ stomach turns over, his face heating, but he nods. It’s always been a question of when, not if. Peter knew that from the start. He pushes his face into Peter’s neck.

“You’re so affectionate,” Peter says. “You’re like a puppy. I can’t work out if it’s because you grew up with affection or because you were starved of it.”

Stiles frowns, holding Peter a little tighter. His mom used to hug him. She used to tuck him in every night when his dad was usually still at work. But his dad hugged him too. Maybe not as much as he should have done, but when it counted. Stiles always clung to him. He realises now that was probably a side effect of not knowing when the next one was coming.

“We should go have lunch,” Peter says, cutting through Stiles’ thoughts. “Are you hungry?”

“Yeah,” Stiles admits. He’s used to generous breakfasts from Peter. His body was not fulfilled with a slice of toast, especially after he worked it so hard before he’d even gotten out of bed.

“Daddy made you a nice, big lunch,” Peter says, giving him a wink.

He squeezes Stiles tight before easing his arms off, Stiles trailing his arms away, even though he’d like to stay pressed there for another ten minutes.

“Thank you,” he says quietly.

“I’m going to put these sheets in the wash, then we can eat,” Peter tells him. Stiles nods, watching as Peter starts to strip the bed. He pauses at his own side and then looks up at Stiles. “Have you been rolling around in my half of the bed?”
“I wasn’t rolling,” Stiles protests, his cheeks heating. “I had a little nap.”

“On my half?” Peter asks, raising an eyebrow.

“My side was dirty,” Stiles says. “I’m sorry.”

“I don’t mind,” Peter dismisses. “Kind of a shame to wash them now though.”

He considers it for a moment but then resumes pulling the sheets up, tossing them in a pile before turning back to Stiles, pulling the key from his pocket. He unlocks him, leading the way downstairs. Stiles sitting at the island as Peter goes through to the utility. When he returns he goes over to the counter, retrieving two plates and placing one in front of Stiles. There’s a large baked potato with cheese, coleslaw, salad and chicken fingers that look homemade. Stiles smiles at it.

“Thank you.”

“Eat up, baby,” Peter tells him. “You deserve it.”

Stiles nods. “I do.”

Peter gives that proud look and Stiles starts to eat. He likes this self-esteem thing. He likes getting nice things. He likes being able to ask for more, within reason. That’s what makes it special though. If he got everything all at once, what would there be left to want for?

He eats, grateful and happy. Peter clears the dishes away afterwards, coming to stand beside him again. Stiles looks up at him, waiting.

“You’ve been a little up and down today,” Peter says. “I think we could do with focussing your mind on something.” He looks at Stiles. “Have you thought about a project you want to work on yet?”

Stiles shakes his head. He’s spent embarrassingly little time on anything but warm and fuzzy things.

“I’d like you to do that,” Peter tells him. “Two more days and Daddy’s going to town. Let me know what you need and I’ll get it for you.”

“I’ll think about it,” Stiles agrees.


“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I like playing chess with you. I want to get good at it.”

“You’re getting there,” Peter assures him.

Stiles follows him through, sitting down at his side of the little table. He pulls his hand drawn guide closer to him, looking down at the little pictures. He doesn’t really need it now, but he likes having it there. It gives him confidence, like a good luck charm, or maybe a love letter.

Their games are starting to get longer now that Stiles has a clue what he’s doing and is beginning to use strategy instead of just moving whatever piece feels useful at the time. He plans ahead. That means sometimes it takes him forever to move a piece. In the end, it’s usually still to the wrong spot, or right into Peter’s hands, but he’s trying. He stares down at the board, trying to work out what Peter might do next, but he can’t even work that out in an everyday context, he’s got no
chance when it comes to a complex game of chess.

“You look very handsome when you’re concentrating,” Peter tells him.

Stiles looks up at him. “Why are you saying that?”

“Because you look very handsome when you’re concentrating,” Peter states, giving him a withering look.

Stiles purses his lips together, looking back down at the board. “It’s a little condescending,” he mutters.

“Calling you handsome is condescending?” Peter asks incredulously. “What goes on in that head of yours?”

Stiles shrugs. “I didn’t mean… Just the when you’re concentrating thing is a bit…” He sighs.

“One day I am going to get you naked, lay you out on that bed, and compliment every inch of you until you believe me,” Peter says.

Stiles stares at him, his whole body going hot, his dick decidedly interested.

“When you’re ready,” Peter adds easily.

“Uh,” Stiles begins.

“Stage two first,” Peter tells him firmly. “We go in order, one step at a time. We’ll get there when we get there.” He drops his gaze to the board. “Are you going to play?”

Stiles gives him a hopeless look, his brain fried, but Peter isn’t looking at him. He wonders if this is a tactic, distract him with filthy mental images and then take the easy win. Or maybe this is about the discipline that he mentioned. He needs to keep his thoughts in check and focus. He looks down at the board with renewed motivation, trying to work out his next move.

He plays, he plans, he plots, trying to dodge Peter and get to his king. His mind only occasionally wanders to kisses and cuddles and bodies pressed together. He calls that a win. While he waits a particularly long time for Peter to make his next move, he looks at Peter’s hand resting on the table. Strong fingers. Fingers that he’s going to wrap around Stiles’ cock when he asks. Stiles shifts in his chair, hoping that Peter can’t smell it on him. Mostly hoping he can’t. Partly hoping he can.

He shakes the thought off, looking up at Peter as he surveys the board. He’s been doing that for a long time. Stiles wonders if that means he’s actually making it difficult for him for once. His eyes fall back down to Peter’s hand and he reaches out before he can stop himself, fingers brushing over his knuckles.

“Are you trying to sabotage me?” Peter asks, not looking up from the board. “Not very sporting.”

“No,” Stiles says, pulling his hand back. “I just wanted to hold your hand. I like you.”

Peter smiles indulgently, eyes lifting up to him before he turns his hand over, reaching it out towards Stiles. Stiles smiles back like he’s been handed a treat, dragging his fingers over Peter’s palm before playing with his fingers. Peter catches his hand in his own, lacing their fingers together as he turns his attention back to the board.

They keep hold of each other for the rest of the game, when Stiles is one move away from getting
Peter in check and is trying his best not to bounce in his seat.

“Check,” Peter says.

Stiles frowns in confusion, looking at Peter’s king. “But I didn’t move yet.” Peter raises an eyebrow at him and Stiles looks down at the move he just made, trapping his own king. “Oh.” He looks at Peter’s king then back at his own before looking up at Peter. “But that’s not fair. I was…” He gestures to Peter’s king and gives a little huff.

“You’re not supposed to tell me what you’re going to do next,” Peter tells him. “It’s a good job we didn’t play poker.”

Stiles gives him an unimpressed look. “But I was doing really well. I was going to get you.”

“You can still get me,” Peter tells him.

“Can I?” Stiles asks, studying the board.


Stiles sagged. “Just take my stupid king.”

“You are a terrible loser,” Peter tells him. “Just play. It’s not over yet.”

Stiles rolls his eyes but moves his king. In three more moves it’s checkmate and not in his favour.

Peter looks up at him, very pleased with himself. He lifts Stiles hand, placing a kiss on the back of it. “That was a good game.”

“It wasn’t the worst,” Stiles agrees. He’s definitely getting better. Peter looks at his watch before placing their hands back down on the table. “Dinner time?” Stiles guesses.

“Not yet,” Peter says. “Not enough time for another game though.”

Stiles purses his lips like he’s thinking but all he wants to do is press his body against Peter’s in whatever way he’s allowed. It’s feeling less like a craving and more like pure addiction.

“I suppose we could watch a little television,” Peter allows. “You have used your brain today.”

Stiles nods, not daring to say anything in case he messes it up. He’s good at that. Peter smiles at him, keeping hold of Stiles’ hand as he gets to his feet, leading him over to the couch. He lets go once they’re sat, taking out the remote and scrolling through the TV guide. He puts on another nature documentary, angling his body towards Stiles and lifting his arm in invitation. Stiles can’t quite hide the giddiness as he tucks himself into his side, Peter holding him close.

Stile stares at the TV, watching the prowling mountain lions. “Does the wolf like watching this stuff?” he asks.

“That’s part of it,” Peter says with a shrug. “I like it too. I’d watch the History Channel but it’s all bullshit nowadays.”

Stiles smiles. “You don’t like Pawn Stars?”

“I do not,” Peter says primly.

Stiles presses his face into Peter’s chest with a laugh. Peter slides a hand into his hair, fingers
playing through the strands, and Stiles hums happily, not looking at the TV again.

When it’s time to go back upstairs, Peter locking his cuff on as he sits in the window seat, Stiles feels cold, missing Peter’s heat wrapped around him. The sun doesn’t shine through the window at this time of day, setting at the other side of the house. Stiles hugs a cushion to himself and watches the sky change colour.

During dinner, Peter still feels too far away. Stiles wants to stretch out his leg, wrap his foot around Peter’s ankle, but playing footsie feels so juvenile. Stiles can be a big boy. He can eat his dinner without the constant reassurance of Peter’s touch. He’s not sure that’s what Peter really wants of him though. It feels less and less like what Stiles wants.

He stands in the bathroom doorway as Peter runs his bath, waiting patiently, already envisioning the washcloth against his skin, Peter’s soft eyes and pleased face. He’s so tender with him in those moments. But then he’s always tender when Stiles is good.

“All ready,” Peter says, getting to his feet and looking at Stiles. “You get in. I’ll be there when I’ve made the bed.”

“All ready,” Stiles agrees softly.

Peter closes the door behind himself and Stiles strips, clothes going in the hamper, climbing into the water. It’s perfect. It’s always perfect. He lies back, playing his hand through the bubbles as he waits for Peter. When he returns, Stiles perks up instantly, sitting up as Peter settles by the side of the tub, reaching for the washcloth.

“I want you to understand something.” Peter says, dipping the cloth into the water and then lifting it up, letting the water trickle back down. He lifts his eyes to Stiles who’s looking at him attentively. “When you ask me to make you come, when you let me touch you like that, it means that during bath time, I get to clean you everywhere. Above and below the water. That’s what you’re agreeing to. That’s what you’re asking for, Stiles.”

Stiles pictures it, Peter’s hand sliding under the water, cleaning his legs, his thighs, his dick. He shifts, trying to fight back the arousal. Can Peter still smell it if he’s in the water? That’s not the point. This is important. He needs to pay attention.

“How do you understand, Stiles?” Peter prompts.

Stiles nods. “Yeah.”

“Tell me what you understand,” Peter says.

Stiles twists his mouth. He needs to stop being so precious about saying things out loud. Asking gets him nice things. Stiles likes nice things. “After you make me come, you can wash me everywhere at bath time.”

“Good boy,” Peter praises.

He holds the washcloth out to Stiles who is confused for a moment. Right, Peter didn’t make him come yet. Stiles still gets to do this for himself. It feels suddenly like a chore. He washes himself, handing the cloth back, melting under Peter’s touch as he cleans him. It feels so sensuous, so drawn out, long drags of wetness over his heated skin. Stiles never wants it to stop. He moves when Peter wordlessly prompts him though, sliding back into the water, letting Peter wash his hair. Peter touches his face until he opens his eyes and then he reaches in to pull out the plug.
“Put your nice clean clothes on,” Peter tells him. “I’ll be back for you in a minute.”

He closes the door after himself and Stiles climbs from the bath, towelling himself off and pulling on his fresh clothes. They feel so nice after what he’s been dressed in all day. He is never coming in his pants again. Rookie mistake. He’s more experienced in jerking off than that.

He looks down at himself, smoothing over his clothes, taking pride in them. He lifts his hand, tracing the embroidered coat of arms with his finger. Belonging. He feels so lucky that Peter chose him, claimed him, offered him a home.

Peter comes back with his cuff, locking it in place, and Stiles feels complete.

“There we go,” Peter says, giving the padlock a tug before he stands up.

Stiles smiles at him, holding out his hand to be taken to bed. Peter walks him around to his side, lifting the blankets for him to climb beneath. It makes Stiles feel so special and looked after. He likes being spoiled. He likes that Peter is willing to indulge him.

He watches Peter go around to his own side of the bed, climbing in, the pillows between them. Stiles reaches out, touching the top one.

“What do you mind if I have this?” he asks.

Peter opens his book, looking over at him. “Do what you want with it. You’re the one who spends all night humping it.”

Stiles pauses. “I don’t hump it.”

“Baby, you’re so dead asleep, you have no idea what you do,” Peter says darkly, smirking at him.

Stiles frowns. Is that why he woke up hard this morning? No, his hips were pressed into the mattress. He was probably just dreaming. He wishes he could remember it, it was probably a good one. He doesn’t want a repeat tonight though. Tomorrow is a no orgasm day. He doesn’t want to wake up hard when he’s not allowed to do anything about it. He doesn’t think he’s ever ignored morning wood in his life. Just the thought of it makes him wince.

He gives a little huff, grabbing the pillow and turning over with it, hugging it to his chest. It opens up a gap behind him between himself and Peter. He likes that idea. He doesn’t need a wall to keep him safe. Peter’s not going to do anything he doesn’t want. Right now, Stiles is pretty sure he wants everything.

He shifts back, encroaching on the space the pillow used to take up. The middle of the bed. That’s where Stiles likes to sleep. He smiles to himself, snuggling down against his pillow.

“Good night, sweet thing,” Peter singsongs.

“Night,” Stiles mutters, pushing his face into the fabric, mouthing at it as he falls asleep.
Chapter 10

Stiles wakes up to find heat pressed against his back. He shuffles against the bed, pillow still hugged to his chest, his body pressing back into Peter. He makes a noise, part acknowledgement, part disappointment that he’s not wrapped up in Peter’s arms right now. That would feel so good, held tight, surrounded by him. He cranes his neck to look over his shoulder.

Peter is laid on his back, his arm thrown over his own stomach. He looks at Stiles, raising an eyebrow. “Are you sure you have enough bed there?”

“I told you, I like the middle,” Stiles responds, dropping his head back down onto his pillow.

“I told you, you have to learn to share,” Peter says.

“I’m sharing,” Stiles says. “You’re not sharing.”

“Why is my side of the bed so much more attractive than yours?” Peter asks him.

“Because you’re in it,” Stiles responds.

Peter reaches out, sliding his fingers into Stiles’ hair. Stiles hums happily.

“Well, you can have it to yourself now, I’m going to take a shower,” Peter tells him.

“Don’t,” Stiles whines.

“It’s time to get up,” Peter says, pulling his hand away.

“But…” Stiles complains. He looks back over his shoulder. “No cuddles?”

“You said not in bed,” Peter points out.

“I changed my mind,” Stiles says.

“And how am I supposed to know that?” Peter asks. “Communication is key, sweetheart. I keep telling you, nothing happens until you ask for it.”

Stiles nods, rolling over so he can look at him properly. Asking gets him nice things. “Can we cuddle in bed?”

“Of course,” Peter agrees. “Tonight. It’s time to get up.”

Stiles sighs heavily, rolling his eyes.

“Unless you huff and puff at me,” Peter says. “Then maybe I won’t feel like cuddling you.”

“Sorry,” Stiles says, looking at him with big eyes.

Peter gives him an indulgent look. “I’m going in the shower. Hug your pillow.”

Stiles reaches behind himself, pulling it into his arms as Peter climbs out of the bed. He turns around, considering Stiles.
“Maybe I should get you a teddy bear,” he muses. “Or a cuddly wolf.”

Stiles feels that warm, cosy feeling inside him start to seep away. “I’m eighteen. I don’t want a teddy bear.”

“Daddy can’t always be there to cuddle you,” Peter says sweetly. “And my baby seems like he needs a lot of cuddles.”

Stiles fixes him with a look. Being infantilised is worth a safeword if it comes to it. “No stuffed animals.”

“Suit yourself,” Peter responds with a shrug, turning to the bathroom.

Stiles frowns to himself, even though he’s apparently won. He considers the pillow in his arms. He doesn’t want to get rid of it but maybe he should. It’s not comparable to a wolf plushie though. That’s an absurd idea. He looks up at Peter.

“Hey, Peter?”

“Yes, darling?” Peter responds, turning in the bathroom doorway with a flourish.

“Can you full-shift?” Stiles asks.

Peter smirks at him. “Let’s leave some surprises in our relationship, shall we?”

He steps into the bathroom, not even bothering with the pretence of pushing the door closed. Stiles hears the water start up, as he sees Peter’s peel his shirt over his head. He sighs happily, all other thoughts flying out of his head. He’s allowed to ask for that. He’s allowed to ask for it to make him come.

Peter pushes his boxer briefs down, stepping out of sight and into the shower. He has such a good body. He must work out. Stiles must be missing something. Scott doesn’t look like that. He presses his body against the pillow. If he moved over to the edge of the bed he could probably see Peter, at least until the glass shower screen steamed up. Peter’s right though. Sometimes surprises make things more special. Leave a little something to the imagination.

He closes his eyes, Peter’s naked body playing against his eyelids. Stiles can have that, he reminds himself. If someone had offered that to him before, in his other life, he would have literally grabbed it with both hands, no hesitation. His hormonal little self would have taken whatever he could get. This is different though. This isn’t a quick grope in the back of a club. This isn’t a mutual outpouring of lust. This is a step, something they’re going to build upon, and Stiles wants strong foundations. He’s not going to fuck this up.

He listens as Peter gets out of the shower but he doesn’t open his eyes. He hears him come through to the bedroom, opening drawers, getting dressed, and then the bed dips beside Stiles.

“Time to get up, baby.”

Stiles grumbles, opening his eyes to look at him.

“You can go back to bed after breakfast if you want,” Peter assures him. “You can snuggle up with Daddy’s pillow.”

“I miss having a lie in,” Stiles says. “Don’t you ever take a day off?”
“I could possibly be convinced,” Peter muses, reaching out to touch Stiles’ cheek. “If given enough incentive.”

Stiles feels a hotness settle in his belly. He would love to be the reason Peter stayed in bed all day, abandoning his carefully structured life. The thought of doing that to him is akin to sexual abandonment.

“But not today,” Peter says, pulling his hand away. “Get up. I’ll be back for you in a little while.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, somewhat begrudgingly.

“That’s a good boy,” Peter says, getting to his feet.

Stiles drags himself out of bed, definitely not willing to miss his chance to use the bathroom ever again. When Peter takes him downstairs for breakfast, Stiles sits at the island with his orange juice, not quite relaxing until Peter puts a delicious plate of food down in front of him, one that matches his own. Stiles compares them, just to make sure. Peter gives him an amused look but doesn’t comment.

“Thank you,” Stiles says earnestly.

“You’re welcome, baby,” Peter tells him, looking pleased.

Stiles eats, savouring the warm glow that Peter’s words give him as much as the food. It settles something inside him when he knows he’s done the right thing in Peter’s eyes.

“I want you to have a think about your project today,” Peter tells him. “What you might want to research.”

“Oh,” Stiles agrees, looking up at him.

“I want you to at least have some ideas for me,” Peter says.

Stiles purses his lips together. Using his brain seems like a huge task right now. Docile doesn’t do it for Peter though, he reminds himself. Stiles might like this happy place he retreats to in his head, but it’s probably not much fun for Peter. He wants intelligence. Stiles will offer him what he has of it. He’ll improve himself. He’ll be the Companion that Peter deserves for all his effort.

“What are you working on?” Stiles asks. “You have a project or something in your study, right?”

Peter raises an eyebrow at him, looking unimpressed. “What I’m interested in is irrelevant,” he says. “I want this to be something that interests you. A passion project doesn’t mean much when it’s somebody else’s passion.”

“I guess,” Stiles agrees, looking down at his plate.

“Think about it,” Peter says.

Stiles nods his head. He has to admit, it can get pretty boring in the mornings when he doesn’t have Peter. Now that he’s finished one of the pictures in his colouring book, he doesn’t have much of an incentive to do another one. He’s pleased that he’s accomplished it, he feels like it taught him a lesson and helped him work through something, but that’s done now and he doesn’t know if he has the patience to do it again. That means he has a comic to read today but nothing else to do until lunchtime.
Peter is giving him the opportunity to have something that he’s actually chosen for himself though. That’s power. Everything he has, the clothes and the comics and the colouring book and the journal, all of it was chosen for him by Peter. Stiles is eternally grateful for them in ways he can’t quite put into words, but selecting something for himself would give him a real sense of ownership. It would be his.

When they finish breakfast, Stiles sits down on the bed, watching Peter secure the cuff in place. He loves the way his fingers move nimbly over the buckle, chewing on his lip as he imagines them working Stiles’ body as sure and skilful as that. He looks up at Peter as he steps back.

“Can I ask a question?”

“Go ahead,” Peter says.

“Okay, you know you said about stage two,” Stiles says. “How we start when I ask.”

“Yes,” Peter responds, looking at him impatiently.

“I just wondered if there were rules for when I could ask,” Stiles says. “I mean, not now, I’m not asking now.”

“You wouldn’t get it now, Daddy has to go work,” Peter responds.

“Right, no, that’s what I meant,” Stiles says, feeling himself blush. He hates that response so much. “But today is a no orgasm day. Do I have to wait for an orgasm day or are those two things separate?”

“You can ask Daddy to make you come on any day you want,” Peter tells him. “Orgasm days are your schedule for getting yourself off. This works outside of that because I want to give it to you when you’re ready for it. If you have to wait too long, you’ll just overthink it and talk yourself out of it.”

“Yeah, probably,” Stiles agrees.

“And we do not want that, baby,” Peter says. “Embrace your wants. Never feel ashamed of them.”

Stiles nods, taking a breath. Is he ashamed? No, he’s just cautious. It’s not that he doesn’t trust Peter to guide him through this, he literally wants nothing more than to put himself in his hands, but he’s not sure he trusts himself. It’s so easy to get caught up in this. Body and brain need to work together. He’s not getting in too deep, having a panic attack and then making Peter regret ever buying him. He’s not going to prove himself to be defective goods.

“There are still rules, however,” Peter tells him. “You know the schedule and that will always come first. You can’t ask when Daddy needs to work. You can’t ask during mealtimes. The afternoons would be best but if you’re awake early enough you can ask for it before breakfast. After bath time is also acceptable but it would be a shame to get you all messy after I just cleaned you.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, trying to get his head around it all.

“Also, one orgasm a day,” Peter says. “If you get yourself off, don’t come to Daddy for seconds.”

“That’s fair,” Stiles nods.

Peter smiles at him. “You are such a good boy for me. I don’t know how you ever survived
without your Daddy.”

Stiles looks up at him, the words hitting him somewhere deep. He’s starting to wonder that as well.

Peter places a kiss on the top of Stiles’ head before he leaves him alone. Stiles looks behind himself at the bed. Peter said he could get back in after breakfast. That’s all the permission Stiles needs.

He moves over to Peter’s side, climbing under the blankets. He presses his face into the pillow, wondering what he’d be able to smell there. Contentment? Vulnerability? Happiness? Arousal? He smiles to himself. He wishes he had the ability to get under Peter’s skin like that. Maybe he does.

He snuggles into the warmth, wishing Peter were there with him. He admires Peter’s dedication to his work, whatever it is, but he wishes they had more time together. He wishes they could just stay in bed all day and kiss and cuddle and touch. Peter could read his book and Stiles could read his comics and Peter would fetch food for them from the kitchen and then they could make out some more. It sounds perfect. Peter has to take a vacation sometime, right?

Stiles can’t help coming back to the question of what Peter does in his study all morning. Work, he knows that, but he has no idea what it means. Whatever he does, he’s travelled for it. And somehow it involves an office? He wonders if the art is anything to do with it or if that’s just a hobby he picked up along the way. Maybe he works in a gallery or a museum. Maybe he goes around the world collecting beautiful things. Stiles wonders if he’s one of them. He’s never thought of himself as beautiful but that’s what Peter calls him. Stiles would never disbelieve him.

That’s Peter’s project though, whatever it is. Stiles needs his own. He thinks about what he would be researching if he were at home right now. Whatever was currently trying to kill them, probably. Nothing is trying to hurt him here though. He’s safe. He never thought that fact would leave him somehow bored. He wonders what the pack are up to now? Are they in danger? Do they need him? Have they given up looking for him already?

He shakes the thought away. He’s been obsessed with fact collecting long before his best friend got bitten by a werewolf and all of their lives were constantly in peril. He struggles to pick out what interested him in those days though. Back then it wasn’t focussed on getting an answer, solving a problem, it was just pure procrastination. He could lose whole evenings researching the history of the male circumcision purely because he had one tiny question that snowballed. He needs a question. He needs a purpose.

He wants this to be about more than just curiosity. He wants the knowledge to be something that will improve him. He lifts a hand up, playing idly with the crest embroidered into his shirt. He’s Peter’s now. He wants to be something that makes him better for Peter. That’s what he wants to learn how to do. It’s something he’s been curious about since he got here, since he stopped having it shoved down his throat at the Foundry. Those weren’t the real answers. He feels like, given the right resources, he might be able to find them for himself.

He rolls over, smiling up at the ceiling. He can make his own decisions. He tries not to let the doubt creep in that Peter might not like them. He said he wanted Stiles to choose something for himself. This is what he’s chosen.

He lifts his head, looking over at his toy box. He did what Peter asked. Now he deserves his comic.

He climbs out of bed, opening up his chest and taking the next issue out. He’s tempted to take it back to bed but he feels like he’s getting a little too indulgent with himself. Besides, he likes the window seat. He likes the view, the way it makes him feel like he’s almost outside. He sits down,
looking longingly at the trees. He doesn’t remember the last time he was outside. Yes he does, it was the day he arrived here with Peter, when he walked Stiles around to the back of the building and showed him this very view, the remoteness of it. It had felt scary then. It just looks beautiful now.

He remembers the time before that too though. He remembers being in the woods with Scott, the day he was taken. He remembers feeling so safe by Scott’s side. But Scott had run and Stiles was grabbed, slammed into the cold ground. He touches his temple. There’s no mark there now. He remembers the desperation in his voice when he called out for Scott, because he was weak and he needed saving. Scott didn’t make it in time. Stiles is sure that he tried though. Scott doesn’t know how to not at least try.

The thought makes Stiles feels so distraught, tears threatening his eyes as he chews on his lip. Scott will hold himself responsible for this. He’ll be carrying around the guilt of Stiles’ kidnapping, letting it wear him down. It hurts to think of him like that. Stiles wishes he could tell him he was okay. He wishes he could give him a hug and make it better and tell him there was nothing he could have done and, in the end, it didn’t turn out that bad. Peter is good to him. Peter looks after him. Stiles doesn’t think even knowing that would make Scott give up on him though. Scott always does the right thing. The right thing would be taking Stiles home. Wouldn’t it?

Stiles pushes the thought away. No more woods for him. As restless as he feels, maybe that’s a good thing. Bad things can’t get him while he’s safe in here.

He looks down at the comic in his hands, feeling that familiar little kid giddiness that had been lacking from his life before he came here. Too much violence and death and heartbreak. Stiles doesn’t miss that. And there’s nothing wrong with embracing his inner kid. It’s a world away from cuddling a teddy bear. He’s certain of that fact.

He opens up the comic, starting to read. It’s easy to forget about everything else and get pulled into the world of Gotham as he turns the pages. It’s a familiar place to be, even if the stories are new. Stiles likes exploring it from a new perspective. It puts a little distance between him and all his baggage. That can only be a good thing right now.

It ends on the inevitable cliffhanger and Stiles has to use all his willpower not to grab for the next comic. He has two left but he’s saving them for when Peter has to go to work and he’s left in the house by himself. He’ll need all the distractions and comfort he can get.

He lets his mind wander instead, thinking about what could happen next, how he would move the story forward, tie up all the loose ends. He reads through the comic again, looking for clues, the details he maybe missed the first time around. He likes spending so much time on his comics, really appreciating them. He doesn’t want to take anything for granted.

When he’s finally finished he places the comic back in his toy box and closes the lid, looking around the room. He still has some time to kill before lunch. His eyes fall on the bed. He could take a nap. That’s really not a productive way to spend his time though. Today feels like a finishing off day, a housekeeping day. He’s getting things in order for the next stage.

Their relationship is about to change, Stiles can feel that precipice, and he wants to throw himself off but he needs just a little bit more first. He wants his cuddles in bed. He wants the intimacy to be so all consuming that Stiles falls over the edge without having to push himself. Getting swept away is his new favourite feeling in the world. That and the fireflies. He loves that other place that he knows Peter can take him to, even if coming back from it is scary. He can learn to trust it though. Peter said he can take him back. Stiles wants to be taken.
That isn’t the only thing on his mind though. Once he starts his project he’s going to have a focus, something that’s his, and that feels pretty huge. He loves his presents that Peter has bought him, loves the contents of his toy box and the effort that’s gone into them, but presents are passive. This is something he has control over. Having things that truly belong to him, things that are important to him, that makes this home. Stiles can’t wait to turn that page.

Before he begins something new, he should finish what he started though. He gets to his feet, retrieving the copy of *Gulliver’s Travels* he’d abandoned as soon as he got more interesting things. He should really see it through though. He’s pretty sure he remembers how it ends from that cartoon version he watched as a kid, but that’s not the point. He likes the idea of closure. When you have the opportunity for a neat ending, you should take it. Stiles wants to finish the book.

He takes it to the window seat, slouching down and finding his place nestled amongst the pages. It doesn’t take that long to finish it, he was practically there already, and he feels something settle inside him as he closes the book back up again. Another thing ticked off, leaving more space for what comes next.

He replaces the book to the shelf on the wall, making sure to put it back exactly where he got it from. He knows how Peter feels about *order*. Stiles wants to roll his eyes but he kind of admires his discipline. Stiles is supposed to have discipline too, he remembers. He’s definitely going to work on it.

He trails a finger along the titles on the bookshelf like they might tell him some secret about Peter. He’s pretty sure they’re absolutely as pretentiously superficial as they look though. Peter seems like the kind of person who would want a one night stand to know that he *reads*. He’d want to be impressive. No more one night stands though. He promised. It’s all about Stiles now. Stiles doesn’t need impressing. He doubts that fact would make Peter get rid of what he’s pretty sure is an art installation though.

He smiles to himself, going to sit down on Peter’s side of the bed, picking up the book he’s actually reading. There’s a leather bookmark that Stiles opens it to, looking over the poem that Peter will be reading tonight. He flicks back through the pages, all short lines and structure. Stiles could never get hooked on anything that didn’t have a clear narrative. To be fair, he doesn’t love anything without pictures so he’s probably not the benchmark here.

It feels intimate, glancing through these pages that Peter reads in bed, when he’s at his most vulnerable before conceding to something as human as sleep. He wonders if these poems specifically mean anything to him but he doubts he’d get an answer if he asked. Peter is the biggest puzzle of all. Stiles wonders if he has it in him to solve it.

When Peter comes up to collect him for lunch, Stiles is sprawled on top of the covers but he’s not actually *in* the bed so he doesn’t feel like a total waste of space. Besides, he’s been productive. He can sprawl if he wants.

Peter comes to stand over him, eyes hungrily taking him in, and Stiles kind of wants to squirm. Or preen. Or maybe just grab him. He’s not sure if that’s allowed. Maybe he should ask.

“Your shirt is riding up and you look like a slut,” Peter says, perfectly matter of fact.

“Huh?” Stiles asks, lifting his head. Peter’s right, there’s a sliver of his stomach showing above the pants that sit low on his hips. He tugs the shirt down.

“You spoil all my fun,” Peter says, sitting down on the bed beside him. “Did you have a think like I asked.”
“Yeah,” Stiles says, sitting up and trying to push away how good the word slut sounded on Peter’s lips. He’s not supposed to find that hot, is he?

“And?” Peter prompts.

“I think I know what I want to research,” Stiles says, playing with his hands in his lap. “I don’t know if you’ll want me to though.”

“It’s got nothing to do with what I want,” Peter says. “It’s your project.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I just don’t know if you’ll want me focussing on this. I mean, I’m doing it with the best intentions. I just don’t want you to think…”

“Stiles,” Peter cuts him off firmly. “Tell me what it is.”

Stiles levels his gaze at Peter. If he wants this he has to be able to justify it like a big boy. “I want to learn about being a Companion,” he says. “I don’t mean the propaganda they played into my room at the Foundry and I don’t mean the vague mentions they skim over in school. I want to learn about the history and how it translates to modern life and why it started and how it started and the statistics of it all and who chooses this life and who buys Companions and what they do with them. I just… want to know what I am. I want to put it in some kind of context.”

“Take a breath, darling,” Peter says, putting a hand on his arm. Stiles looks down at it and then up at him. He breathes. He didn’t realise he wasn’t. “I think that’s a good idea,” Peter tells him. “I don’t know what you’re so anxious about.”

“I just really don’t want that to sound ungrateful because I’m grateful and I’m happy and I want to stay here,” Stiles says. “But I want to understand what it means. And I want to understand how we ended up with a society where fathers sell their only sons and nothing happens to them.”

His eyes fall down and he can feel the tears brimming up but he grits his teeth. He’s angry, he tells himself. He’s not sad, he’s just hurt. Either way, his dad doesn’t deserve his tears. Stiles hopes that he’s miserable with all his money.

Peter squeezes his arm, warm and reassuring. “That’s an answer that’s important,” he says. “I know a good academic bookstore, I’m sure I can find you something to get you started. I’ll look into some more specialised texts from there.”

Stiles looks up at him. “Thank you,” he says earnestly. He’s not sure it conveys even half of his gratitude but he hopes the sincerity comes through.

Peter reaches into his pocket for the key. “Let’s get some lunch.”

Stiles eats in happy silence, so relieved that Peter would understand why he’d want to learn about this. Stiles has never felt so supported, so encouraged. He knows he has less responsibilities now, no homework, no lurking evil to figure out on a ticking clock, no college applications. It’s easy for Peter to let him spend his time on what interests him. He still has his training to do though, Peter’s rules to learn. He wants to be the best Companion for Peter. He’s glad that Peter seems to understand that and is letting him have the tools to better himself alongside the guiding hand that Peter has offered all along.

“What do you want to do this afternoon,” Peter asks him as he clears the plates away.

Stiles looks up at him. He wants to be led. “What happened to my training?” he asks.
Peter turns away from the sink to look at him. “We’re not there yet, sweetheart. There’s an order to these things.”

“But I want to learn,” Stiles says.

“You are,” Peter tells him.

“You told me mornings were for you to work and afternoons were to train me,” Stiles says.

Peter looks amused, moving towards him. “And I appreciate your eagerness. But we’re not at the stage where we can just jump in yet. You’ve done so well in stage one, and we can start on stage two whenever you’re ready. You can ask for that now, but I have a feeling you’re not going to. Then we have stage three, which is multifaceted and is going to teach you so much. Once you’ve mastered that, I think you might be ready for regular training sessions. You might be ready for Daddy to take the reins. But there’s an order, it’s been carefully planned out for you, you have to work through that first. That’s your training.”

“I want to be good for you,” Stiles says.

“You are good,” Peter says. “So good.”

Stiles’ eyes flick away. That’s not really what he meant. He wants to be experienced. He wants to not be some untalented little virgin. Peter deserves better than that. He’s used to better than that. Stiles doesn’t think he can possibly compare. Peter’s right though, he’s not even ready to ask Peter to get him off, what more can he possibly expect to learn from him if he won’t allow something as pathetically high school as that.

He looks up at Peter, feeling himself start to spiral, and he wants to cling to him. He feels safe in his arms. “Can you take me to that place?” he asks. “That place in my head. You said you could.”

Peter gives him an indulgent smile. “I can. But that comes later. And I don’t know how you want me to take you there when you won’t even let me touch you.”

“You can touch me,” Stiles insists. He stares into Peter’s eyes and he nearly says the words, nearly asks, but he doesn’t want it to be impulsive. He has his own order to things, just like Peter does. He wants to be sure that he’s ready before he opens that door.

Peter takes a step closer to where Stiles sits on his stool, their bodies almost brushing together. “And where can I touch you?” he asks.

Stiles looks down at Peter’s hand, deciding that he’s brave enough to reach out and take hold of it. That’s what Peter wants, isn’t it? He guides Peter’s hand upwards, pressing his palm against the side of his face, leaning his weight into it.

“Here.”

Peter holds him steady, stroking his thumb over Stiles’ cheekbone, making him give a little shiver. He holds Peter’s wrist, guiding him down to the back of his neck.

“And here.”

Peter squeezes him, making something release in Stiles’ body. That’s what you do with puppies, isn’t it? Grab them by the scruff of the neck. He moves Peter’s hand to his shoulder, letting the heavy weight rest there for a moment before he pulls it down to his chest, pressing against his heart that’s beating too fast. Peter probably knew that before he felt it though.
Stiles guides his hand lower, to his waist, feeling weak as Peter holds him firmly. He’s so strong. So solid. Stiles’ whole body responds in some kind of biological way. He pushes down further, to his hip, Peter’s fingers digging into the bone. A needy noise escapes Stiles’ mouth. He’s practically there, at his dick, which is very interested in that fact. One tiny push. That’s all it would take.

He’s getting ahead of himself again though. Peeking behind the curtain, that’s what Peter said. He wants to feel like he has the basic skills mastered before he rushes ahead. He will not let Peter find him lacking.

He reaches up with his other hand, daring himself, brushing his fingertips against Peter’s mouth and then moving back to touch his own. He lets his hand drop down, heavy in his lap.

“I can touch your lips with my lips?” Peter asks.

Stiles nods. “Yes, please.”

“Show me,” Peter urges.

Stiles slides off his stool, Peter’s hand on his hip holding him steady, or maybe tugging him closer, Stiles isn’t even sure. He leans against Peter’s body and reaches upwards, brushing their lips together. It’s as tentative as the kiss they shared in bed yesterday but this time he can feel all of Peter, and Peter can feel all of him. Every needy last bit.

Stiles tries not to think about that, lifting his arms to wrap around Peter’s neck. He brushes their lips together again, makes his bottom lip catch on Peter’s in invitation, but he doesn’t take the hint, keeps his movements just as gentle as Stiles. Stiles tries pressing firmer, wants to lick into his mouth, he knows how to do this, but he knows how to do it with teenagers. Usually drunk teenagers. How do grown-ups kiss?

He pulls back, looking up at Peter. “Sorry,” he says. “I’m not very good at this.”

“Who told you that?” Peter asks, and the question sounds so genuine.

Stiles shrugs. “I’m just not. I haven’t done it much.”

“You’ve kissed six people,” Peter says. “Four girls and two boys.”

Stiles leans back, raising an eyebrow at him. “Are you seriously going to try and play that off as not creepy?”

“It’s attentive,” Peter says.

Stiles laughs. “Sure.” He looks up at Peter. “Anyway, it’s seven people. Four girls, two boys and one man.”


He makes like he’s going to pull away and Stiles grabs hold of him. “I want to kiss you.”

“We were just doing that,” Peter points out. “You stopped.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees with a sigh. He rests his head on Peter’s shoulder because sometimes it’s easier to not look at him. He’s so competent and composed. It makes Stiles feel so helpless. “Can you teach me how?”
Peter cranes his neck to look down at him. “You want me to teach you how to kiss?”

Stiles nods his head, daring to meet his eyes. “Will you?”

Peter presses his mouth into a hard line, thinking. “I didn’t account for that so it’s not officially on the plan.”

Stiles feels his cheeks heat with shame. Whatever Peter paid for him, it was too much. He’s made allowances for him being an inexperienced virgin, but Stiles doesn’t even have the fundamentals down. He can’t even do something he should have learnt in elementary school.

“I suppose we could fit in a little crash course,” Peter says. “You’re so eager to be trained, let’s feed that instinct.”

Stiles lifts his head, not sure if Peter is being condescending or not. He struggles with that a lot. He’s getting what he wants though. He knows that means he needs to be grateful.

“Thank you,” he says.

Peter smiles at him. “Let’s get a little more comfortable.”

He pulls Stiles’ arms from around his neck, taking hold of his hand and leading him through to the living room. They sit on the couch, side by side, and Stiles chews on his lip while he waits, his whole body filled with anticipation. Peter lifts up his hand, running his finger over his trapped lip.

“You’re going to need to let go of that for me,” he says. “Mine.”

Stiles releases his lip, plumping it out for Peter to run his finger over again.

“Good boy,” Peter praises. “How do you want to do this? Do you want to kiss me? Do you want me to kiss you?”

“Please just kiss me,” Stiles says, the words coming out a little too desperate.

Peter’s eyes sparkle with amusement. “You wish is my command.”

Stiles should definitely feel condescended now but he’s not sure he has the presence of mind. Peter shifts his body, angling himself towards Stiles, and Stiles mirrors him, closing his eyes as Peter touches the side of his face. Peter presses his lips against Stiles’, firmer than Stiles’ attempts but still chaste. Stiles feels a heat in his chest as Peter moves a fraction and does it again, dry lips catching on Stiles’. Stiles makes a noise of encouragement, as though Peter needs cheerleading, Peter who probably barely even sees this as sexual. Meanwhile, Stiles is trying to ignore the way his dick is tenting the front of his pants.

Peter uses the same move as Stiles, making their lips catch together, but he doesn’t hesitate, licking at the seam of an opening he makes, tongue hooking under Stiles’ upper lip. Stiles groans, opening his mouth, jaw going slack. Peter smiles against him, hand going to cradle the back of Stiles’ head as he fits their mouths together, sucking on Stiles’ lower lip. Stiles sighs, leaning his weight into Peter as he worries Stiles’ lip between his teeth. It makes a shudder to through his body and Peter puts his other hand on Stiles’ waist, holding him steady.

Stiles tilts his head, forcing their mouths together more firmly. He knows he should be patient, he asked for Peter to show him, but he feels like he wants to claw his way out of his own skin. He needs to taste Peter. He needs to feel that utter abandonment. Peter grips the back of his neck, Stiles whimpering as he feels himself go limp.
“Good boy,” Peter mutters against his lips, the words all breath, and then his tongue is surging into Stiles’ mouth.

Stiles moans, his body arching, hands fisted in Peter’s sweater. He tastes earthy, like he’s grown in the wilderness around them. Stiles wonders if that’s a wolf thing. He’s never kissed a werewolf before. He’s never kissed anyone like this. He’s shoved his tongue in someone’s mouth before, has licked his way inside, slid his tongue against theirs, but he’s never felt anything as primal and right as this.

Peter feels like he’s trying to devour him, powerful and wild, but he never feels out of control. Everything is carefully measured, every tightening of his hands, every surge of his tongue, every nip of teeth and harsh brush of lips. At first Stiles feels like he’s just trying to survive it, riding it out like he’s under attack, but then he wants more. He pulls at Peter, needing him closer, Peter responding by shoving him back onto the couch, covering his body with his own.

Everything slows down then, or maybe Stiles just can’t keep up anymore. He’s not sure he can breathe beneath Peter’s weight. Peter slides his tongue into his mouth but it’s smoother, more reverent. He flicks it up to lick the roof of Stiles’ mouth before he pulls back, Stiles gasping in his absence.

“How are you doing there?” he asks.

Stiles nods, not opening his eyes. “Uh-huh.”

“How-huh is not an answer, Stiles,” Peter says.

Stiles opens his eyes, gazing up at him breathlessly. “So good. Kiss now, please.”

Peter smiles at him, slow and predatory. “If you insist.”

Stiles’ eyes fall closed before their mouths meet again. He arches his neck, sliding a hand into Peter’s hair so that he doesn’t pull back again, as though he really has the power to stop him. He moans into Peter’s mouth as Peter’s tongue slides against his, so sensuous, like it’s trying to unravel him. Stiles presses his body upwards, his hard dick pressing against Peter’s hip. He makes a mortified noise, too hot all over. This isn’t supposed to be about sex, but nobody told his body that.

As Peter pushes him further down into the couch cushions though, he realises he’s definitely not the only one who’s hard. His eyes go wide, squeaking as their mouths open somehow wider to each other. There’s something about the thought of Peter not being in total control of himself that makes Stiles want to fall apart all the faster. He knows that it’s just a natural reaction to heat and friction and the slide of their tongues, that it’s not necessarily even anything to do with Stiles specifically, but it still makes this feel like it’s something they’re sharing, not just something Peter is doing to him. They’re doing it to each other.

Filthy images flash through his head, all the places this could go, but then he realises that, even if he does ask for more, if he follows his body’s wants, all he can ask for is Peter to get him off. Touching Peter was never part of the deal. He wonders if that comes in stage three or if Stiles just doesn’t have that right as a Companion. Peter’s body isn’t there for his benefit. Stiles is here to serve. Peter is already filling more whims than he deserves.

He closes his eyes, melts under Peter, lets himself be kissed. He pays attention to what Peter’s doing because he’s supposed to be learning and Peter is showing him how he likes it. Stiles needs to be able to recreate this. If he wants to be good for Peter, this is his chance to find out how.
Peter kisses him slow and deep. He cradles Stiles’ head, keeping his head tipped back for better access. His thumb rubs at the spot below Stiles’ ear. His other hand is below Stiles, resting at the curve of his lower back, adding a counter pressure to the weight of his hips. His wet mouth drags over Stiles’ before he dips back in to taste him again. His dick is so fucking hard against Stiles’ thigh.

Stiles moans, unable to stop himself, pushing up with his hips to rub his cock against Peter, making a strangled noise at the friction.

“Ah ah ah,” Peter chides as he sits up, leaving Stiles panting and utterly bereft.

“Wha’?”

“You’re not allowed to come today,” Peter says. He looks pointedly down at Stiles’ crotch. The soft material of his pants leaves nothing to the imagination. He wonders if that’s why Peter chose it. “Not unless you ask in a very specific way.”

Stiles stares at him, trying to catch his breath. “I wasn’t the only one who’s…” He gestures vaguely, losing his nerve. “…into it.”

“No,” Peter agrees easily. “But I can come any time I want.” He smirks, bracing himself on the couch cushion beside Stiles, leaning over him. “I could come right now. Looking at your flushed face and your pretty, swollen lips.”

Stiles feels another wave of arousal threaten to drown him. His tongue flicks out over his lips, power of suggestion, and Peter looks so pleased.

“Do you want that?” Peter asks. “You want Daddy to come on you and mark you all up?”

Stiles stares at him, open mouthed. The mental image alone is too much. Peter, beautiful, together Peter, straddling him with his cock out, touching himself, face flushed, dishevelled, as he shoots come over Stiles’ body. Stiles blinks at him with damp eyes, trying to remember what words are so he can say yes please.

Peter gives a little chuckle, sitting back up. “That’s not stage two. And it’s not kissing.”

Stiles sags, not even bothering to hide his disappointment. Peter’s right, Stiles knows that, they’re really missing several steps if they’re going to get into porn star moves like that. It’s cruel of him to dangle it in front of Stiles when he’s a mess of lust and hormones though. Dangle it and take it away.

Peter pushes out a breath and then looks down at Stiles, considering him. He’s irritatingly composed. “Do I need to put you in a cold shower?”

Stiles sags, not even bothering to hide his disappointment. Peter’s right, Stiles knows that, they’re really missing several steps if they’re going to get into porn star moves like that. It’s cruel of him to dangle it in front of Stiles when he’s a mess of lust and hormones though. Dangle it and take it away.

Peter pushes out a breath and then looks down at Stiles, considering him. He’s irritatingly composed. “Do I need to put you in a cold shower?”

Stiles stares up at him. “Your shower looks amazing.”

“It is amazing,” Peter agrees, looking smug. “I am a firm believer in high water pressure.”

“Mmm,” Stiles hums.

“So you want a cold shower?” Peter asks. “Bear in mind, you’ll be going in with your clothes on.”

Stiles shakes his head. That is literally the last thing he wants. Peter probably wouldn’t even give him any clean ones to put on afterwards.
“You need to calm down then,” Peter tells him. “Or you need to ask.”

Stiles takes a slow, deep breath. “Calming down.”

“Okay,” Peter agrees.

Stiles closes his eyes, pretending like he’s in gym class and Coach is going to humiliate him if he doesn’t get his body under control right now. It’s a situation he knows from experience. He did it then, he can do it now.

He feels the pressure ease, pulling himself into a sitting position. He’s still too hot, his skin overly sensitive like all his nerve endings have been charged, but he can think a little more clearly and his dick isn’t trying to impale his own stomach. He looks over at Peter who gives him a gentle smile.

“You’re a good kisser,” Peter tells him.

Stiles snorts a laugh. “All I did was let you kiss me, I couldn’t be bad at that.”

“You’d be surprised,” Peter says dryly with a roll of his eyes. He levels his gaze at Stiles. “And you were an enthusiastic participant, my dear. You kissed me back. With feeling. It was very lovely. Trust me, you’re good at it.”

Stiles looks down with a shrug. “You’re a good teacher.”

“Take some credit,” Peter says wearily. “Take a fucking compliment, Stiles.”

Stiles lifts his gaze, feeling chastised. “Thank you,” he says meekly.

Peter nods, looking at him. “You okay?”

“Fine,” Stiles responds. “Sexual frustration isn’t going to kill me.”

“There’s a solution,” Peter points out.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “But I have my own little tick list.”

“Oh yeah?” Peter asks, intrigued. “And what do we need to tick off?”

Stiles shrugs. “Intimacy. A feeling.” He shakes his head. He’s being deliberately vague, some part of him worried that if he tells Peter what he really needs, he’s going to rush through it and then Stiles will have to say yes. He’ll have to ask. Stiles needs this to be on his own terms. He feels like, at the end of the day, Peter wants that too.

“Well you let me know when you have all your boxes filled,” Peter says.

They play a game of chess, though Stiles’ mind is so far from focussed that it doesn’t take them very long. He tries to pull himself out of his own head, tries to work out what moves he needs to make, but every time Peter reaches out to move a chess piece, he imagines those fingers getting him off, every time Peter touches his mouth thoughtfully, he imagines lips pressed bruisingly against his own, tongue swiping wetly inside. And then, just because his brain is a pervert, the recurring memory of what Peter’s hard dick felt like pressed against his thigh. He was under Peter’s skin. It didn’t really do him any good though.

When Peter sits him down on the bed later, locking the cuff in place so that he can go and make dinner, he looks down at him critically.
“You’re not allowed to touch your cock.”

“I know that,” Stiles assures him.

“I can smell how horny you are,” Peter says. “It’s delicious. But no touching.”

“I won’t,” Stiles promises. “I’m a good boy.”

“So good,” Peter agrees. He hooks his fingers under Stiles’ chin, tilting his head up and pressing a chaste kiss to his lips. “Is that okay?” he asks. Stiles nods, gazing at him with soft eyes. “Any time I want?” Peter prompts. Stiles nods again. “I need you to say it, baby.”

“You can kiss me any time you want,” Stiles parrots. “I like it,” he adds.

Peter smiles at him. “I like it too.” He trails his fingers down Stiles’ neck and then steps back, taking one last lingering look at Stiles before he turns around, leaving the room.

Stiles sits there, idly twisting the chain in his fingers as he tries not to let his mind run away with him. The thought of kisses and cuddles and touches being a part of their normal gives him a sense of calm and belonging. He would have expected giddiness and maybe a bit of preening but it just feels nice, in the least generic way possible. It feels grown-up. It feels stable. It’s the intimacy he keeps claiming he needs before he moves this forward.

The thoughts keep going around in his head during dinner, but Stiles feels like they’ll settle if he lets them. They’ll just become a fact. Stiles likes facts, they’re comforting. He strings them together to make theories that are almost always right.

When Peter is running his bath, Stiles finds himself drawn to the bedroom window, looking up at the clear sky. “The moon’s almost full,” he comments.

“Yeah,” Peter agrees distractedly.

“Does it affect you?” Stiles asks.

“I’m a werewolf,” Peter says irritably. “Of course it affects me.”


“Stiles, I’m a born werewolf,” Peter says. “I grew out of that in puberty.”

“Right,” Stiles says. “I wonder how Liam’s doing.”

“Who’s Liam?” Peter asks in a tone of voice that suggests he really doesn’t want to know.

“Scott’s Beta,” Stiles says. “We had to chain him to a tree a while ago. He was doing better though.”

“Do you just have a band of merry teenage werewolves?” Peter asks, derision dripping from his voice.

“Kind of,” Stiles says. He stares at the moon with a sigh. “I miss them.”

“Scott?” Peter asks. “And, who else was it? Lydia?”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees.
“The one you objectified,” Peter says casually.

Stiles turns to look at him. “What? I didn’t do that.”

“You told me in great detail how she was a part of your sexual fantasy,” Peter points out.

“Because you made me,” Stiles argues.

“Sweetheart, I didn’t go back in time and make little freshman you turn her into a two-dimensional porn star,” Peter responds.

“She’s my friend now,” Stiles insists, looking back out of the window with a pout. “I respect her. I always respected her. I was just dumb.”

“I wonder if she’d be your friend if she heard that story,” Peter muses.

“She knows I had a crush on her,” Stiles says.

“A crush is flattering,” Peter says. “I doubt she’d be flattered by that.”

Stiles turns to look at him again. “Why are you being like this?”

“I’m just pointing out that you considered this girl a prize between you and some other guy,” Peter says. “It’s not the best basis for a meaningful friendship.”

Stiles can feel the tension rising in his body. “It had nothing to do with Jackson, he’s an asshole, the only reason…”

The taps shut off abruptly and Peter gets up, coming through to stand in front of him. “What did you just say?”

Stiles feels his indignation falter. “What? I was just… It wasn’t about Jackson because…”

“What word did you just say?” Peter asks tightly.

Stiles frowns. He goes back over his previous sentences and then he catches it. Asshole. Right.

“Sorry,” he says.

Peter shakes his head. “I am sick of repeating myself, Stiles.”

Stiles tries very hard not to roll his eyes. “I…”

“Corner,” Peter says, gesturing to the edge of the room “Now.”

Stiles stares at him. “What?”

“Go and kneel in the corner, facing the wall,” Peter tells him. He reaches into his pocket, taking out his cell phone. “Eighteen minutes. One for every year. That’s what you do to toddlers.” He looks up from setting the timer on his phone. Stiles just gapes at him. “You do not want me to have to ask again, Stiles.”

Stiles feels himself go cold. He’s never been actually scared of Peter, not since he first got here, but there’s something in his eye now that Stiles knows not to mess with. He turns around, going to the corner of the room and lowering himself onto his knees.

“If you move or talk, the timer starts again,” Peter tells him.
Stiles gives a tiny nod and wonders if that’s too much. He can feel tears pricking at his eyes already. He feels so ashamed. All he was trying to do was protect his friend, her reputation, the very real relationship that they shared. Maybe he used to be gross, but never to her face. All teenage boys are gross, aren’t they? He didn’t think he was particularly deviant. And maybe he was a pain in her ass all those years that he was pining after her, but he was never inappropriate, was he? He never disrespected her. If anything, he worshipped the ground she walked on.

That’s not what he’s supposed to be thinking about now though. He’s supposed to be thinking about what he did wrong. Part of him is so incensed that he would get into trouble about something so stupid. Even his dad never really cared when he swore. His dad hasn’t proved to be the best role model in the world though. Peter looks after him and he doesn’t ask that much in return. He’s right, he’s pulled Stiles up on his language so many times already, has told him he needs to make better word choices, and Stiles hasn’t taken that on board. He hasn’t listened. He hasn’t been a good boy.

A tear falls down his cheek and Stiles doesn’t dare reach up to wipe it away. He doesn’t want the timer to start again. He doesn’t want to be here for a second longer than he has to. He stares at the wall, his breaths shuddery, imagining Peter behind him, filled with disappointment. If he can even bear to look at him. Stiles goes on about wanting to be everything Peter desires of him and then he can’t even follow a simple instruction. He’s so stupid. He’s let Peter down. He can’t even be mad at Jackson for inciting the anger that made him slip up. It was just his own thoughtlessness. He didn’t care enough.

Stiles starts to wonder if the timer has been reset because it seems to go on forever. There’s no way eighteen minutes can stretch on this long. It feels like an eternity. He feels so lonely, cut off from Peter, the one thing he never wants. He spends all morning waiting for him to come collect him for lunch. He craves his presence, needs it, because Peter keeps him level. He keeps him safe. And now he’s cut off because he couldn’t be good.

He wants to let out a sob, wants to bow his head down, but he can’t take any more. He holds his body stiff, breathes determinately in and out, because then Peter has to let him up again, doesn’t he? He’s doing the right thing. He’s doing what he’s been asked. He listened to the instructions. He’s being good.

After a while, breathing starts to feel like less of a chore and he’s simply doing what Peter asked without having to think about it. It makes him feel a little calmer. The timer on Peter’s cell phone makes him jump and he bites down on the noise, as well as the hope that surges through him. He’s not moving until Peter says he can.

“Turn around,” Peter says.

Stiles does, moving onto his ass as he leans against the wall. Peter crouches down in front of him, a sympathetic look on his face. There’s no anger there now. Stiles takes some solace in that fact.

“Why did you get put in time out?” Peter asks.

Stiles blinks, trying to compose himself. He wants his voice to be strong. “I said a bad word.”

“And what’s wrong with that?” Peter prompts.

“I’m not allowed to say bad words,” Stiles answers. “You told me that. You gave me chances before. I’m sorry I didn’t try hard enough. I won’t do it again.”

Peter smiles at him. “That’s a good boy. Give me a hug.”
He opens his arms and Stiles throws himself at him, pressing his face into Peter chest. Peter holds him, cradling him there, stroking a hand through his hair. Stiles has never felt so safe and loved.

“It’s over now,” Peter tells him softly. “Finished. We’re done with that. You learn your lesson and you move on.”

Stiles nods his head. He’s learnt. He won’t do that again. He doesn’t like being bad.

Peter places a kiss against his temple and then eases him away, putting him back on the floor. “I need to finish running your bath.”

Stiles nods, even as he wants to cling to him. He wants his bath. He wants his Daddy to take care of him.

“Sit in the window seat and wait for me,” Peter says. “And wipe your face. I’ll tell you when it’s ready.”

Stiles gets up on shaky legs, curling himself into the window seat, but he doesn’t look at the moon again. He listens to the water instead, staring at the bathroom doorway as he lifts his T-shirt up to wipe at his damp face.

Peter smiles softly at him when he comes to get him, taking him by the hand and leading him through to the bathroom. He turns to leave Stiles to get undressed and Stiles almost asks him to stay. He lets him close the door though. He strips, climbing into the bath, and he waits.

As Peter hands him the washcloth, Stiles thinks that this is probably the last time he’ll do this by himself. After Peter makes him come, he’s going to do this himself. Stiles doesn’t think he’s going to hold out another day. He doesn’t think he wants to. He never wants space between them again.

He cleans below the water, handing the cloth to Peter to clean above. He closes his eyes and hands himself over, making happy little noises when Peter washes his hair. There’s so much affection there. Peter takes such good care of him.

When he’s dried and dressed, Peter leads him again by the hand, taking him to bed. Stiles moves the pillows from between them as Peter climbs in. He looks at him with doe eyes but he doesn’t dare ask. He doesn’t know if he deserves it now.

Peter picks up his book, the one that Stiles had flicked through earlier, finding his page and holding it open with one hand. He lifts his other arm up in invitation and Stiles goes to him, clinging to Peter’s side. Peter holds him there securely like he might slip away, fingers stroking up and down Stiles’ arm as he falls into a blissful sleep.

**Chapter End Notes**

Just FYI, I’ve added some extra content tags to the fic. It doesn't mean the tone or content will be changing, just making it a little more explicit what the themes are.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Just FYI, I've added some extra content tags to the fic. It doesn't mean the tone or content will be changing, just making it a little more explicit what the themes are.

Stiles sits down in the window seat, lifting his foot up so that Peter can lock the cuff in place. He stays leaned over Stiles, their faces close together, and Stiles feels the warmth spreading through his chest. He wants to touch him. He wants to tell him not to go do his work. It’s not his place though.

“You can have an orgasm today,” Peter says.

Stiles nods his head, feeling the anticipation growing. “Thank you.”

Peter smiles at him, that slow smile that lights up his eyes. “You are just the most precious thing.” He closes the gap between them, brushing their lips together, and Stiles makes a pleased little noise. Peter pulls back. “Be good. I’ll see you at lunchtime.”

“Bye,” Stiles says, watching him leave. He feels so floaty and lovely and content. He woke up in Peter’s arms this morning. He was the little spoon. It felt like literal perfection.

He sighs, looking at his toy box. He’s saving his last two comics for tomorrow when Peter leaves him. He’s trying very hard not to think about that. He’s nervous about it already. Peter being downstairs is too far away. But Stiles has to be grateful. Peter is working hard for him, earning money for him, providing for him. Stiles can’t reasonably complain about that, no matter how bored and lonely he gets.

But if he’s saving his last two comics then his toy box holds nothing that interests him today. He feels like a brat just thinking it. He could be in the basement still with no sense of day or night, no stimulus except for a flickering bulb and occasional scraps of food. He could be in the Foundry with those videos trying to brainwash him, no peace of mind. At least there he got exercise every few days though. He looks longingly out of the window. He can’t remember what fresh air is like. He wonders if Peter would let him go out in the yard, just to stretch his legs and fill his lungs with forest air. Maybe he’d at least let him open the window. Peter’s already so good to him though. Stiles doesn’t dare ask for more.

Stiles needs to do something with his day though, to stave off the restlessness until Peter comes to get him. Tomorrow, Peter is going to get his research book and Stiles will have something of his own to spend his time on. He won’t be so reliant on Peter. His time with Peter will be a want rather than a necessity to his sanity. He feels like that will be good for both of them. Stiles will be less annoying if he’s a little more secure. It took far too much self-control not to cling to Peter and beg him not to leave this morning.

And Stiles knows what he would usually do with this mixture of boredom and insecurity. He’d put his hand around his dick and give himself something very compelling to think about instead. Any mood could be overridden by getting off. It was like a reset button that flooded his brain with chemicals that made everything else go to oblivion.
Stiles is allowed an orgasm, but he’s not going to take it. Not yet. He wants to wait. He wants Peter to do it for him. He wants them to share it.

He has to bite down on his lip to stop himself grinning at the thought, giddiness bubbling up inside him. The way Peter had kissed him yesterday almost had him coming apart at the seams. His hands make Stiles feel like he’s coming alive and Peter hasn’t even touched him in the good places yet. Their bodies pressed together like they were yesterday, but this time Peter’s hand sliding past his waistband, wrapping around his dick. Is that what it will be like? Stiles hopes so. Everything Peter does is sensual, even washing him. Surely this has to be the same. He wouldn’t make it bland and practical, a means to an end. Stiles doesn’t think he’s capable of that. Everything about him screams passion and sexuality.

And now Stiles is hard. He rolls his eyes at himself, sitting back in the window seat and refusing to touch it. He’s not allowed to touch his dick unless he’s washing it, using the bathroom or getting himself off with permission. Just because he’s allowed an orgasm, that doesn’t give him a free pass to play with himself without intent. He’s waiting for Peter. That means he’s just going to have to leave his hard on pressed awkwardly against his pants and try to think of something else.

He doesn’t have many other things to think about though. His head is filled with Peter, with hot bodies pressed together in bed, with sweet kisses before Peter peeled away from him to take a shower, with the way Peter looked naked, his back to Stiles, pulling his clothes on. None of that is making his dick go down.

He closes his eyes, breathes, tries to centre himself. He’s not going to be a slave to his body. He needs better discipline than that. That’s what Peter is trying to teach him. He’s giving him the tools to help himself. Mindfulness. Stiles looks over at the toy box. At least colouring a picture would give him something to do. Peter thinks it a good idea. Stiles can’t argue with that.

He gets to his feet, moving over to his toy box and opening up the lid. As he reaches for the colouring book, his journal catches his eyes. A place for his thoughts. A place for him to work through whatever’s on his mind. Stiles has things on his mind that he’d like to let go of, but he’s not sure going there will be such a pleasant experience. He has to purge himself though. If he wants to be Peter’s, he has to let go of everything else.

He pulls out the journal and a pen, taking them back to the window seat. He opens it to the second page, touching the words there. With Peter. I belong. He smiles, feeling calmer. He knows what’s on the other side of that page, everything that Stiles was, and he knows now that simply turning the page isn’t enough. He thinks back to last night, talking about his friends, what Peter had said about Lydia. He remembers his own reaction, the one that had gotten him put in time out.

His chest tightens, making him want to curl into a ball. He’s learning from it though, and that means it was worth it. He stares down at the words in front of him, refusing to look at the corner where Peter made him kneel. I belong. He feels it more surely now than he ever has before. He misses his friends, but would he give Peter up for them? No way. He’d let the world burn down before he let that happen. He tries to ignore the knot of guilt that settles in his stomach. They’d understand. If he could explain it to them, they’d understand.

He turns to a fresh page, starting to write.

Lydia

I know that if you weren’t a banshee and you didn’t get dragged into this world, you would probably still be blissfully unaware of my existence. Lucky you. But you got thrown into a situation where you couldn’t escape the dorky kid who had a crush on you. I’m glad I got the chance to
I knew you for who you really were though. I’m glad I got to fall in love with you for real, even if it turned out to be platonic.

I’m sorry if I ever made you feel uncomfortable. If I was ever inappropriate. I’m sorry if I ever made you feel like less than the smartest person in any room you walked into. I wasn’t just in awe of your beauty and your strawberry blonde hair. I was never just in awe of that. It’s how you presented yourself though. You can’t blame me too much for falling into the trap.

That’s not fair. Apologies don’t come with excuses. I drooled over you. I fantasised about you. I objectified you. That wasn’t right. I want you to know that I know it wasn’t right. I valued every second of our friendship. I valued you. I’m sorry we started on such a rocky foundation because of my immaturity. I’m not that kid anymore. I don’t even recognise him now. We’ve been through so much.

I guess you’ll be going away to college soon. Enjoy your last few months. Don’t waste them looking for me. I doubt I left a gaping hole in the pack. I don’t have any powers. I can’t fight. You’re smarter than me so you can’t be missing my brain. I was always obsessive rather than clever anyway. You’ll probably get there faster without my distractions. You’re all going to be fine. I know you are. I’m counting on it.

I’m good. I’m happy. I don’t want you to find me. I have someone to look after me. To love me. We’re all going to be okay.

Love you forever

Stiles wipes at a tear from the corner of his eye before it can fall. This is his happy ending, he doesn’t need to cry. He wishes he could send this to her for real. He wonders if Peter would do it if he asked. He has to understand closure, right? Stiles was torn so cruelly from his life. He ended up in such a wonderful place but he never got to say goodbye. Everyone should get a chance to say goodbye.

He takes a deep breath, turning the page.

Scott

He shakes his head, worried the tears are going to fall for real. He can’t do this right now. There’s way too much to say to Scott. It’s a tie he doesn’t think he’s strong enough to sever. That’s not disloyal to Peter, is it? It’s not like he’s trying to run away. It’s not like he’s crying out for help. He’s committed to Peter. He’d give him anything. Can’t he do that and have a best friend as well?

Stiles slams the journal closed and places it on the other side of the window seat, hugging his knees to himself. He just needs to get things a little more in perspective. Scott was the only thing he had once upon a time, when his mom was dead and his dad was drinking and no one else wanted to know. It’s a lot to let go of. This is just a transitional period. He’ll be able to write the letter soon. He can be loyal to Scott and Peter for a little while.

He presses his face against the cool glass, feeling his restlessness growing. He wants to do something with his body but that particular thing will have to wait until this afternoon. It’s not even about sex though, about being horny, about his body already being conditioned to morning orgasms on the days that he’s allowed them. He wants to use his limbs, wants to run and climb, wants to do something.

He gets to his feet with a frustrated groan, knowing he’s limited to what he can achieve. He starts to pace, careful of his chain, and then he just jumps up and down, shaking out his arms, like maybe
he can throw this feeling off him. It doesn’t work. He gets down on the ground, does a few push ups. His technique is terrible and his arms are too weak to do it for as long as he needs. He slumps to the floor with a sigh and then he just lies there, staring at the carpet.

Self-pity is not an attractive trait but Stiles stays on the floor for longer than he’d admit. He finally forces himself up, grabbing his journal from the window seat and placing it back in his toy box. He blames his mood on nervous energy and a lack of patience. He doesn’t like being alone. He doesn’t like waiting for things that he wants. He can feel it all bubbling up inside him, anticipation and anxiety. It makes his heart beat faster and his palms sweat. It makes the hair at the nape of his neck damp. It makes him want to sink back down to the floor.

He’s not going to have a panic attack. He’s not. Peter would be so disappointed.

He goes over to the bed, lying down on Peter’s side and pressing his face into his pillow. Transitional period, he reminds himself. He’s waiting for Peter. He’s waiting for his project. He’s going to feel so much more settled when he has those things for himself.

He lets himself think about how this afternoon will play out. Peter will get that pleased, predatory look when Stiles asks. Stiles hopes they can kiss first. He wants to make it look that they did yesterday. He wants to rub his body against Peter’s. He wants to let it consume him.

He imagines Peter touching him everywhere, hands running all over his body, under his clothes. He wants to be undressed. He wants it to be drawn out. Peter has a great attention to detail. He can take Stiles apart before he even gets his hand on his cock. Stiles wants that. He wants to be taken to that place in his head. He wants to stay there while Peter holds him.

He breathes in deep from Peter’s pillow again. He can smell Peter faintly, that scent of the outdoors even though he’s always inside, like he’s a wild thing that can’t be tamed. It gives Stiles a thrill. He wants more though. He wants to be able to smell him like a wolf can, pick apart all the scents, all the things that make him up. He wonders if Peter would give him the bite if he asked. Then they’d be pack. That’s the true definition of belonging, isn’t it?

He must doze off because the next thing he knows, Peter’s hand is on his shoulder, giving a squeeze. Stiles rolls onto his back, looking up at him. Peter offers him a soft smile, fingers trailing down the side of his face.

“Hello, beautiful.”

“Hi,” Stiles returns, his voice a little scratchy.

“You really do sleep a lot,” Peter comments.

“I never used to sleep well,” Stiles says. “Since I was a kid. Night terrors and insomnia. Then I found out about creatures of the night and it all kind of went downhill from there.”

“But you sleep for me,” Peter says. “I must be doing something right.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says.

Peter gives a little nod, leaning down to brush their lips together. It lingers for a moment but it’s not enough. Stiles makes a little noise. He can’t ask now though. Not during mealtimes. Just a little longer.

“Ready for lunch?” Peter prompts.
Stiles nods his head, sitting up and offering his ankle to Peter so he can unlock him.

They sit at the kitchen island and Peter presents him with toasted sandwiches and salad. Stiles doesn’t know what this sauce is, but it’s amazing. He takes another huge bite.

“I know there’s not much to stimulate you right now,” Peter says. Stiles looks up at him, chewing. “Just enough to keep you ticking over, but there is so much enrichment coming your way, baby. I have a long list of things I want to buy you tomorrow.”

Stiles swallows, excitement thrumming through him. “A long list?”

“Very long,” Peter assures him. “I’m going to spoil you rotten.”

Stile grins at him. He likes the sound of that. “What are you getting me?”

“It’s no fun if I tell you,” Peter says. “I want to show you.”

“Can’t wait,” Stiles says, taking another bite of his sandwich.

He wonders what Peter might be getting him, if it’s something that he’s mentioned or something Peter has intuited, but he decides that he’d much rather have the surprise. He looks over at Peter and it’s overwhelming, the fondness and affection he feels for him. He’s never felt anything like this for anyone. Is this what real love feels like, the romantic kind?

“I didn’t have my orgasm today,” he tells Peter, wanting Peter so badly that it’s practically a physical sensation.

“I could tell,” Peter agrees. “We’ll talk about it after lunch.”

“Oh, Stiles agrees, trying to get his mind out of the gutter. He takes another bite of his sandwich. “This is really good.”

“Don’t talk with your mouth full,” Peter tells him.

Stiles swallows it down. “Sorry.”

Peter gives him an amused look. “We’ll get some etiquette out of you yet.”

“I missed those classes,” Stiles reminds him.

“But you learn so well with me,” Peter says fondly.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. Peter could teach him anything and he’d force himself to be a pro through sheer willpower. He’d do anything for him.

When they finish eating and Peter has tidied away, he offers his hand out to Stiles. “Let’s go talk about your orgasm.”

Stiles’ dick very much likes the sound of that. He takes Peter’s hand and allows himself to be led through to the living room. They sit together on the couch, thighs touching, and Stiles stares down at them. He can feel Peter’s warmth seeping into him.

“You have three options,” Peter tells him. “You can choose to spend some time alone upstairs and give yourself an orgasm. You can choose to forgo your orgasm today, but we’re not running a rollover system. When it’s gone, it’s gone. Or, you can choose to have Daddy make you come.”
Stiles nods eagerly. “I want you to make me come.”

And there’s that smile, pleased and predatory. There’s a hint of amusement in his eyes though. “That was easy.”

Stiles shrugs, remembering what Peter told him. “I’m not ashamed.”

“Good,” Peter says, his eyes going dark. That’s desire, right? Or maybe possessiveness. Stiles doesn’t care, he likes it. “So, how would you like to do this?” Peter asks.

“Uh.” Stiles blinks at him, suddenly unsure of himself. He thought it was Peter’s job to work that out.

“Do you want to do it here?” Peter prompts. “Upstairs? On the kitchen table? Do you want to sit or lie down or come over here and straddle my lap? All perfectly acceptable answers. Just give me a clue, baby. Tell Daddy what you’d be comfortable with.”

Stiles lets out a shuddery breath. Every bit of that sounds amazing. He needs his brain to keep working for a little longer though. “Upstairs,” he says. “I want to go to bed.”

“Don’t you always,” Peter croons. “You just love making me wash the sheets, don’t you?”

“Sorry,” Stiles says.

“It’s okay,” Peter assures him. “I would do all the laundry in the world for you.”

Stiles smiles. How does that make him feel so special?

“Come on, baby,” Peter says, taking hold of his hand again and pulling him to his feet. “Daddy is going to make you feel so good. Any way you want.”

“Can we kiss?” Stiles asks as he’s towed along, trying to keep his footing on the stairs.

“Yes,” Peter says easily.

“I want to kiss,” Stiles says.

“Baby, I’ll kiss you until you can’t breathe,” Peter tells him.

“Thank you,” Stiles says, pulled into the bedroom.

“So,” Peter says, turning to face him, taking hold of his other hand to pull him in close. “You want to get under the blankets? All nice and cosy? Is that what baby likes?”

Stiles nods his head, the words making his cock throb. He hopes there’s not too much more negotiation. He just wants Peter to take charge. He wants to be taken care of.

“In that case, I’m going to take my trousers off, it’s probably going to get hot in there,” Peter says, letting go of Stiles so that he can work the button open. “Don’t worry, everything else stays on.”

Stiles shrugs. “You can take it off.”

Peter pushes his pants down and then looks up at Stiles, smug and amused. “This isn’t for you yet,” he says, gesturing to himself. “We’re going to work up to you having Daddy.” He discards his trousers, stepping forward so that their bodies brush together. Stiles makes a noise in his throat, chewing on his lip. “Daddy gets to have you though.”
“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, the word all breath.

Peter smiles, taking hold of the hem of Stiles’ shirt and giving it a little tug. “How about we get rid of this?”

Stiles nods his head, lifting up his arms. Peter pulls the material up slowly, fabric brushing against his skin and making him shiver. Peter drops it to the floor and trails a hand down Stiles’ chest, his stomach, shamelessly taking in the sight of him. By the time he meets Stiles’ gaze again, his eyes are dark.

“Let’s get you comfy,” Peter says. “Then we’ll get you out of your mind.”

Stiles lets out a shuddery breath, feeling it through his entire body. “Can you take me to that place?” he asks. “The fireflies.”

“I’m going to try,” Peter tells him, lifting a hand to brush against Stiles’ neck. “That depends on you though. You have to let me. You have to trust me. We’re still learning here, I don’t know all of your little buttons yet.” He leans in, lips brushing against Stiles’ ear. “I’m going to find them though.”

Stiles whimpers. “Please.”

“I bet you’d beg so pretty,” Peter says. “I wonder if I have the patience to make you.”

Stiles makes another helpless noise. He doesn’t like being teased. Peter said he could have this.

“It’s okay,” Peter soothes. “Let’s get in the bed. Daddy’s going to take good care of you.”

Stiles nods. That’s what he needs.

He lets Peter lead him over to the bed, pulling back the blankets so he can climb in. He lies on his side, watching as Peter gets in beside him, pressing their bodies close together, fingers brushing over Stiles’ cheek, into his hair. He just gazes at him for a moment with such affection and then he leans in, fitting their mouths together.

It’s hot breath, the slow slide of tongues. Stiles melts into it in an instant. He wraps his arm around Peter’s back, fists the other hand into his T-shirt, body surging forward to banish any space between them. It feels so good, his entire body responding, the neediness bleeding into something deeper, something that understands the virtue of waiting. He wants his body to hum like this forever.

Peter rakes his fingernails through Stiles’ hair before sliding his hand down to rub over Stiles’ back, a strong, soothing motion. He deepens the kiss with it, forcing Stiles’ mouth open wider, fucking into him with his tongue. Stiles moans, pushing his hips upwards, rubbing his hard cock against Peter’s hip. It makes him want to bite his lip but he can’t, letting his jaw go slack to Peter instead.

Peter pulls back, tugging Stiles’ hand from his shirt, grabbing the other one from him behind his back, twining their fingers together. It feels so romantic but then a second later he’s flipped onto his back, Peter’s body weighing him down, Stiles’ hands pinned to either side of his head. Stiles feels a wave of something go through him, his body arching as his mouth opens soundlessly.

Peter grins down at him. “I think we just found one of your buttons.”

Stiles presses against Peter’s grip, not trying to get away, just testing it. There’s no give but Peter’s
not holding him painfully. It’s just firm. It feels safe.

“Yeah,” Peter says. “You like Daddy being in control, don’t you?”

Stiles gazes up at him through bleary eyes. He can’t even find it in him to nod, but Peter knows.

“That’s it,” Peter says, leaning down to drag his lips over Stiles’ neck. “Let Daddy play with you.”

Stiles makes a noise that he hopes sounds affirmative, closing his eyes as Peter leaves open mouthed kisses against this throat. Stiles can feel him with every breath. If Peter presses just a little harder, maybe he wouldn’t be able to breathe at all. Peter bares his teeth, dragging them bluntly against Stiles’ neck, nipping gently at his pulse point. So much control; over Stiles, over his wolf.

Peter kisses downwards, over his collarbone, across his chest. He lets his lips catch on a nipple and then licks wetly over it, making Stiles shiver. When Peter’s mouth closes around it, he moans and arches his back as much as he can under Peter’s weight. Peter grins against his flesh, sucking a little too hard before he lifts his head.

Stiles opens his eyes, panting as he looks up at Peter. He’s so self-satisfied and filled with joy. It’s gorgeous and infuriating. Stiles wants him to look at him like that all the time.

Peter lets go of one of Stiles’ hand, Stiles whining at the loss.

“Shhh,” Peter soothes. “Need Daddy to hold you down?”

He moves both of Stiles’ hands, placing them above his head and crossing them at the wrist so he can hold them steady against the bed with one hand. Stiles presses against the hold.

“Better?” Peter asks.

It doesn’t feel as good as Peter holding onto his hands and it stretches his shoulders uncomfortably, but he still feels secure. It gives him that sense of not slipping away.

Peter trails a single finger from his other hand down Stiles’ chest, his stomach, making Stiles feels ticklish and lightheaded. Peter kisses his neck again with dragging lips and then his hand is pressing against Stiles’ hard cock through his pants. Stiles’ whole body jumps as Peter squeezes him firmly, massaging his dick.

“I feel a wet patch,” Peter says. “You’re so eager for Daddy.”

Stiles makes a strangled noise, his arms straining. Everything is sharp, even the pleasure. He curls his toes, trying to work out how to breathe.

Peter lifts his hand away, grabbing Stiles’ waistband and pulling it away from his skin, letting it snap back against him with a sting. “Shall we take these off?”

“Yes,” Stiles grits out.

“Good boy,” Peter breathes against his neck.

He lets go of Stiles then, sitting back to take hold of his pants with both hands, and Stiles feels untethered, lost at sea. He lifts his hips instinctively for Peter as he tugs at his pants, moving with Peter’s hands to strip them off, and then Peter is just looking at him.

“Beautiful,” he says. “I knew you would be.” He wraps his hand around his cock, making Stiles’ whole body strain. “Every inch of you.”
He strokes Stiles gently as he leans back down and Stiles grabs for him desperately, holding onto his shoulders. Peter brushes his lips against his temple, his cheek, his jaw, scenting at his neck. It calms something inside Stiles, his hips riding up into Peter’s touch. It feels amazing. Stiles doesn’t know how it can feel that different than his own hand wrapped around his cock, but it really fucking does.

“Try not to come yet,” Peter tells him. “It’s okay if you do, this is for you, but just try and wait a little longer. Daddy wants to enjoy you.”

Stiles moans, unable to keep his hips still, digging his fingers into Peter’s back. He doesn’t feel like he has any control over it. He feels it low in his belly, like burning, his balls tight and sensitive. Peter grips his cock a little more firmly, his hand moving slick with precome, and Stiles gasps, feeling himself unravelling. He arches his neck, head pressed back against the pillow.

“You get so wet, baby,” Peter says, swiping his thumb over the head of Stiles’ cock for emphasis, playing with the beads of precome. Stiles’ entire body shudders, out of his control. “You got enough here that I could fuck you with it.”

Stiles makes a strangled noise, his whole body taut like a guitar string, vibrating down to his bones. He moves his lips like he’s trying to articulate something but he doesn’t feel like he has a single thought in his head so he’s not sure what it could be. He pants and whines and squeezes his eyes shut, concentrating on every clever little thing Peter does with his hand, each twist and squeeze and subtle change of pace. He wants to remember it all so he can do it to himself.

“You’re such a good boy,” Peter tells him, biting at his jaw. “You’re so good for Daddy. I can feel how much you want to come.”

Stiles gives a bitten off moan in response, feeling it welling up. It’s like a knife edge, one he would have pushed himself over by now. Peter’s just not quite giving him enough though. Stiles is fucking up into his hand, coordination shot, but it’s not getting the job done.

“You can let go,” Peter tells him, trailing his lips up the side of Stiles’ face.

Stiles keens, lifting his hips from the bed, following his animal instincts. He uses Peter’s body for leverage, strong and unwavering, but then Peter’s other hand is on his hip, pressing him down.

“I appreciate your enthusiasm,” Peter tells him, a note of amusement in his voice. “But let Daddy do it.”

He strokes Stiles faster, gripping him hard. It the kind of rough touch Stiles uses to get himself off when he’s in a hurry, or just impatient with himself. Stiles can feel everything tensing up, gritting his teeth with determination.

“Daddy wants you to feel so good.”

Stiles cries out, lifting his face to bury it in Peter’s neck as he feels it hit, helpless against the power of it. Peter slides his hand from his hip, using it to cradle the back of Stiles’ head instead, holding him there while he rides it out. Stiles feels his body spasm, white hot heat surging through him, pressing against his skull, rushing through his body in waves. Peter’s hand never falters and it just keeps going, Stiles stuck on the cresting wave, shaking all over. He’s usually given up on his body by now, has fallen bonelessly against the bed, but Peter just keeps working him and it feels like it’s never going to end.

“Perfect,” Peter breathes. “You’re so perfect.”
Stiles shudders again as Peter’s hand finally starts to still and he remembers how to breathe. The oxygen flooding his body gives him another wave, aftershocks making him squirm. Peter gathers him up in his arms, rolling them so that they’re on their sides, holding Stiles close. Stiles presses his face into Peter’s chest, still shaky and pulled apart. He can feel it bubbling up inside him like a physical sensation.

“Daddy,” he says brokenly.

Peter holds him even tighter, nuzzles at his temple, and then Stiles is crying.


Stiles clings to him, shivery and sweat soaked. He feels so small, so vulnerable, and his instinct it to try and bury further into Peter, to disappear into him.

“Come here,” Peter says, and then Stiles is being moved, like a boat capsizing. Peter sits up against the headboard, pulling Stiles into his lap and cradling him in his arms. “That’s what baby likes, right?” Peter says, rocking him gently. “That make you feel safe?”

Stiles sniffles into his neck, hands gripping his shirt. Peter’s strong arms ground him, wrapping him in a steady pressure that makes his limbs feel heavy, but it’s better than the flighty, nervous sensation that was making his skin crawl.

“The come down it always rough,” Peter says, lips grazing his temple. “But Daddy is so pleased with you, baby.” He uses one hand to ease Stiles’ face away from his neck and Stiles whimpers. “Shhh,” Peter says, wiping his tears away with his thumb. “I am so pleased with what you did.” He kisses at Stiles’ damp cheek. “And what you said.” He kisses the corner of Stiles’ eye, where new tears are threatening to spill over.

Stiles feels lightheaded. He wasn’t even sure if he’d said it out loud until Peter confirmed it. He meant it though. He knows he meant it. He opens his eyes, gazing up at Peter. Peter smiles softly at him, leaning down to rub their noses together.

“I’m so proud of you.”

Stiles smiles, feeling it all well up inside him. All he can articulate is a fractured little noise, but Peter strokes his hair back affectionately like it’s everything.

“I thought you were going be tough to break in,” Peter says. “But you go down so easy, like it’s what you’ve always wanted. You’re basically begging for it.”

Stiles hums, pushing into Peter’s hand as it pets him. This wasn’t in any of his fantasies, not one of them, but Peter’s right, it’s like everything is slotting into place. Maybe this is why he could never find anyone who wanted him before. He was looking in all the wrong places.

“Close your eyes, baby,” Peter whispers. “Let Daddy take care of you.”

Stiles does as he’s told, taking a deep breath and letting it out as a sigh. He burrows back into Peter’s neck, Peter’s hands gently petting him, making him feel loved. Everything is warmth and contentment and it’s not quite fireflies but it’s good. It’s really good. He never wants it to end.

He doesn’t think he falls asleep. He’s aware of Peter’s hands moving over his body, stroking and soothing and exploring without any real intent. He’s aware of Peter kissing him and nuzzling at him and breathing him in. He’s aware of his own hands unravelling, beginning to pet Peter in return instead of clinging to him for dear life.
He presses into Peter, mouthing at his neck, making a needy little sound.

“Do we have a little bit of an oral fixation?” Peter teases. “That’s going to come in handy for stage three.”

Stiles tips his head back, giving Peter a questioning look.

“We’ll get to that later,” Peter tells him. “When you’ve got your clothes on and you can form a sentence.”

Stiles gives an audible little huff, pouting at him. He wants to know all the things. He wants to do them.

“My point exactly,” Peter says. He runs his fingers over Stiles’ mouth until he parts his lips, looking up at Peter with adoration. Peter smiles at him. “You are so completely mine,” he says with wonder. “Mine.”

Stiles nods his head. “Kiss?”

“You’re so greedy,” Peter says, but he doesn’t deny him, leaning down to join their mouths together.

It’s deep and languid, every slow swipe of Peter’s tongue, every drag of his lips, bringing Stiles around like he’s waking from a deep sleep. He shifts his hips and then grinds down with his ass, disappointed to find that Peter isn’t hard. He frowns, making a disgruntled noise. Peter pulls back with a grin.

“You’re very greedy.”

“But, you didn’t get to…” Stiles trails off, his eyes falling down and then back up again.

“That wasn’t for me,” Peter says. “That was for you. And I think you enjoyed it, didn’t you, baby?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, voice soft.

“And that’s all that matters,” Peter says. “Playing with Daddy comes later.”

“Stage three?” Stiles asks.

Peter gives him an amused look. “Let’s get you dressed, then I’ll tell you all about it.”

He pulls at the sheet, using the corner of it to wipe over the mess on Stiles’ stomach. It’s already started to dry flaky against his skin. Stiles crinkles his nose at it. Peter eases him back to sit on his own, rubbing a hand up and down his back until he balances by himself. He gets up, retrieving Stiles’ pants and inspecting them.

“Still a little damp, but they’ll do,” he says, tossing them to Stiles. “Put them on.”

Stiles looks towards the bathroom. “Can I go wash up first?”

Peter gives a dismissive shake of his head. “I’ll give you a bath tonight.”

Stiles gestures down at himself. “But…”

“You’re fine,” Peter says. “Daddy did that to you. You didn’t like it?”
“I…” Stiles looks at him helplessly, no idea what the correct answer is. Of course he liked it, but does that mean he has to like wearing his own come for the rest of the day as proof? He’s not sure that’s a great deal.

“You got Daddy all messy as well,” Peter says, looking down at his stained clothes.

Stiles feels himself flush. Then Peter pulls his shirt over his head and Stiles’ cheeks get even hotter. He goes over to his dresser, pulling out clean clothes before getting naked and then redressing. Stiles can’t stop looking. Apparently Peter doesn’t have to parade around in Stiles’ come for the rest of the day. Stiles supposes it is his mess. He didn’t make it on his own though.

He pulls on his pants, trying not to think about it. Peter picks up Stiles’ T-shirt from the floor, passing it to him as he sits down on the edge of the bed. Stiles puts it on, sitting cross legged and looking at him, waiting.

Peter leans over, inhaling him. “You smell utterly divine, my darling.”

Stiles is pretty sure he smells like a whore. Peter said that was a concept they were coming back to though. Can that really turn him on? Is it okay if the thought of that turning Peter on turns him on a little bit? He shakes it off, focussing on the reason he’s wearing clothes now and not still snuggled in Peter’s arms and soft blankets.

“What’s stage three?” he asks.

Peter smiles at him, leaning back on his elbows. “Stage three is you learning how to give an exquisite blowjob.”

Stiles’ eyes drift away, unable to stop himself imagining it. “Oh.”

“Don’t worry, we’re breaking this one down,” Peter says. “I’m going to teach you. Show and tell. This is going to take a few sessions, and you don’t get my cock in your mouth in the first one.”

Stiles nods his head, eyes still unfocussed as he runs through the possibilities in his head. Peter would probably have him kneel. Would Peter stand? Sit? Would they lie on the bed?

“Stiles?”

Stiles blinks, looking at him. “Hmm?”

“Are you with me?” Peter asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles says.

Peter gives him that smug look that is somehow ridiculously attractive. “Mind out of the gutter, sweetheart. I need you to pay attention.”

“I’m listening,” Stiles says, focussing on him.

“This is going to be a learning experience, not a task,” Peter says. “It’s something we can build on and build on until we’re totally in sync.”

Stiles nods his head. “Okay.”

“So when you’re ready, you just ask Daddy to teach you about blowjobs and we can get started on lesson number one,” Peter says.
Stiles chews on his lip, eyes flicking down to Peter’s crotch. “When can I ask?”

“Not now,” Peter says, giving him a long-suffering look. “You are fucking insatiable.” He sits up. “We’re going to work your mind for a little bit instead. See if you can remember how to use it.”

“Do I get to know what lesson number one is?” Stiles asks.

“Lesson number one is the show and tell,” Peter says. “Lesson number two is when you get a taste.”

Show and tell. That has to mean Peter’s going to suck him off, right? Show him how to give head? Stiles’ dick is perking up at the prospect. Unless Peter has some kind of teaching aid. A banana? A dildo? That sounds a lot less fun.

“Get up,” Peter says, standing from the bed. “We’re playing chess.”

Stiles looks up at him. “I’m sleepy. Maybe we can watch TV?” he asks sweetly.

“You need intellectual stimulation,” Peter says. “I wouldn’t be a very good Daddy if I just gave you orgasms and TV time.”

“I don’t know, that sounds pretty perfect actually,” Stiles says.

Peter gives him an unimpressed look. “Up.”

Stiles can’t help grinning at him as he gets to his feet.

It feels unfair of Peter to make him play a game that requires so much brain power when Stiles’ mind can’t decide whether to focus on the way Peter just made him come or the way he might be about to suck him off. He spends a lot of time staring at the board and pretending to think about his next move. The rest of the time he’s staring at Peter, imagining all the things he wants them to do together. If it were up to him, he’d be in Peter’s lap now, kissing him.

“It’s your turn,” Peter says in a tone of voice that suggests it’s not the first time he’s said it.

Stiles blinks, looking at the board. He tries to care but he’s simply not invested. He looks up at Peter. “You’re too far away.”

“I’m literally right here,” Peter states.

“But you won’t be tomorrow,” Stiles says, trying not to pout. Being a brat is not attractive. He doesn’t think.

“I’ll be back for dinner,” Peter assures him. “And I’m bringing you lots of lovely presents.”

“I’d rather have you,” Stiles says.

Peter reaches out, taking hold of Stiles’ hand. “Don’t go getting separation anxiety already,” he says. “You’re going to have a miserable night if you do that.”

“I don’t like being on my own,” Stiles says, clinging onto him.

“You are just a bundle of abandonment issues,” Peter says. “Which is very telling.” He rubs his thumb over Stiles’ knuckles. “You know I’m going to rush back to you. I don’t like being away from my baby either. But once we get to the summer and you finish your training, we can go anywhere in the world and you’ll never have to leave my side.”
Stiles feels warmth spreading through his chest. That’s what he wants. It means he has to complete his training as quickly as he can. He wants to make a start as soon as Peter will let him.

Peter gestures down at the board. “We’re supposed to be playing this so that you have something to focus on,” he says. “I know how your anxiety spirals when you get a chance to think too hard. You don’t need to worry about everything all the time, baby. Daddy has it all under control.”

Stiles nods. He believes him. Telling his anxiety that is another matter. He needs to learn to let it go.

Peter lets Stiles hold onto his hand while they play the game. When Peter takes him upstairs to wait for dinner, Stiles gets his cuff put on like a good boy and lets Peter leave the room without being desperate or clingy. It feels like a fair trade.

After dinner, Stiles doesn’t look at the almost full moon, doesn’t let his thoughts stray from Peter. When the bath is ready, Stiles steps into the bathroom where Peter is getting to his feet.

“Do you need me to leave?” Peter asks. “I can’t imagine what you have left to be shy about.”

Stiles’ mind runs through the afternoon. Stiles naked beneath Peter, Peter’s hand on his cock. Stiles cradled in Peter’s lap, covered in his own come. He really can’t justify being precious about this.

“You can stay,” he says.

Peter gives him a soft smile. Stiles likes making him happy.

He pulls his T-shirt over his head, dropping it to the floor. He puts his thumbs in his waistband, looking down at himself. He has nothing to hide. All he ever wants is less barriers, less distance. Maybe he should lead by example. He pushes his pants down, stepping out of them as they pool on the floor. He looks up at Peter, cheeks heated but smile proud.

“Hamper,” Peter prompts.

“Right,” Stiles says, gathering his clothes and putting them in.

Peter offers his hand out and Stiles takes it, letting himself be guided into the bath. He sinks down, Peter letting go of his hand as he settles himself down. Peter takes the washcloth, dipping it in the water and getting it wet.

“Daddy got you dirty,” Peter says. “Now he’s going to clean you. Make it all better.”

He looks at Stiles for confirmation and Stiles just nods. This is what he agreed to. He relaxes back into the water, watching as Peter leans forward, starting with his toes. He cleans carefully between each one, a ticklish sensation that Stiles tries not to shy away from.

“My toes didn’t get dirty,” he says.

“Shhh,” Peter responds, not looking at him. “Let Daddy take care of you.”

He moves on to the other foot, careful and attentive, taking his time. He dips his other hand into the water, gripping Stiles behind his heel and then lifting his leg up out of the water. He holds him there, washing over his shin, his calf, up over his knee to his lower thigh before it disappears back below the bubbles. He places Stiles leg gently back down, taking hold of the other one and repeating the process.
By the time he’s pushing the washcloth underwater to run over Stiles’ upper thighs, Stiles is constantly worrying his lip between his teeth. It takes all his concentration to stay still, to not think about sex, because this isn’t supposed to be sexy. Is it?

It’s sensuous though, the way Peter drags the cloth over his flesh, fingertips grazing him along the way. It’s slow and deliberate and reverent. Stiles finds himself very quickly addicted to the way Peter’s hand feel on him. Peter pushes between his thighs, forearm against the inside of Stiles’ leg as he cleans the back of his thighs, slides the cloth up to wash over his ass, dragging it back through so that it presses against his balls. Stiles makes an involuntary little sound, tensing up.

“It’s okay,” Peter soothes. “Just bath time. Nothing’s going to happen to you.”

Stiles nods his head, closing his eyes, trusting him.

Peter washes his dick, not lingering, but it doesn’t stop the blood starting to pool or the way his hips fidget. Peter moves higher up, washing Stiles’ stomach, the remnants of his come. He cleans his chest, his arms, his fingers, the back of his neck. By the time he squeezes him at the scruff with the wet cloth, Stiles just exhales a tiny moan, melting into him.

“Good boy,” Peter says, voice quiet. “Let’s wash your hair, baby.”

Stiles goes with him, tipping his head back, humming as Peter’s fingers slide through the soaked strands, caressing his scalp. He keeps his eyes closed as the shampoo is worked into a lather and then he lets Peter guide him back, rinsing the suds away.

Peter keeps petting him for a long time after all the soap is gone. Everything is dulled by the floaty sensation of being weightless in the water, his hearing muffled as he keeps his head back. Sensory deprivation. The only thing that feels real is Peter’s fingers, making his skull tingle. It builds up into something intense, escaping him as a shudder as his eyes finally flutter open. It takes him a moment to focus on anything in the brightness.

Peter cradles his head, encouraging him up enough that he can get his bearings. Stiles stares at him. He’s so pretty. He can’t find the words to say it out loud.

“Do you want me to help you out of the bath?” Peter asks.

Stiles nods, sitting up a little more as Peter pulls out the plug. He takes hold of both Stiles’ hand, helping him stand, supporting him as he steps over the side of the bath. Once he’s steady, Peter grabs a towel, rubbing it gently over his body to dry him off. He puts it carefully on his head, massaging his wet hair, and Stiles really likes it when there’s no sensory input except for the sensation of Peter caring for him.

Peter steps back, picking up Stiles’ clean clothes. He crouches down, helping him get his legs into the pants before pulling them up for him, settling them low on his hips. He puts his T-shirt over his head next, guiding his arms through the holes. He adjusts the shirt to sit a little better and then considers Stiles, the way he sways slightly, his eyes not quite focussing. Then, without warning, he scoops him into his arms bridal style, carrying him through to the bedroom.

Stiles wraps his arms around Peter’s neck, leaning into him. The bed is still a mess, Peter never did the laundry, and Stiles is worried he’s going to put him down somewhere and start doing it now. Peter just nestles him within the blankets though, Stiles not having the strength to hold on as he pulls back. Peter retrieves the cuff, fastening it snugly around Stiles’ ankle and locking it in place. He lifts the blankets to cover Stiles’ body, and as he leans over him, Stiles lifts his head from the pillow, claiming a kiss. Peter smiles indulgently at him and then kisses him again, deeper, in that
way that makes Stiles’ body too hot. He presses his hips up into nothing. Peter pulls back.

“That is enough of that for today,” he says. “Time to sleep.”

Stiles tracks him with his eyes as he walks around the bed, climbing in beside him. “Spoon?”

Peter looks amused but tired. He jerks a nod. “Roll over.”

Stiles smiles, turning onto his side so that Peter can fit himself to his back. He sighs happily, wriggling to get comfortable. Peter wraps his arm around him and Stiles holds onto it, hugging it to his chest. He can feel Peter’s pulse in his wrist against his fingertips, strong and steady, and it feels like his own heart beats in time, lulling him off to sleep.
Chapter 12

Stiles stares out of the window at the outside world, or the little of it he can see. Peter gets to go out there today. He gets to walk out of the front door, breathe in the fresh air, get into his car, drive down the forest road to the country lanes. Somewhere they turn into highways, if Peter is going that far. Then he gets to go to work. He gets to talk to other people, gets to stimulate his mind, gets to do whatever the fuck he wants.

Stiles is kind of seething with jealousy. He holds onto it, because he feels like it gives him more power than his hopeless anxiety does.

Not that he’s going to express either of them to Peter who is currently downstairs making Stiles’ lunch. He’ll be a good boy. He’ll let Peter go without the added guilt of Stiles’ state of mind. That’s what’s expected of Stiles. This is when he needs to be tough.

He turns away from the window when Peter returns, sitting up a little straighter. Peter places a tray down on the dresser before going to join Stiles on the window seat. Stiles can see a sack lunch in a brown paper bag, as well as a few snacks and drinks. He looks at Peter and feels the sense of foreboding come crashing down on him heavily. So much for playing it cool.

Peter reaches across, stroking a soothing hand over Stiles’ knuckles, and Stiles looks down to see that he’s closed his hand into a fist around his own shirt. He forces it to unclench, splaying his fingers out like it will break the spell. He drops his hand down into his lap, looking up at Peter.

“Sorry.”

“I’m going to miss you too,” Peter assures him.

If that’s supposed to make Stiles feel better, it fails miserably. Half of him wants to crumble like he’s been given permission, while the other half sparks protective indignation that threatens to burn right through him because they can’t both be sad.

“I’m okay,” he says, trying to sound like he means it. It’s not like separation anxiety can kill him. Peter is coming back. “I saved my last two comics.”

Peter nods. “I’ll get you some more today.”

Stiles gives a smile that he really does mean. “Thank you.”

Peter looks at him fondly, reaching out to touch his face. “I think it’s time we bumped you up to an orgasm a day,” he says. “You’ve been such a good boy, you’ve earned it. And you have been so eager to get on with your training, I want to give you every opportunity to learn.”

Stiles nods, feeling his cheeks flush. He doesn’t even know if it’s the praise or his own lust that elicit that reaction. The two have kind of started to go hand in hand.

Peter trails his hand down the side of Stiles’ neck, catching on the collar of his T-shirt. “I want you to have one today while I’m at work.”

“No,” Stiles protests. “I want to wait for you. I want you to give it to me.”

Peter gives him an indulgent look, pulling his hand away and sitting back a little. “And I want something pretty to think about while I’m at work today. You in my bed getting yourself off is
about the prettiest thing I can imagine.”

“Our bed,” Stiles corrects. “And I don’t want to do it on my own. I want to learn.”

“I want you to learn as well,” Peter says, getting to his feet and rounding the bed. “You smashed through all my carefully laid plans. I figured you’d be playing with yourself a little longer than you were.” He opens the drawer in his nightstand, taking out the bottle of lube. “I want you to experiment. Explore. Play. Then you can report back to me at the end of the day and we’ll learn together.”

He tosses the bottle at Stiles who catches it clumsily. He looks at it for a moment, a mixture of arousal and apprehension mixing in his gut. “Is the report mandatory?”

“No,” Peter concedes. “But it is fun.” He glances at his watch. “I have to go.”

Stiles feels his stomach roll over, tossing the lube carelessly into the window seat as he gets to his feet, crossing the space between them. Peter accepts him into his arms, holding him around the waist as Stiles presses into him. He’s going to let Peter leave, he’s going to be a good boy, but not without saying a proper goodbye. He needs something to hold him over.

He tips his head back, practically fluttering his eyelashes, but Peter refuses to take the hint. Stiles pouts which only earns him a raised eyebrow. Stiles sighs, resting his cheek against Peter’s shoulder.

“I want a kiss,” he mutters.

“I know you do,” Peter replies easily. “So ask for one.”

“I thought I just did,” Stiles says.

“Darling, you most certainly did not,” Peter says, voice all smooth and dark.

Stiles lifts his head, looking at him, trying not to let his irritation show. That won’t get him anywhere. “Please can I have a kiss?”

“Of course,” Peter responds.

His lips lift in a little smile, one arm sliding from around Stiles so that he can put two fingers under his chin, guiding him into the kiss. Stiles loves that almost as much as the act itself, Peter leading him in just about any context. His anxiety is always so much lower when Peter is looking after him, taking control, and Stiles adores the fact that that doesn’t necessarily mean gentle. He can kiss him deep and dirty, tongue sliding over Stiles’ like it is now, stealing his breath away, and Stiles still feels adored and cared for and coddled. Stiles never knew to want this but he doesn’t think he could live without it now.

But then Peter is pulling away and Stiles knows that he has to, at least for the next few hours. He still belongs to Peter though. Peter is still doing all of this, earning and providing and stocking up on supplies, for him, to be good to him. So, in Peter’s words, Stiles needs to suck it up. He has his comics. He has a bottle of lube. He has the promise that Peter is coming back. Stiles has never had much certainty in his life so it counts for a lot.

“I won’t be as late as last week,” Peter tells him, still cradling him against his body. Stiles could drop like a dead weight right now and Peter would still hold him steady. That fact makes Stiles want to bury into him. “I don’t have as many errands but I do have a shopping spree planned. I hope you know what a lucky, lucky boy you are.”

Peter smiles affectionately at him. “I can’t wait for you to try and express your gratitude.”

Stiles chews on his lip, trying not to squirm. “Blowjob lessons?”

Peter gives him a pointed look. “Maybe tomorrow.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

Peter nods. “I really have to go. You have a good day, beautiful.”

“You too,” Stiles says.

The word *Daddy* is on the tip of his tongue but he’s way too together to say it right now. A little part of him is still mortified that he said it yesterday, and that he’s probably not going to be allowed to forget it, though Peter, to his credit, is as gentle and patient as ever. And Stiles meant it, it wasn’t an orgasm induced slip up, he wanted to say it. His inhibitions aren’t stripped away enough to say it again right now though. But he will.

Peter leans in, placing a chaste kiss against his lips. “Be good.”

“Always,” Stiles agrees.

That makes Peter kiss him again before he finally pulls away. Stiles stands there in the middle of the room as he watches Peter walk away, watches him going off into an outside world that’s starting to feel more like a concept than something three dimensional and real. He listens to Peter closing the front door, the sound of keys jangling, Peter’s car driving away. He wants to fold onto the floor, dread and panic closing in, but he doesn’t. He won’t.

Instead, he goes over to the tray Peter left for him, looking over the snacks. As he guessed, Peter has left him a cookie. Stiles denied himself it last time, but he grabs it now, taking a bite, savouring it. He deserves this and he’s going to use it to drown out his feelings for a minute while he grabs his comics and curls up in the window seat, nibbling his cookie and transporting himself into a world of heroes and villains and problems that aren’t his own.

He spends most of the morning wrapped up in that cosy world, going back over all his comics, looking for the links, the foreshadowing, appreciating the nuances. It’s one of his favourite things to do and right now this is his only outlet for it. Not for long though if Peter brings him a book today.

As Stiles puts his comics away in his toy box, he eyes the lube left abandoned in the corner of the window seat, but it can wait. Lunch first. It’s a little earlier than Peter usually feeds him but Stiles can make his own choices today. He’s hungry. He wants his lunch.

It was obviously made with love and Stiles eats it just as lovingly. He sits in the window seat and stares out of the window, thinking of Peter. He wonders what he’s doing right now, if his colleagues are annoying him with small talk. Stiles doesn’t think that he’d suffer it gladly and he complained that he gets much more work done at home.

He eats the little pot of homemade humus with the hand cut veggie sticks and wonders if Peter packed this for himself as well or if he gets something there. Is there a cafeteria in his work? Is it terrible? Is he in the city where he can grab something easily? What does he even do all day? Stiles wonders if he’ll ever feel like he’s allowed to ask.
His lunch finished, he tidies up after himself, putting everything non-edible back on the tray before his eyes fall down to the lube. Maybe he should let his food settle first. He knows he’s stalling but even if he could time it perfectly so that Peter would walk in on him, would maybe help him finish up, it wouldn’t go the way of his fantasy. Peter would be unimpressed that he can’t follow instructions well enough. That, or he’d give him one of those sardonic looks and make a snide comment before leaving him to it. And maybe withholding his presents until he learns to behave himself. Not worth the risk. Stiles wants to do the right thing. He wants to make Peter proud.

He grabs the bottle and takes it over to the bed with him, pulling off his shirt. His hands go to his waistband before looking down. Right. The cuff. He’s not complaining, he’s pretty sure he’d feel lost without it, but it’s not really convenient to his current desire to get naked. He shrugs, pushing his pants down anyway, letting them catch on the cuff. It’s a way better option than getting come on them. Again.

He climbs into Peter’s side of the bed, his favourite side, the side they usually end up sleeping tangled up together in. He yanks the pants in with him, putting them under the covers where they’re going to offer the smallest impediment, and lies back against the pillows, bottle gripped in his hand. He flips open the lid, squeezing a little into his hand, just enough to get things started. He has plans. He wants to get himself lost in the familiar first though. He wants to get hard and wanting. It’s not difficult when he considers the fact that Peter is sitting at his desk – does he have a desk? – right now, thinking about Stiles doing just this. Stiles wants to live up to the fantasy, even if Peter will never know.

He grabs his dick, which is definitely not flaccid, giving a few firm strokes and feeling it thicken in his hand, getting hotter as the blood surges in. It’s such a familiar feeling, comforting almost, Stiles’ easiest method of escape through his tumultuous adolescence. His dick was something he always had to hand, literally, and privacy usually wasn’t hard to come by either. The lube is still new and novel and kind of amazing but that just adds another layer to perfection.

When he’s in his happy place, dick leaking and straining against his palm, he grabs for the lube again, slicking up his fingers more carefully. This is the one that’s going to count. He strokes his dick again, keeping himself ticking over as his wet fingers slide further back, opening his thighs wider to allow his own touch. He presses the slickness against his hole, coats it messily, plays his fingers through it. He’s going to make it happen today. He’s going to know what it feels like. Maybe he’ll even tell Peter about it. The thought, even hypothetically, sends a little thrill through him.

He plays with his dick almost idly, a distraction to the way he traces his hole, pushes against it, lets himself enjoy the sensations for what they are. It’s okay if it’s just this. It feels good. It wouldn’t exactly be time wasted if he didn’t get any further and the journey is supposed to be enjoyed as much as the destination, right? He really, ridiculously wants to be fingering himself right now though. He wants to learn.

He feels the first give and dips his finger inside, instinctively gripping his dick harder at the sensation. He backs off with both hands and takes a breath. Slow and steady. He presses in again, teases the head of his cock while he does, the dual sensations making him arch his back as sparks crackle across his flesh. He’s going to die when Peter does this to him. He won’t survive it.

Not that Peter has ever suggested he will do this to him. He’s never said he’s going to fuck him. Stiles wonders if he realises it will break his heart if he doesn’t. He understands that Peter seems to have some very specific order for their sexual endeavours to unfold upon, and fucking has not been given a number yet, but surely that’s the natural progression. Stage one, masturbation. Stage two, handjob. Stage three, blowjob. Those were Peter’s bases when he was filling out the little book of
Stiles, right? Does that mean stage four is sex? Home run? God, Stiles hopes so.

It’s enough inspiration for him to get his finger inside himself up to the first knuckle and ease it gently in and out. This is as much as he’s felt before and it’s just as good as the first time, maybe better with the added context. He feels like he’s actively working towards something now. It makes him giddy and greedy and wish that Peter was here.

He tries to push in deeper but it doesn’t feel quite right so he pulls his finger out, adds more lube. It’s already getting like a slip and slide down there but he needs to actually get it inside him. Is there a fool proof method for that that he’s missing or is it just keep putting the stuff down there until it gets to all the right places? He guesses it’s going to be the latter today.

He presses his finger in again, appreciating the extra lube, going back to rocking his finger in and out, his hips drawn into the motion, before he tries to go deeper again. He gets past the knuckle, drawing in a sharp breath and then reminding himself that he needs to relax. He eases off and then pushes in again, the motion already starting to feel fluid. To feel right. It’s such a fantastic sensation with so many positive connotations, and he wants to give into it now but he wants more. He wants to fuck himself on it.

He strokes his cock, eases his finger in and out, gets it a little deeper before things start to stall and he figures it’s a problem he should throw more lube at. It works. He follows the same pattern, jerking off, rocking his finger, adding lube, the cycle continuing until finally, finally, his finger is as deep as it will go and he feels full, which is dumb because it’s one finger and he needs to be able to take so much more than that, but he’ll learn. Peter will help him.

The thought forces a moan from his lips and he plays his hand over his cock, rocks his hips up into the movement, and, okay, fucking himself on his finger is apparently the way to go. That works way better than just poking it awkwardly into himself. See. Learning.

He keeps his hands mostly still, rocks his hips into the sensations instead, and he likes the control it gives him. It takes him a minute to figure out an angle that works but then it’s all fluid and gorgeous and he tilts his hips and slides down on his finger and feels himself being worked open. If he kept going like this he couldn’t probably start putting another finger in, but he’s not going to keep going. He doesn’t want to. He’s earned a fucking orgasm. Enough lessons for today.

He grips his cock tighter, starts to move his hand along with his thrusts, doubling his efforts and doubling his rewards while he’s at it. The friction inside him, the heat of it, that drag and slide, slickness that feels so dirty. He thinks he’s used about half of Peter’s bottle of lube. He doubts he’ll care. Maybe he’ll buy a new one today.

Stiles can feel it, his skin dripping with sweat, pooling behind his knees, the small of his back, too hot under the blankets but not willing to part with them. It’s a tingle, just out of his reach, like it’s happening beside him, not to him, but then that coil in his belly pulls taut and it all comes crashing down. He whimpers and shudders and comes over his hand, tightening around the finger he has inside him which is an entirely new sensation that he did not know existed and he moans, head thrown back, wishing there were someone there to kiss his neck, to hold him, to share this with him.

He slides his finger out as he comes down, which is also a weird and new feeling. He melts, boneless, into the mattress, and then he rolls, not caring about the mess, pressing his face into Peter’s pillow. Peter still hasn’t cleaned the sheets from yesterday so Stiles can get a real sense of his scent, and maybe of what they did here together, but that could be overactive imagination.

He dozes off, exhausted and content, wrapped up in Peter and possibilities. He wishes for Peter to
be there when he wakes up, stroking his hair back and looking at him with love and telling him what a good boy he is for doing this. Peter wanted him to. Stiles wants what Peter wants. It seems like a straightforward way to live.

When he comes back to himself, sticky and wet and lonely, the glow has started to fade. He hates being alone. Solitary. Peter said that’s not what this is though. Corner time is his solitary. Stiles chews on his lip, tugging the blankets tighter to him. He wants Peter here to make him feel better because he suddenly doesn’t know how to do it on his own. Nothing can fix this except Peter, warm and real in front of him. He sighs, fingers tangled in the sheets that he’s currently ruining with his mess. So much for the afterglow.

With a disgruntled noise he forces himself out of the bed, trying not to get tangled up in his chain or dragging pants as he makes his way to the bathroom. Cleaning up the lube is not an easy task. The more water he adds, the more slippery it seems to get. He ends up wiping most of it off on a towel and hoping it doesn’t stain.

He pulls his pants back up and goes to retrieve his shirt from where he tossed it on the bedroom floor. He smooths it down, fingers playing over the family crest. He feels so proud to wear it. It feels like the truest part of his identity, the fact that he’s Peter’s. He wishes he were here now to touch, to kiss, to cuddle with and be good for. He needs to be good by himself though, which is nowhere near as satisfying.

He feels restless and maybe a little bit bratty. He’s still not sure if that’s okay. What the hell does feisty even mean? He wants to be what Peter wants, but that’s tricky when he doesn’t understand it. His instinct around Peter is to fold, to go soft, to cling. He feels safe with him, knows that he’s looked after, and so all the walls come down in a way they never have with anyone else. He had no idea he’d like being somebody’s baby.

He leaves the bed the mess that it is because he feels like Peter will enjoy seeing it. He’ll definitely enjoy smelling it. Stiles wonders if he should have a left a little come on himself, but that’s gross and Peter can probably smell it anyway. The thought sends a little thrill through Stiles. He likes not having any secrets because it means there’s no point having any shame. Stiles is done being ashamed.

He sits in the window seat, watching the trees sway in the breeze as he waits for Peter. As soon as he hears his car in the driveway, all his restlessness converts to joyous energy. He jumps to his feet, bouncing slightly as he listens to the door opening and closing, Peter moving around. He twists his hands together, edging closer to the door. Peter doesn’t appear. Stiles stands at the threshold, not daring to cross it because that got him in trouble last time, but he leans against it, listening. There’s a rustle of bags from somewhere.

“Peter?”

Nothing. Stiles has no doubt that it’s him, that’s not the problem, but Peter clearly has no intention of letting himself be rushed. Stiles gives a little huff, rolling his eyes. He could… Is that abusing it? Is it being dishonest? He means it though. He meant it then, he means it now, even if some part of him still doesn’t get it. But it’s right there, on the tip of his tongue, and Stiles lets it loose.

“Daddy?”

The rustling stops. “Yes?”

Stiles grins to himself. Neat trick. “Can you come upstairs?”
“I’m putting the groceries away, baby,” Peter responds.

“I missed you,” Stiles says.


Stiles wanders back into the room. He’s not sure if that’s a win or not but at least he knows how to get an answer. He tells himself he won’t abuse his new power, but Peter gave it to him, he guesses he wants him to use it.

When Peter finally comes to join him, he’s laden down with armfuls of bags. Stiles stares and then he smiles, giddiness settling in. That’s all for him. His Daddy bought all of that just for him. The floodgates are well and truly open and Stiles is going to embrace it if this is what it gets him.

Peter puts everything down on the bed and then turns to Stiles, just taking him in for a moment. “There’s my beautiful boy.”

Stiles goes to him, vulnerable and needy just from having Peter close to him again. It’s like soft focus. It’s fireflies in his peripheral. Peter can take him there so easily, just a well placed word would do it now. Stiles feels like that should scare him, but it doesn’t. Nothing matters outside of getting Peter to love him right now and Peter is looking at him with so much tenderness that he must, right? It makes the inside of Stiles’ skull tingle.

He presses his face into Peter’s neck as Peter wraps him up in his arms, holding him tight. He breathes Stiles in like he’s oxygen and Stiles hums happily. He wonders what he would smell on Peter right now if he had the ability, who he would smell. There’s a little pang of jealousy that Peter has been out there in the world with all the things that Stiles is kept separate from, but it doesn’t really matter because right now his whole world is here, in tailored clothes and flesh and warmth.

“You are just perfection to come home to after a long day,” Peter tells him, stroking his back with strong hands.

Stiles hums in response, trying to press impossibly closer because they’re still two separate entities and that means they’re much too far apart.

“And you were a good boy today,” Peter says. “I can tell by the mess you made. Did you have fun?”

Stiles nods against the crook of his neck. “I got a whole finger inside myself. All the way. Then I…” He stops himself, doesn’t know the word in acceptable vocabulary.

“Fucked yourself on it?” Peter provides.

“Yeah,” Stiles breathes. “I’m not allowed to say that, right?”

Peter pushes his hair back, easing him back so he can see Peter’s devilish grin. “No, but I am.”

“Okay,” Stiles says. He doesn’t have the energy to be indignant about it. Being pressed up against Peter feels too good, everything else can fuck off. It’s not like he even meant to start this conversation, it just kind of slipped out, because what is the point of not telling this man absolutely everything?

“Did you like it?” Peter asks.
Stiles nods his head, mouthing at Peter’s neck. “I want you to do it to me.”

“I did not think I was coming home to an armful of this,” Peter says. “Not that I’m complaining. You give it up so fucking easy though, baby. It’s hardly any fun taking you apart when you’re already in pieces for me.”

Stiles looks up at him. “You can do more.”

“Sweetheart, I can do so much more,” Peter tells him. “I can take you past fireflies to something you can’t even imagine. When I’m through with you, you’re not even going to remember how to beg.”

With the combination of Peter’s hot body and the dirty things he’s saying, it’s impossible for Stiles not to get hard. He makes a needy little noise, pressing himself into Peter’s thigh.

“We’re not even on stage three yet,” Peter chides. “No way you’re ready for that.” He shifts back, not enough to knock Stiles off balance but enough that he can’t rub up against him. “Besides, don’t you want to see what Daddy bought you?”

Stiles smiles, his attention refocussing. “Yes please.”

“That’s a good boy,” Peter praises. “You stand on your own two feet and I’ll show you.”

It takes Stiles a moment but he steps back, instantly cold and exposed. He watches Peter go over to the bed, reaching into one of the bags. He produces a thick reference book. It looks academic.

“This is the most prominent scholar on the subject of Companions,” Peter says, gesturing to the cover. “This book gives a decent overview of the history and contexts of the role, it should answer some of your questions and spark new ones. I thought it would be a good jumping off point for your project. When you get into it, you can let me know about specific areas that interest you and we’ll get you some more specialised texts.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says, a little overwhelmed. He takes the book, cradling it in his arms. It’s weighty. He likes that. It makes it feel important.

“And I got you study supplies,” Peter says. “Notebooks, folders, post it notes, index cards, pens, highlighters.”

He stacks them all on top of the book in Stiles’ arms while Stiles tries to juggle them, somehow managing not to drop anything on the floor.


“I don’t know your preferred method,” Peter says. “Go put that away and I’ll show you what else I picked out for you.”

Stiles grins, going over to his toy box and placing everything carefully inside, dedicating a little section just to his studies. They matter to him. He can’t wait to dig in. He stands, turning back to Peter who already has a stack of comics in his arms. Stiles’ eyes light up and he wants to lunge for them.

“The next seven issues,” Peter says, holding them out. “Work through them at your leisure.”

Stiles takes them, going to put him with the rest of his stash. “You are the best.”
“We haven’t even gotten to the surprises yet,” Peter says. Stiles turns back to face him eagerly.

“We did discuss this one though,” he says, producing an MP3 player. It looks like an expensive one. Really expensive. “We can put some songs on it tomorrow,” Peter tells him. “And the headphones they give you with them are always terrible, so I got you some nice top of the range ones,” he goes on, pulling them out. “There’s nothing worse than wasting good equipment with subpar accessories.”

“Thanks,” Stiles says, not knowing what else to say. The thought of having music of his own on demand, of being able to dance around to it, it makes him bounce on his toes.

“I’ll keep hold of it until we get it loaded up,” he says, putting it down on the bed. He grabs a large bag, looking pleased with himself already. “And this is just something I thought you deserved to have. Daddy wants you to be happy.” He opens up the bag to reveal a PS4.

Stiles stares at it in awe. “Are you kidding me?!?”

“I did some research, I felt like this would be a good fit,” Peter says, like it’s no big deal.

“Oh my god,” Stiles says, unable to take it in. He’s brimming over with excitement and affection. Having no idea what else to do with himself he flings himself at Peter who catches him with ease. “This is amazing. Thank you.”

Peter clears his voices pointedly. Stiles wants to roll his eyes but after everything Peter’s just given him, Stiles can give him this.

“Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter squeezes him tighter. “You’re welcome, baby boy.”

Fuck. Why does that feel so right?

Peter puts his hands on Stiles’ hips, moving him a step back. “I’ve got more.”

Stiles blinks at him. He doesn’t know if he can take more.

“I have a man coming to install a TV in here for you tomorrow,” Peter says. “You can play in the mornings while I’m working, but only for forty-five minutes, you’re not rotting your brain on it.”

Stiles hesitates. “Forty-five minutes?” he asks. Peter raises his eyebrows at him. “No, it’s just, forty-five minutes, in terms of gaming, it’s not that long.”

“Would you prefer zero minutes?” Peter asks, infuriatingly earnest.

“No,” Stiles says.

“Then forty-five,” Peter says, turning back to his shopping. “I got this game for you,” he says, pulling out a copy of *Skyrim*. “Action roleplay. That’s what you like, right? The man in the shop recommended it.”

“It’s perfect,” Stiles agrees, taking it from him and flipping it over to read the back.

“The PS4 also doubles up as a DVD player, which is handy,” Peter says, like Stiles doesn’t know every spec of this machine he’s lusted over. He looks up from his game, concentrating on what Peter is saying to him. He produces a DVD. Stiles reads the title, frowning slightly. It’s yoga. “I’d like you to do this every day,” Peter says, handing it over to him as he pulls out a rolled up yoga
mat. “It’s an hour, and I appreciate that you probably can’t do the whole thing right from the start, but I’d like you to watch it all the way through and I’d like you to do what you can. You’ll get better at it, you’ll be doing the whole thing in no time.”

Stiles looks it over, feeling slightly lost.

“I can tell you’re restless,” Peter says, because of course he can. “This will give your body something to do, use all your muscle groups and make you work up a sweat. It’s good for that mindfulness we talked about too. The improved flexibility is just a welcome side-effect,” he says in a way that sounds positively filthy.

“Oh,” is all Stiles manages, feeling his face heat.

“Put them away,” Peter prompts, handing the mat over. Stiles nods, going back to his toy box. “I went back to my tailor as well, he had some of the more demanding projects finished for you,” Peter says, producing some neatly folded clothes. There’s slacks, shirts, jackets, a waistcoat. They look incredibly expensive. Stiles kind of wants to try them on and preen. “You won’t really need clothes like this for a while, not until your training is done, but I thought maybe we could have a weekly date night, break them in a little.” He reaches into another bag and pulls out, of all things, a *Star Wars* boxset.

Stiles just stares at him, not sure he can even process any more. He has literally found the perfect man.

“Dinner and movie?” Peter suggests.

Stiles nods. He’s run out of words.

Peter smiles at him indulgently. “I can’t wait to dress you up all pretty.”

Stiles nods again. He doesn’t know how to express this swell in his chest but maybe if he could just press himself against Peter again he could try. Peter turns back to his bags.

“Oh, there was one more thing,” he says, pulling something out.

Before Stiles can see what it is, it’s tossed over to him. He instinctively catches it, looking down to see a little wolf plushie that fits neatly in his hands, grey and white fur and tiny little fangs. It’s soft and adorable but Stiles scowls at it.

“I said no stuffed animals.”

“I know, but it’s so cute,” Peter says.

Stiles look up at him. He can’t be ungrateful when Peter has just spoiled him rotten and given him literally more than he ever dreamed of, but he made his feelings about this clear and Peter didn’t respect them. He doesn’t know if this is a deal breaker, if he loses all the other stuff if he doesn’t accept this, but he can’t let it slide. “I’m not putting this in my toy box,” he says, even though his voice quivers.

“Oh, okay,” Peter responds easily, like it’s no big deal. He takes it from Stiles’ hand, placing it on the dresser instead. “He can live here then.” He appraises him for a second and then gives a nod before turning back to Stiles. “You sort the rest of this out,” he says. “I’m going to go make dinner.”

Stiles’ face and stomach drop in unison. “You didn’t bring takeout?”
“We’re not having takeout every week,” Peter says, like what he brought last week wasn’t amazing, healthy gourmet food.

“I don’t want you to go,” Stiles says. “You just got back.”

“I won’t be long,” Peter assures him. “I’m making a stir fry, I’ll be back before you know it.”

Stiles pouts at him and he doesn’t even care if he’s being petulant now.

“Tidy up your things,” Peter says. “Look through them, enjoy them, I’ll be back before you even miss me.”

“Not possible,” Stiles says.

Peter steps closer to him. “My baby has a flair for the dramatic.”

“You left me alone all day,” Stiles says.

“And you’re okay,” Peter says. “You can last ten more minutes before you have my undivided attention for the rest of the night.” He tilts Stiles’ head back, gives him a tender kiss on the lips. “You like your presents?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, trying not to sound begrudging.

“Daddy takes care of you,” Peter says. “Sometimes Daddy needs to leave the room to do that. I’ll be right back.”

Stiles nods. He’s being unreasonable. And pathetic. “Okay.”

Peter gives him that proud smile, one more sweet kiss, then leaves him alone with his things. Stiles doesn’t make a fuss and in return Peter pampers him for the rest of the evening. They have an understanding. Stiles doesn’t have to cling so hard. Things balance themselves out.

The next morning, he wakes up wrapped in clean sheets and Peter. He shifts within the warmth, his hard cock rubbing against the soft fabric of his pants. Oh. He stills mid-movement, his body telling him to press himself into the mattress, or maybe roll over and press himself into Peter instead, but his body’s an idiot and he’s not jerking off when he can have something so much better than that.

He forces himself to take a breath, relaxing against the bed and trying to calm himself down, to think about anything else. That proves impossible when Peter’s arm tightens around him as he pulls his body flush against Stiles’ back with a little flex of his hips. He nuzzles at his neck before lips are brushing his ear.

“You want to take care of that?”

“No,” Stiles says, his voice strained.

“Liar,” Peter says affectionately, kissing his neck.

Stiles hesitates, second guessing himself. Jerking off like this would be heaven. Or getting Peter to do it, just like this. His hand would only have to move a little bit lower and everything would slot into place. “I only get one, right?”

“One orgasm a day,” Peter agrees. He nips at Stiles’ earlobe. “So greedy.”

“You’ll be waiting a while, we have the guy coming to fit the TV this afternoon,” Peter reminds him.

“Will there be time though?” Stiles asks.

“We’ll make time,” Peter assures him. “But not straight after lunch.”

Stiles nods. “I’ll wait.”

Peter places one last kiss on his neck before pulling away. “In that case, I’m going to jump in the shower.”

At breakfast, Stiles can barely keep himself from jigging up and down in his seat. He can’t use his PS4 yet but Stiles is fine with that, he can’t wait to dive into his research project. He flicked through the book last night while Peter was making dinner and it looks fascinating. He’s going to read it from cover to cover and he’s going to make a million notes. He wiggles his toes, trying to keep the rest of him still, but he’s failing miserably.

“Did I buy you too many nice things?” Peter asks. “Are you going to prefer your alone time to being with Daddy?”

“No way,” Stiles dismisses and he means it. He’s glad his mornings aren’t going to be a slow dragging torture, but he’s still happiest when Peter is within touching distance. That’s when he feels secure. It’s an underrated feeling and he’d take it over glee any day.

“Well, I’m glad you like your presents,” Peter says.

Stiles nods. “I love them. I love it here.”

Peter appraises him for a moment. “I made absolutely the right choice with you.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. He never would have believed he’d be the right fit for anything, but it’s undeniable. This is where he belongs. It only took him eighteen years to get here. Some people search for a lifetime.

When they go upstairs, he sits on the bed, watching Peter’s fingers buckle up his cuff, sliding the lock into place. He can do such clever things with those fingers. Stiles wants them inside him. He wants them to take him apart.

“Well, I don’t think you’re going to have any problem entertaining yourself today,” Peter comments.

Stiles blinks, looking up at him, and then he smiles happily. “Thank you.”

Peter nods, looking amused and a little bit long suffering. “I’ll see you for lunch, baby.”

He leans down, placing a lingering kiss on Stiles’ lips before leaving him alone. Stiles lifts a hand, fingers touching his mouth, savouring it. He’d give up all of his things just to be allowed to kiss Peter all day long. He doesn’t get that though, Peter has to work, and so Stiles is going to make the most of what he has.

He gets up, going over to his toy box and taking out his project. He lies out on his stomach in the window seat, opening up the book and starting to read. It’s captivating. He thought he knew the bare bones about Companions, they talk about it in social studies at school, but they don’t go into all the fascinating details. Stiles grabs his post its and marks interesting pages, making notes of
things he wants to come back to when he starts to pull all the threads together, as well as things he
definitely wants to look into in more detail.

When he looks up to stretch his neck from being hunched over, he sees the little plushie wolf on
the dresser looking back at him. He frowns. It wasn’t facing that way when Peter put it up there
last night. He must have moved it this morning, knowing this is where Stiles would be. He
probably thinks he’s being cute. Stiles doesn’t appreciate it.

He rolls his eyes, turning his attention determinately back to his book. He gets so engrossed that he
doesn’t even hear Peter coming up the stairs.

“I knew that beautiful brain of yours needed a work out,” he says.

Stiles gives little gasp, his body jolting. He looks up. “You sneaked.”

“I really didn’t, sweetheart,” Peter says. “You’re just in a world of your own.” He nods towards the
book. “Having fun?”

Stiles smiles, sitting up. “Did you know that having Companions was a military thing?” he asks.

“I did,” Peter agrees, because of course he did, he’s all worldly and well educated.

“They were given to high ranking personnel to look after their needs while they were deployed so
that they could focus on their duties,” Stiles says. “It was supposed to be cooking and
housekeeping but humans are gross so it ended up being sex.”

“Should we take sex out of our equation?” Peter asks in that infuriatingly earnest voice.

“I’d withdraw cooperation,” Stiles counters. “But when they came home, some of these military
guys, they ended up taking their Companions with them. Which is weird because most of them
were married and then they had a wife and a Companion.”

“Some people still enjoy that set up,” Peter says.

“Weird,” Stiles repeats, then he pauses, looking at Peter. “Do you want a wife?”

Peter smiles at him, amused and so fond. “Only you,” he assures him.

Stiles nods, getting that floaty feeling swelling in his chest. “Yeah, I guess it branches out after
that,” Stiles says, looking down at his book. “I haven’t got to the bit about families selling their kids
yet.”

“That comes later,” Peter says. “You’ll get to it.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. As much as he wants to know, he’s still apprehensive. He doesn’t think he’ll
like the answers, whatever they are.

“I love seeing you use your mind,” Peter says. “I’m going to make you the happiest little boy.”

Stiles smiles at him, floaty feeling intensifying, and he gets to his feet, crossing the room to give
Peter a hug. “I am,” he says.

Peter wraps his arms around him, before lowering his mouth to his ear. “You need to tidy up.”

Stiles makes a noise of protest, pushing into him further. He’s so warm and lovely. Stiles can’t
even think of anything else when he has this.
“Be a good boy,” Peter tells him, just the tiniest hint of warning in his voice, and that does it.

Stiles pulls back, gathering up his things from the window seat and placing them carefully away in his toy box. He closes the lid and turns back to Peter who smiles at him, gesturing him over. Stiles doesn’t hesitate before throwing himself back into his arms, snuggling close.

“You are absolute perfection,” Peter says.

He kisses Stiles’ temple and Stiles tips his head back for a real kiss, a brush of mouths, a parting of lips, a swipe of tongues. Stiles feels his body lighting up with want. Peter pulls back, leaving him hanging.

“We need to go eat lunch before the installation guy for the TV gets here,” he says.

Stiles nods, even though he wants to grumble. This is all for his benefit.

Over lunch, he starts to feel nervous about someone else invading their space. He hasn’t been around another person since the Foundry and he hated all of them. He likes his little bubble with Peter, has come to depend on it. It doesn’t feel safe to let someone else in here. What if they don’t agree with their relationship? What if they judge? What if they look at Stiles like a third class citizen? It’s what he is, strictly speaking. Peter doesn’t treat him that way, but it doesn’t change what he is to the rest of the world. He suddenly remembers every sniggering comment they made about Companions at school. Sex slaves. It’s what the world thinks. Stiles suddenly feels ashamed.

When the man arrives, Peter hops up from the couch to open the door, greeting him with that effortless charm. Stiles shrinks back but the man only nods at him in acknowledgement, following Peter up the stairs. He’ll see the chain, the cuff. If he doesn’t know what Stiles is already, he’ll work it out. Then, when he comes back down, he’ll think less of him. He’ll think he’s dirty and powerless. Stiles has fought that image back, has accepted what he truly is to Peter, he doesn’t want to have to do it again because of some stranger.

Peter gives him a warm smile when he returns, going through to his office. He collects his laptop and the MP3 player, sitting down beside Stiles as he boots it up. He connects the two devices, opening up his iTunes store and passing it over to Stiles.

“Choose as many things as you want.”

Stiles stares at it, his mind a sudden blank. When faced with the possibility of anything it can feel impossible to make a choice. Besides, his mind is still on that workman, on the raised eyebrow he probably gave the chain attached to the bed. He’ll go back to work and he’ll tell his colleagues about it and they’ll all laugh. He’ll be a funny story that gets them through the workday. He grits his teeth, eyes filling with tears that he blinks furiously away. Stiles can’t stand the thought of being reduced to that. He’s worth more.

“Baby?” Peter says, his voice soft and questioning.

Stiles looks at him, seeing the concern, the genuine worry that Stiles is not okay. Stiles smiles at him. To Peter, he’s worth more.

“I’m okay,” he says, turning back to the screen and starting to type in the names of his favourite bands, filling up his basket. He matches songs to different moods, finding songs for when he needs something to calm him down and songs for when he wants to dance, songs to study to and songs that are just pretty.

“I haven’t even heard of most of these bands,” Peter says.
“Your record collection is from a different millennia,” Stiles comments.

“I’m not that out of touch,” Peter says, flipping the tab over to his library. “That’s just vinyl I’ve picked up over the years. My downloads are a little more recent.”

Stiles scrolls through them. “You have some good stuff here,” he says. “Why don’t we ever listen to this?”

Peter switches it back over to the store. “Keep going.”

Stiles doesn’t push it, is just grateful Peter had shown that tiny part of himself. It’s the biggest real glimpse that Stiles feels like he’s gotten in a long time. When he’s proved himself, when he’s finished his training, maybe then he can be open with Stiles. He can trust him. Stiles will do whatever it takes to prove himself worthy. He wants to know everything about Peter. That’s true intimacy, isn’t it?

“Okay,” he says. “I think I’m done.”

Peter takes the laptop back, putting through the payment information and starting the process of downloading the songs. The workman comes back down the stairs and Stiles leans into Peter who abandons him in favour of this stranger. He supposes that’s just good manners though. There’s a brief exchange and then Peter is taking out his wallet and offering the man what Stiles assumes is a generous tip. Money will get you everywhere. He sees the man out and turns back to Stiles.

“Well,” he says. “Alone at last. Whatever will we do with ourselves?”

Stiles takes the hand that’s offered out to him, letting Peter pull him to his feet and then keeping hold of him. “I want you to teach me about blowjobs.”

Peter pretends to consider it for a moment. “I suppose we have time for that.”

He leads Stiles up the stairs and to the bedroom where the workman was. Stiles looks at it through his eyes, the cuff on top of the blankets, the chain attached to the bed. It makes him feel violated that this man was in here. But then he sees the flat screen TV on the wall opposite the bed and he decides that he doesn’t care.

“Wow,” he says. “That is a nice TV.”

“I want you to be able to appreciate the graphics in your game,” Peter says.

The PS4 is already hooked up beneath it, ready to go, and Stiles thinks that Peter must really love him to turn his bedroom into a gaming cave for Stiles.

“Does this mean we can watch TV in bed?”

“Absolutely not,” Peter tells him. “And you won’t be watching TV at all, it’s only hooked up to the console, you won’t get a signal on it.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. He doesn’t want to sound like a brat, like he’s asking for too much. “Thank you.”

Peter gives a curt nod. “Do you want to keep talking TV specs or shall we learn about blowjobs?”

“Blowjobs,” Stiles says quickly. “Please.”

“Good boy,” Peter says. “Let’s get you on the bed. No blankets today, I need to be able to see what
I’m doing.” Peter tugs Stiles closer to him, lifting the hem of his T-shirt, Stile raising his arms up to let him pull it off. “That’s better,” Peter says, eyes scanning over the new expanse of skin. “Get on the bed, sweetheart.”

Stiles climbs on, lying on his back in the middle of the bed, eyes fixed on Peter. He wants him to get undressed too. He wants to strip him. He wants his hands on all that flesh, but Peter joins him on the bed still full clothed. He covers Stiles’ body with his own, which somewhat makes up for it, but Stiles still feels needy and exposed and like a treat is being withheld from him. He needs to be good, he reminds himself. He needs to keep being good, then he can play with Daddy.

Peter kisses him, slow and lazy and deep, making Stiles cling to him, trying to drag him impossibly closer. He’s so needy whenever Peter’s not touching him, but somehow he gets even needier when he is. It’s never enough.

Peter pulls back, waiting until Stiles opens his eyes before addressing him. “I’m going to teach you how to give a blowjob now,” he says. “It’s going to feel good, but I need you to pay attention. This is a learning opportunity. You want to make Daddy feel good too, don’t you?”

Stiles nods his head. “So good.”

“Then listen to what I say and focus on what I do,” Peter says. “When you get a chance to try this, I want to be able to tell that you were taking everything I taught you on board.”

“I will,” Stiles promises. Peter smiles at him. “When you say you’re going to teach me…” Stiles begins.

“I’m going to suck your cock,” Peter says plainly.

That makes a shock of arousal go through Stiles, gripping Peter’s shirt tighter in his fingers, but it doesn’t quite stop the shudder. Peter looks very pleased with himself.

“We’re starting now,” he says, like Stiles needs to get into student mode.

Okay,” Stiles says with no conviction. His brain is already narrowing down to Peter good, touch good, everything else can go fuck itself.

“First rule of sex is foreplay,” Peter says. “There’s going to be times when I just push you down on my cock and let you get to it, but generally it’s nice to work up to it. It should be a build-up, not an exclamation. Like when I got you off the other day. There was kissing and touching and getting you into the headspace. I didn’t just stick my hand down your pants.”

Stiles stares at him. Is he supposed to say something? Mostly he’s just stuck on the mental image of Peter pushing him down onto his cock. He needs that in his life. He gives a little nod, hoping it at least gives the illusion of paying attention.

“So kissing is good,” Peter says, leaning in and brushing their lips together. Stiles tries to chase him but it doesn’t get him anywhere. “Touching is good too,” he says, running his fingertips down Stiles’ side, gripping his hip. Stiles nods. No arguments from him. “And sometimes,” he says, moving so that his thigh is between both of Stiles’, pressing down against his cock. “Sometimes some friction at the right angle is exactly what you need.” He adds more pressure, rubbing against Stiles’ cock until he whimpers. “And when you put all three together, that’s when you’re onto a real winner.”

He leans in, slipping his tongue into Stiles’ already open mouth, hand smoothing up and down his side, moving up to curl around the back of his neck, thigh a steady pressure that Stiles’ can’t resist
pressing his hips up into. It makes him dizzy, moaning into Peter’s mouth, already too hot.

“You see?” Peter says as he pulls away.

Stiles blinks at him. Oh right, he’s supposed to be learning. “Yeah,” he breathes.

“Also, notice how I’m using my thigh to give you some friction, I’m not humping you like a horny dog,” Peter says. “This is for you, this isn’t about me, so I’m focussing on making you feel good. When you’re making Daddy feel good you do it for him, you don’t get greedy and take for yourself,” Peter says. “If you’re allowed to come, Daddy will take care of you after. You understand? Sometimes it’s mutual, but sometimes it’s about focussing on the other person. You need to learn when it’s your turn.”

Stiles nods. He likes the idea of being the one in control like Peter is, the one giving pleasure, but he’s pretty sure he’ll never be able to hold it as together as Peter does.

“Then,” Peter says, shifting back slightly, “You can start to focus in on the prize.”

He presses his hand against Stiles’ cock through his pants, making him buck up. He squeezes, massages, strokes him through the material.

“I really do love how wet you are,” Peter says. “We’re going to have a lot of fun with that.”

Stiles bites down on his lips, nodding his head.

Peter leans in, dragging kisses over Stiles’ throat. “I can’t wait to taste you.”

He presses his hand against Stiles’ cock through his pants, making him buck up. He squeezes, massages, strokes him through the material.

“I really do love how wet you are,” Peter says. “We’re going to have a lot of fun with that.”

Stiles bites down on his lips, nodding his head.

Peter leans in, dragging kisses over Stiles’ throat. “I can’t wait to taste you.”

Stiles moans shamelessly, pressing into the touch, turning his face to try and capture a kiss, but Peter is moving back. He grabs the waistband of Stiles’ pants, tugging down, and then Stiles is naked on the bed, hard and leaking and desperate, while Peter just sits there, looking him over.

Stiles lifts an arm, putting it over his face.

“Don’t you dare hide from me,” Peter says, his voice a growl. Stile whimpers, letting his arm fall away. Peter meets his eyes fiercely. “You are just gorgeous from head to toe.”

Stiles wants to argue but he can’t, not with that look in Peter’s eye. There’s no way he’s not telling the absolute truth, at least as he sees it.

Peter reaches out, hand wrapping around Stiles’ cock, stroking him slowly. “You’re not going to take me all the way in the first time,” Peter says. “That’s okay. We’ll work on it. I know you’ll let me fuck your throat when you learn how.”

Stiles makes a broken noise, nodding his head.

“But the first time, use your hand to help,” Peter says. “You can stroke me like this and then you can suck on the head.”

He leans forward and Stiles holds his breath, anticipation pressing on his skin like needles.

“Taste first though,” Peter says, flicking out his tongue to lick flatly over the leaking head. “Explore. Enjoy it. I’m going to.”

He licks over Stiles again and Stiles’ whole body strains. That is nothing like a hand, like the swipe of a thumb or playing his fingers over his slit. It’s wet and hot and kind of wriggly which should be gross but really isn’t. Fuck, it’s literally the greatest thing he’s ever felt and it makes him want to
tear his way out of his own skin.

“Using your tongue is always good,” Peter says, and then his lips are wrapping around the head of Stiles’ cock, tongue swirling around.

“Oh god,” Stiles says, reaching blindly upwards, trying to find purchase. He fists both his hands into his pillow, nearly pulls it over his head with how hard he’s pulling at it.

Peter tongues at the slit and Stiles just about loses his mind completely, a string of incoherent noises falling from his open mouth. He sinks down further, taking him in about halfway, his hand still wrapped around the base, stroking and twisting and complementing everything he does. When Peter’s mouth slides back, Stiles’ cock is wet and aching. He groans.

“That’s probably as deep as you’ll take me the first time,” Peter says. “Just use your hand, use your tongue, give it a little suck.” He takes him back in, demonstrates making a seal, hollowing his cheeks, before pulling off again. “And watch the teeth.”

He opens his mouth, Stiles already craving that wet heat, but instead Peter drags his teeth gently down Stiles length. He jumps, so sensitive, it’s like a knife.

“Nobody wants that,” Peter says, licking it better. He looks up at Stiles. “Stay with me, we’re not quite there.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I can’t.”

“If you’re not listening, I’m going to stop,” Peter warns him. “You can do this, baby, take a deep breath for me. Let’s keep going.”

Stiles takes a deep breath, flooding his lungs, and then he takes another, feeling himself edge back from the brink. He makes a frustrated noise. Further from his orgasm isn’t where he wants to be.


“That’s good,” Peter says. “Keep going.”


“Okay, baby boy,” Peter says. “Daddy’s going to show you how he does it. You’re going to get as good as this. You’re going deepthroat and you’re going to swallow every drop. Let me show you.”

Stiles nods his head eagerly and then he cries out as he’s engulfed, Peter sucking him right down to the base, his nose buried in Stiles’ pubic hair. It looks obscene. It looks absolutely gorgeous. Stiles wants to learn how to do it.

It’s the last coherent thought he has before his eyes slip closed and his head arches back and he feels Peter sucking him, bobbing his head up and down, doing clever, wicked things with his tongue.

It feels as though his orgasm is ripped from him like an act of violence. He’s making broken
sounds as his body convulses and Peter is just sucking him, swallowing it down, rubbing his hip in a way that feels so caring, so at odds with the way his body tears apart.

Stiles shivers, his breaths shaky, and he feels like he has no control. Peter pulls off him, licking his softening cock, and Stiles is going to shatter, he’s going to break apart, and not even Peter will be able to fix him. Peter looks up at him, gazes at him along the length of his body, and Stiles makes grabby hands because he can’t find the words. Peter gets it though. He moves up to join him, wrapping him up in his arms, surrounding him in love.

“It’s okay,” he whispers. “Let go. I’ve got you.”

Stiles closes his eyes, burrows into him, pleasure settling in his body like a constant state, like happiness made physical. Peter strokes his back and nuzzles at his temple and Stiles drifts, sees stars and fireflies, is lifted up in Peter’s arms away from the world.
Stiles unrolls his yoga mat at the foot of the bed, smoothing his hands over the geometric pattern in different shades of blue. It’s probably expensive. Peter doesn’t seem to do anything cheap. Stiles likes the thought of being worth it though. He’s never had as many nice things as he has here.

He puts the DVD into the PS4 and sits back to watch. If he has to give up an hour of every morning to this, he’s decided he’d prefer to do it first and get it out of the way rather than have it hanging over his head. He feels a little guilty for thinking of it that way. Peter has given him this with the best of intentions, to keep his body active and his mind calm. Stiles has never been good at either of those things, his brain going too fast and his body not able to keep up. This will probably help with coordination and control. And flexibility, he reminds himself, imagining Peter bending him over or pushing his legs up over his head. He ignores the throb his cock gives. There’s no way he’s wasting an orgasm and missing out on his training this afternoon.

He looks up at the woman on the screen. She’s blonde and toned and perfect. Stiles can’t relate. The warm up is easy enough though, some breathing exercises, some gentle stretches. He likes the awareness of his own body, thinking about posture and alignment and how he moves. There’s something very calming and nurturing about it.

About halfway through, he starts to get out of his depth. The woman makes it look so easy, moving her body with such grace, while Stiles just tries not to fall on his ass. He checks out, sitting down on his mat and just watching her. He wonders if there’s something wrong with him that he can’t do this, can’t make his body bend and contort like she does. She keeps kindly telling him that it’s okay if he can’t complete the move, that he should do it to his own comfort level, find what works for him. There’s a comfort in her reassurance that he can’t do it wrong and so he gets up and tries again, moving his body, awakening parts of himself he doesn’t think he’s ever used before.

By the time he’s laid out on his mat, doing nothing but breathing in and out, he feels like every tiny part of him is unwound, a deep down satisfaction settling over him that fills him with motivation. Peter was right. Of course he was.

Stiles sits up, bracing himself for a moment so that he doesn’t get dizzy when he stands. He grabs his study things from his toy box and takes them over to the window seat, laying out on his stomach and picking up where he left off the day before. He works his way through the next couple of chapters, learning about Companions’ transitions away from active war zones into domestic settings.

After what Stiles has been through, the violence with which he was taken, he can kind of relate. He knows what it’s like to be scared all the time, to not know when the next bomb is going to drop. Stiles didn’t have Peter by his side through that though like the Companions had their military Masters. They were bonded through their experience, it’s why many of the Companions were kept once the deployments were over. Peter was his saviour, not his equal. Does that mean their bond isn’t as strong? Peter gives him everything he could dream of now, he makes him so happy, he makes up for what he went through to get here, but he can’t ever know what it was like. Being forged in fire makes you stronger. Stiles isn’t sure if it’s a shared happy ever after if he was the only one rescued.

He takes a break, deciding he’s earned his forty-five minutes of gaming. He puts the disc in and grabs the controller, going to sit on the bed. He watches as the intro sequence plays out and then spends almost half of his time creating his character. There’s so many options though and each one will affect his gameplay later on. That feels like a big responsibility. It feels like the biggest
decision he’s had to make in a long time.

He does have choices now though, he has to appreciate that fact. He has a number of ways that he can spend his time while Peter is working, and while they come with conditions, he still gets to decide how his mornings play out. It gives him power, a sense of self. Stiles knows that that’s a gift, not a given, to someone in his position. Peter doesn’t owe this to a Companion, but he wants Stiles to be happy, to be fulfilled. The more Stiles reads of his Companion book, the more grateful he is to have Peter.

Stiles is barely starting to play out his first quest when his forty-five minutes is up. He pauses the game, warring with himself for a moment over whether Peter would really know if he played just a little bit longer. Peter’s rules are for Stiles’ benefit though. He’s being a good Daddy. Stiles needs to be a good little boy. That’s how this works. It’s the only way this works. Stiles wants it to work.

He switches off the game and tries not to resent the fact that he has to watch that perfect lady do yoga for an hour every day, whether he likes it or not, and yet the most enjoyable thing he owns, he’s only allowed forty-five minutes on. It’s for his own good, he reminds himself, settling down in the window seat to do some more studying.

Stiles had always assumed that the Foundry had been around for as long as Companions had, but they used to be trained up in house by the military and it was nothing like the training they underwent nowadays. Nothing like the training Stiles narrowly avoided. Back then, it was ensured that they could cook and clean and obey instructions. They knew the military way of life and their chores were designed to make their Masters’ lives easier while they focussed on literally waging war. They weren’t trained in etiquette because they weren’t expected to entertain, only submit. They weren’t trained sexually because it was overlooked that their Masters would use them that way, though it became accepted early on.

Stiles stares at that sentence over and over. …weren’t trained sexually… He’s tempted to skip ahead and find out how the Foundry trains them now. Is their sexual education verbal, visual, physical? What the hell did he escape? He knows as dumb teens they always joked about the sex slaves, and he knows that’s what Companions have become to many people, but being trained in it is something else. Is that what his handler was for, to literally handle him, to train him how to please his master?

Some dark little part of him points out that maybe that’s what Peter’s doing now. Getting his sex drive up, teaching him blowjobs. The thought of Peter doing those things to him doesn’t make him feel physically sick though and Peter let him come to this on his own, gave him the space to want it, and he’s making Stiles ask. Explicit consent. Stiles doesn’t mind learning when he’s the one in charge of starting each lesson.

By the time Stiles finishes the chapter, he decides he can’t handle any more information today. He tidies up his study supplies and curls up with a comic instead, leaning against the window as the sun shines through. He can’t feel the breeze that makes the leaves dance on the trees outside but he can feel the sun’s warmth. He can feel it soaking into him.

Peter comes to collect him for lunch before Stiles gets a chance to finish the comic. He looks up at Peter, standing by the bed, and his whole body reacts, like pins and needles, the sensation of blood returning and awakening flesh. He glances down at his comic regretfully, desperate to know what happens in the new arc he’s just begun, but it will have to wait. He can’t have Peter whenever he wants, there’s no way he’s going to do anything but respond when he’s right there in front of him. He puts the comic aside, getting to his feet and crossing the space between them, happy when Peter allows him into his arms.
“Hello, beautiful,” he greets, arms going around Stiles’ waist, holding him snug. “Productive morning?”

Stiles nods. “Did my yoga, studied, played Skyrim, started on my new comics.”

“Busy boy,” Peter says. “How did you like the yoga?”

“It was good,” Siles agrees. “I couldn’t do it all.”

“I told you I didn’t expect you to,” Peter says kindly.

“I’ll keep working on it,” Stiles says.

“You’re a quick learner,” Peter says. “You’ll get it.”

“Physically not so much,” Stiles says.

Peter smirks at him, fingers sneaking under Stiles’ shirt. “Baby, I have no complaints physically.”

Stiles’ hips press forward without him even thinking about it, instinctively trying to rub against Peter as blood pools in his dick. Peter holds him still. He’s so strong, it takes nothing for him to overpower Stiles, it doesn’t even look like he’s trying. Stiles wants him to hold him down on the bed again. He wants his hands held above his head and Peter’s dick fucking him deep. He pulls his lip between his teeth, chewing on it.

“You are thinking some filthy thoughts,” Peter says. “Be a good boy, go tidy up, it’s time for lunch. We can talk about getting baby off later, if you haven’t done it already.”

“I haven’t,” Stiles insists, but he’s sure Peter already knows that. He’d be able to smell it. Stiles wonders what he can smell now.

“Well, Daddy’s going to make you come then,” Peter says. “If you’re good.”

Stiles nods his head eagerly and then remembers what being good means. Tidying up. He blinks a few times and then forces himself from Peter’s now lax grip, going to put his comic away and close up his toy box before making sure the PS4 controller is neatly put aside. He turns back to Peter, waiting for approval.

“Good boy,” Peter says. “Let’s go eat.”

Lunch is healthy and balanced and so good, making Stiles feel like the luckiest boy in the world. He watches Peter eat, remembering the way his lips had wrapped around Stiles’ cock. Stiles wants to do that today. His hand fidgets and his dick hardens. Now isn’t the time. He needs to think about something else.

“Did you have a productive day?” he asks, all too aware of the fact that he’s basically parroting Peter’s own niceties back at him. Following Peter’s example is a safe bet, isn’t it? He’s not allowed to do all the things that Peter can do though. The rules are different for him.

“A lot of leg work, not much to show for it,” Peter responds, vague as ever. “Not the worst day.”

Stiles nods, picking at his food. He wants to ask what Peter’s working on but he knows it won’t get him an answer, that it will probably only earn him coldness. When Peter is willing to share, when Stiles has earned it, that’s when he’ll find out. Until then, he has to respect Peter’s boundaries.

“The Companion stuff is starting to get pretty dark,” he says instead.
“Don’t read it if it’s going to upset you,” Peter says. “I can get you something else.”

“No, I like it,” Stiles insists. “It’s interesting. And I want to know. Just, even from inside the Foundry, I never knew what actually happened there.” He looks up at Peter. “I’m so lucky you bought me.”

Peter smiles at him. “I will always look after you, baby. You’re Daddy’s little boy and I’m going to raise you right and treat you good.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says, his voice cracking against the swell of his chest.

“If you’re a good boy for me you are never going to want for anything,” Peter promises.

Stiles nods his head. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter’s eyes go dark, dilated and pleased. He reaches over, caressing Stiles’ cheek. “You are just sweetness personified,” he says, leaning in for a kiss. It’s slow and chaste but it makes Stiles shudder, a helpless little noise caught in his throat. Peter nips at his bottom lip, pulling back. “So sweet for Daddy.”

“Always,” Stiles agrees.

“Not always,” Peter dismisses. “Sometimes Daddy likes you filthy too.”

Stiles nods his head. He’ll be anything. “Okay.”

Peter laughs, and even though Stiles is pretty sure it’s at his expense, it still sounds so warm. “Eat your lunch.”

Stiles does.

When Peter clears away the plates, Stiles taps his foot restlessly, unable to keep still. He’s all hormones and wants and nervous energy. Peter returns to him, Stiles turning on his stool to be able to face him more fully, resisting the urge to just fold into him like he always wants to. If he could just sit in Peter’s lap, cradled in his arms, for the rest of his life, he would have literally no complaints.

“So,” Peter says, casual and drawn out. “What do you want to do this afternoon, sweetheart?”

“I want to learn more about blowjobs,” Stiles says, forcing the words out. “You said I can taste, right?”

“You want to taste Daddy’s cock?” Peter asks, his tone so level that Stiles almost believes that this is a normal conversation. Between the two of them, he supposes it is. His new normal. He nods his head. “No, baby, that’s not going to cut it,” Peter says, taking obvious pleasure in the act. “Gonna need you to say.” He reaches out, taking hold of Stiles’ jaw in one strong hand. “And you can go ahead and look straight at me when you do.”

Stiles squirms but he doesn’t try to move out of Peter’s grip. He averts his gaze though while he tries to compose himself, staring at the sink as he psychs himself up. It’s just words. He can say them. Peter wants him to. That fact alone compels him. He meets Peter’s eyes.

“I want to taste Daddy’s cock.”

“Let’s see how pretty you can ask,” Peter says, still holding him tight.
Stiles licks his lips, an unconscious gesture that suddenly feels obscene. Peter’s eyes track the movement and Stiles feels himself blush deeper, face burning. “Please can I taste your cock, Daddy? Want it in my mouth.”

Peter lets out a breath, soft and satisfied. “Of course you can, baby.” He swipes his thumb over Stiles’ cheek and then lets go of his jaw, placing his hand flat against Stiles’ stomach instead. “We should let all that nice food settle first though.”

“I’m fine,” Stiles insists, a little too desperately.

Peter smiles, amused. “We don’t want to test that gag reflex for the first time when you’re all full up,” he says, patting Stiles’ stomach for emphasis. “Let’s give you a fighting chance.”

Stiles swallows, humiliated and belittled but ridiculously turned on. Peter has his best interests at heart, he reminds himself. He has to trust him. “Okay,” he agrees.

“That’s my good boy,” Peter says, leaning in to brush a kiss against his lips. Stiles tries to deepen it, tries to chase him as he pulls back, but it doesn’t get him anywhere. Peter touches his face, his hot cheeks, runs a hand through his hair to rest at the back of his neck. Stiles all but melts. “So,” Peter says, like the dance is starting all over again. “What are we going to do until baby’s ready for his first cock?”

“That’s not fair,” Stiles complains.

“What’s not fair?” Peter asks innocently, giving a little squeeze to the back of Stiles’ neck.

“ Asking me a question while you turn me on so much I can’t think straight,” Stiles says.

“Sweetheart,” Peter says, the word dripping with condescension. “All I have to do to turn you on is walk into a room.”

Stiles smiles, brimming with amusement and fondness. Sometimes he doesn’t even have to do that. “Alright,” he agrees, feeling his mind come back to him a little at the moment of self-awareness. “I want to play chess. I think I can beat you. Maybe not now, but I think I can.”

“I’m sure you can,” Peter agrees. He trails his hand away, fingertips dragging over Stiles’ throat as he steps back. “Let’s go try, shall we?”

They sit down at the table by the window, Peter making the first move. Stiles manages to keep his wits about him, focussing on the game and trying to anticipate what Peter will do. They’ve been playing long enough that Stiles feels like he should be able to read him by now, but Peter continues to be predictably unpredictable, just like he is in everything. Stiles appreciates the challenge though. He feels capable of taking it on. It’s a good feeling.

He credits Peter with instilling him with confidence, giving him the tools to better himself, actively encouraging him to do so. Stiles knows from his reading that Peter has every right to let him rot upstairs with no stimulation until he’s needed again, or to give him menial housekeeping tasks to keep him busy and out of the way. He’s worth more to Peter than that though. He tells him he’s beautiful and special and a quick smart. He drew him his own little guide so that he could learn to play chess, so that he could learn to beat Peter, and he’s giving him a fair shot at it.

He doesn’t manage it today, but not for lack of trying. He’s impressed with his own ability to concentrate, to keep his mind on the task with Peter so close. It’s easy to get drawn into him, to want him so badly he can’t think of anything else. He’s learning to want more though. Working out his brain, centring his body, it gives him a stable base and he feels like he can achieve anything. He
feels like he can be whatever Peter needs him to be. He’s strong enough now. That’s what Peter said he needed to be. Tough. He doesn’t fall apart unless Peter pulls him apart. He doesn’t fold unless he’s folded. He can be decent, semi-intelligent company until Peter lets him have his fireflies.

Peter looks up at him across the finished game and Stiles feels the shift. The energy in the room changes, making the hairs on the back of Stiles’ neck stand up. It’s like Peter is touching him without having to lift a finger. Stiles goes soft and compliant with both his body and his mind. This is when he’s allowed to. This is when Peter will take care of him.

“How’s that stomach feeling now?” Peter asks.

“It was fine before,” Stiles responds impatiently.

Peter narrows his eyes. “I could do without you talking back to me.”

Stiles’ eyes fall down to the board, his fallen king. “I wasn’t.”

“Look at Daddy,” Peter orders. Stiles looks up, his face hot. “All you have to do is answer the question, baby. I’m sure you can manage that.” Stiles nods his head. “How’s that stomach feeling?”


Peter smiles but it’s not the warm, nurturing one. Stiles probably doesn’t deserve that. “Then you can go ahead and ask if you still want it,” Peter tells him.

Stiles takes a breath. No shame, just respect and honesty. He swallows. “Please, Daddy, I want to taste your cock.”

The smile reaches Peter’s eyes then, lighting them up. “That’s a good boy,” he says, reaching out to take hold of Stiles’ hand. “And I know how much you mean it. You want to be Daddy’s little cock slut, don’t you?”

Stiles nods his head, his own dick hard in his pants. This isn’t about him though, he reminds himself. He’s going to use everything Peter taught him. He’s going to make him proud.

“Come on, beautiful, let’s put that gorgeous mouth to work,” Peter says with a wink.

He leads Stiles up the stairs by his hand, Stiles feeling unsteady, but Peter never lets him falter. Stiles feels safe with him. He’d trust him with anything. Peter sits down on the edge of the bed, pulling Stiles in to stand snugly between his thighs. Stiles presses his hips in closer and then reminds himself he’s supposed to be good. He’s supposed to be giving. All he wants to do is rut against Peter though. He’s greedy and he wants all of him right now. He wants to take this edge off and then he wants to work on Peter’s body all night. That’s not how this works though. He needs to give before he can take. He wants to give everything.

“What comes first?” Peter asks.

Stiles takes a deep breath, trying to steady himself. “Kissing?”

“Say it with a little bit of conviction,” Peter says.

Peter tilts his head. “Come kiss me then.”

Stiles leans down, brushing their lips together, waiting for Peter to take the lead, but Peter just lets himself be kissed, hands slack where they rest on Stiles’ hips, and Stiles realises that’s not how it’s going to work. Peter isn’t going to lead him through this. Stiles needs to show him what he’s learnt.

He presses his mouth more firmly against Peter’s, taking his face in his hands and trying not to cling too tight. He parts his lips, catches his bottom lip on Peter’s, flicks his tongue out against the seam. Peter doesn’t react so Stiles licks wetly along the line, Peter granting him admittance. Stiles slides his tongue into Peter’s mouth, leaning all his weight against him, feeling dizzy already. He needs to keep his cool. This is about making Peter feel good.

He tries to remember how Peter kisses him, but mostly it’s just a haze that turns Stiles liquid. Stiles has been far too selfish in their relationship, hasn’t been putting in nearly enough effort. Peter has been so good to him, has put so much energy into Stiles’ pleasure, and he’s never gotten anything in return. Stiles is determined to make it up to him now.

He pulls his mouth away, dropping his hands to Peter’s shoulders. “Can we lie down?”

“We can do whatever makes you comfortable, baby,” Peter responds.

Stiles frowns. This isn’t supposed to be about him. “Do you like this? We can keep doing this.”

“Let’s lie down,” Peter says, easing him back. “Then you can show me what I taught you.”

Peter settles himself in the middle of the bed and Stiles climbs on top of him, trying not to second guess himself. It feels weird to be the one on top, the one in control of what happens next. He presses his thigh between Peter’s, just like Peter did to him, a thrill going through him as he feels Peter’s hard cock pressed against him. He did that. He smiles, leaning down to kiss him again.

It feels easier like this, when he doesn’t have to worry about staying upright, letting his body go molten. He slides his tongue into Peter’s mouth, his jaw slack as he kisses him deeply. They’ve done this plenty now, he knows how to do it. He loves it. It’s so intimate, tasting each other, sharing their breaths.

He touches Peter’s face, tilts his head to get a different angle, groaning into his mouth at how good it feels. He presses down with his hips, rubbing his cock against Peter before he catches himself. It’s not his turn. He stills, pushing down with his thigh instead, building friction against Peter’s cock. The fabric of Peter’s jeans is thick and rough, making the outline of his cock indistinct. Stiles makes a needy noise, wanting to feel it. Stiles’ own clothes hide nothing, if he gets even slightly turned on it’s right there for Peter to see, the fabric clinging to him and offering a perfect view. Peter isn’t here for Stiles’ pleasure though, Stiles reminds himself. He needs to stop being so greedy and entitled. He needs to focus on Peter.

He rocks his thigh against Peter’s cock, groaning when Peter lifts his hips up to meet him. He’s doing something right. He trails his hand down, gripping Peter’s shoulder for leverage, feeling all that strength underneath him. He pulls his mouth away, gasping for breath, bowing his head down to rest in the crook of Peter’s neck as he keeps moving against him. He mouths at his flesh, slides his hand down further, resting against his hip but not knowing what to do with it. He wants to push his hand under Peter’s shirt and feel his body. He wants to strip him and kiss him everywhere. He doesn’t know if he’s supposed to do that though. He doesn’t know if he’s allowed.

Touching is good though, Stiles reminds himself. Kissing, then touching. That’s the order. He whimpers against Peter’s neck, slips his hand under Peter’s shirt, grazing his abs. They’re hot and
solid and there’s a little trail of hair. It’s too much. He whines and pulls his hand back out again, twisting his fingers in the hem of Peter’s shirt. Peter slides a hand up and down Stiles’ back, a reassuring movement, and Stiles steels himself up, trying again. Heated skin. Firm muscles. He pulls back, fingers catching on Peter’s waistband, and he moans.

Peter slides a hand through his hair and then makes him lift his head up so he can look at him. “Skittish hands are adorable but let’s try and focus.”

Stiles nods erratically. “I’m sorry.”

Peter’s face is flushed, his eyes darker than usual. That’s arousal, isn’t it? Stiles has never seen him look like this. He likes it but it melts any tiny part of sanity he has left. He stares at Peter hopelessly.

“Do you want to stop?” Peter asks.

“Please don’t make me stop,” Stiles says desperately. “I’ll try harder. I’ll do better. Please.”

“Shhh,” Peter soothes. “You tie yourself up in knots so easy. It’s supposed to be fun.” He rubs his thumb over Stiles’ cheek until he starts to relax, melting into his touch. “Tell me what you want,” Peter prompts.

Stiles licks his lips. “I want to touch you. I want to taste you.”

Peter nods. “We can do that.” He eases Stiles back. “Daddy’s going to strip, then baby can play any way he wants. Okay?”

Stiles nods eagerly, eyes going hazy as he sits back. He blinks, not wanting to miss anything as Peter pulls his shirt over his head, as he unfastens his jeans and pushes them down with his boxer briefs, discarding them over the side of the bed. He shifts back, sitting up against the headboard, taking his hard cock lazily in his hand and giving a couple of long strokes. Stiles stares at him, mouth hanging open, and he feels like he could literally come just from looking at Peter like this. He has that much power over him.

Stiles watches Peter’s hand, a bead of precome welling up at the tip of his cock, and Stiles can feel his tongue sliding out of his mouth, even though he’s nowhere near enough, disappointed when Peter’s thumb swipes it away. Stiles can make more though. He doesn’t leak continuously like Stiles does, but that means it will be even more worth it when he finally gets a taste.

He moves forward, practically crawling up the bed as he sits between Peter’s thighs. Peter is so shameless, not the tiniest hint of self-consciousness at the fact that he’s completely exposed. He’s so ridiculously sculpted and gorgeous though, Stiles doesn’t think he’d mind people looking if he had a body like that.

Peter pulls his hand away, his hard cock swaying slightly as it’s released. It’s mesmerising. Stiles edges closer, reaching out a shaky hand and forcing himself not to hesitate as he wraps his fingers around it. He groans at how solid it feels in his hand. It’s not like he’s never touched a cock before, he’s touched his own, he knows what they’re supposed to feel like, but it’s different when it’s somebody else’s.

He remembers the handjob that he maybe gave in the back of the club. He’s pretty sure his fingers touched cock but everything is way too fuzzy to remember. He doesn’t need to numb himself for this now though, doesn’t want to. He’s not in any rush and he has nothing to prove. Peter is being patient with him, is letting him explore this, letting him come to it in his own terms, just like
everything else. It gives Stiles control, makes him feel empowered, and that turns him on so much that he can barely hold himself back.

He starts to stroke Peter’s cock, long movements like Peter did to himself. He knows that Peter wasn’t really trying to get himself off though, he was just keeping himself ticking over while Stiles pulled himself together. Stiles lets himself get used to the movement, the angle so different than when he does this to himself, and then he grips a little tighter, moving his hand faster up and down. It’s dry, Peter’s not sloppy with the precome like he is. He wonders if that makes it unpleasant. He considers the lube in the drawer but that’s too messy and he doesn’t want to have to taste it. He lifts his hand away instead, licking wetly over it before grasping Peter’s cock again.

Peter’s breath catches in his throat and Stiles’ eyes instinctively flick upwards. It’s the first reaction he’s given, the first tiny hint of what Stiles is doing to him, and Stiles likes it. He looks at the sweat on Peter’s brow, the way his breaths are measured but too quick. It makes his own cock throb in his pants. Peter smiles at him, lopsided and giving away far too much vulnerability. Stiles wants to dive in and kiss him again. He wants to make him moan. He wants to make him come.

He looks back down at Peter’s cock, at what he’s doing, and feels a sense of great pride as he watches precome beading at the tip. He wants to play with it but that would be a waste. Instead, he dips his head forward, flicking out his tongue to taste. It would be a lie to say he’d never tasted his own wet hand, had never dipped a finger into his own come on his stomach and tasted it. This is nothing like that though. It’s subtle, just a drop, but it’s heady and addictive and Stiles wants more. He wraps his lips around the head of Peter’s cock, wanting to suck it out of him, and Peter moans above him, deep and full and gorgeous. Stiles groans in response and then Peter’s hand is in his hair.

He doesn’t push Stiles down like Stiles thinks he might, like he actually kind of wants him to. Kind of really wants him to. He doesn’t even force him not to lift his head if he tries. Instead, he just holds him, fingertips pressing into his skull, and Stiles looks up, taking in Peter’s soft eyes and parted lips. Stiles never knew he could do this to somebody. He never knew somebody could want him like this.

He moves his head down, wants to taste all of him, wants to be filled up, but he gags embarrassingly quickly, his throat closing up and threatening to make him wretch. He pulls back, lifts his mouth off with a little huff, trying to calm down. It’s okay. Peter warned him about this. Go as deep as you can and then use your hand, that’s what he said. Stiles can do that.

He fits his lips around Peter’s cock again, tasting more precome, and he moans, dipping down further. He still can’t judge it, gagging halfway down, but he manages not to pull all the way off this time, wrapping his fingers around to form a barrier and give himself something he can work comfortably with. This can still be good. He looks up at Peter for approval who just gazes back at him, tightening his fingers in Stiles’ hair. Stiles would smile if he could. Instead he sucks, trying to work out what he’s supposed to do with his tongue. He can’t lick with his mouth full. He doesn’t feel like he can do much of anything. He settles for just sliding his lips up and down, getting into a rhythm, closing his eyes and letting himself get used to the sensation.

His back is starting to ache from the position he’s in, practically bent double. He lifts his head up, shifting back and stretching himself out on his stomach, putting his mouth back on Peter’s cock. Peter hums happily, fingers sliding through Stiles’ hair. Stiles looks up at him, bobbing his head up and down, sucking gently. He can taste precome, but Peter doesn’t exactly look like he’s on the edge. If anything, he’s moving further away, relaxed instead of wound up and desperate. Stiles frowns, trying to suck harder.
Peter hisses, fingers tugging at Stiles’ hair. “Teeth.”

Stiles whimpers, pulling himself off. “I’m sorry.” His words are slurred and he can’t quite remember how to use his tongue. How is his jaw so tired already?

“Just relax,” Peter says, a hint of exasperation in his voice. Teeth are very bad. Stiles is very bad.

Stiles nods, wiping at his mouth with the back of his hand, saliva collecting at the corners. He takes a breath, putting his lips back around Peter’s cock, sucking more gently. He doesn’t think this is what it’s supposed to feel like though. He doesn’t think Peter is supposed to be this calm. Stiles doesn’t dare do it any harder though. He closes his eyes again, concentrates on what he’s doing, Peter’s fingers stroking over his scalp in reward. Stiles makes a noise of thanks, suckling happily.

He gets lost in the rhythm, something so comforting about it. It’s like he can feel Peter everywhere, his senses filled with him, and he wonders what this is like for Peter who experiences everything in high definition. Stiles’ smell must have been overwhelming. All Stiles is aware of it the weight of Peter on his tongue and the musky taste of his arousal and the smell of him, rich and earthy as usual but sharp as well, cutting straight through to Stiles’ brain like a knife, soothed over by Peter’s fingers. He moans, pulling back to lap his tongue over the head, because that’s what he’s supposed to do with his tongue, he remembers. He swirls it around and dips down until he bumps against his own fingers again.

“Stiles,” Peter says in a warning tone. Stiles’ eyes fly open as he instantly goes cold. Peter hardly ever uses his name, and never like that. Peter tugs at his hair, pulling him off. “You need to get on your knees, baby.”


“Because you’re fucking your pretty little self against the bed,” Peter says. “And it’s not your turn yet.”

Stiles looks down at himself. He hadn’t even noticed but of course he was humping the bed. Of course he has no control over himself. He pushes himself up, his head spinning as he forces himself onto his knees. He looks at Peter, feeling lost, needing something to ground him.

“Maybe you’re done,” Peter says. “You did good, darling.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I want to finish.”

Peter’s lips quirk into a smile. “I don’t think you’re going to finish, no matter how long I let you do it.”

Stiles frowns at him. Does that mean Peter thinks he’s not good enough, or just that Stiles can’t handle it? Both are probably true, but Stiles wants a chance to try. He’s supposed to be learning. Maybe this stopped being fun for Peter though.

“Can I do a little more?” he asks. “Please?”

“You having fun on Daddy’s cock?” Peter asks.

Stiles nods his head. “Please?”

“Ask nicely” Peter prompts.

Stiles fidgets. He doesn’t have space for pride, he reminds himself. Just say the words. “Please let
me suck your cock, Daddy.”

“Okay, baby,” Peter agrees. “For a little longer. Then Daddy wants to get off.”

Stiles pouts. Clearly he’s not capable of making that happen. He adjusts himself, leaning forward on his hands to brace himself either side of Peter’s hips. He tries to use just his mouth as he holds himself steady, judging how far he can go down, only gagging slightly before he manages to pull back. He tries again, tentative, bobbing his head shallowly.

“Use your hand,” Peter tells him.

Stiles makes a disgruntled noise, trying to work out how that’s possible without just falling on his face. He shifts most of his weight back onto his knees, lifting his right hand from the bed and wrapping it back around Peter’s cock. It gives him a much better reference point and he sucks up and down with renewed confidence. He looks up at Peter through his lashes, trying to gauge his reaction. His breaths are shallow, his face flushed pink, but he doesn’t look out of control, not even a little bit. Stiles tries not to let that discourage him. He’s learning. Peter wants him to learn.

He focuses on what he’s doing, tries to go a little faster, tries to up the suction without getting his teeth involved. It’s too much to think about and his left arm is starting to shake under his own weight. He doesn’t want to give in, but he doesn’t know how to do this. He lifts up his head, tears springing to his eyes.

“I’m sorry.”

“Why are you sorry, beautiful?” Peter asks him. “See how hard and wet Daddy’s cock is? You did that.”

Stiles looks down at it, dark and glistening. It’s gorgeous and obscene and it makes Stiles’ own cock twitch in his pants. He wants to touch himself so badly.

“Do you want to watch Daddy get himself off?” Peter asks.

Stiles nods his head eagerly. “Please.”

“You sit there like a good boy and don’t touch yourself and I’ll let you have a taste,” Peter promises.

Stiles nods again, eyes fixed on Peter’s cock. “So good.”

“You really are,” Peter agrees, wrapping his hand around his dick.

Stiles doesn’t take his eyes off it, Peter’s movements so firm and sure, just like when he touches Stiles. It makes Stiles shift, lifting a hand to wipe absently at his mouth. His lips feel puffy. He wonders what he looks like. He wonders what they looked like stretched around Peter’s cock. He bites down on his bottom lip, chewing on it as Peter’s hand speeds up, slick with saliva and probably precome but Stiles can’t tell the difference now. He licks at the inside of his own mouth, trying to taste it there.

Peter makes a noise, something like a growl, fist clenching. Stiles looks up, Peter’s head tipped back, mouth hanging open, twitching with something like a snarl. He looks fierce. Stiles wants to touch him. He wants to see his wolf teeth. He wants to see his glowing red eyes.

Peter doesn’t lose control though, even as he pulls his orgasm almost viciously from himself. He’s never that rough with Stiles. Something about the potential makes Stiles’ cock throb though. It
should scare him but it doesn’t. Peter takes care of him. He would only ever use his strength to
protect Stiles, to make him feel good. What he’s doing to himself now looks really good.

Stiles’ eyes fall down as Peter splatters his own stomach with come, stroking himself through it.
His chest heaves as his hand stills, sucking air into his lungs. Stiles gazes at him. Even undone he
looks so strong. It feels right that Stiles is the one of his knees.

Peter lifts his head, eyes clearer already. He looks down at himself, dipping a single fingertip into
the mess he’s made and holding it out to Stiles. Stiles doesn’t hesitate, moving forward and
flicking out his tongue. It’s stronger than the precome, coating Stiles’ tongue with something
reminiscent of seawater. It’s so masculine and it makes Stiles moan. Peter smirks, clearly pleased,
dragging two fingers through his come and offering them out again. Stiles takes them into his
mouth, sucking on them, humming happily. Peter pushes them in deep for a moment, making
Stiles’ eyes go wide before he takes them away. He gestures down at his stomach.

“You can help yourself.”

Stiles bends over, bracing himself on his hands as he swipes his tongue through it, moaning in
appreciation. It’s bitter and it shouldn’t be pleasant but Stiles wants every drop. Peter’s muscles are
so firm beneath his tongue, never reacting to the way it wiggles wetly against him, wanting to taste
the come and then lick it all away so that he can taste what’s beneath it.

“How the fuck did I get so lucky to find you?” Peter asks with wonder. “You’re so good and sweet
but you are filthy. You’re perfect. I’m keeping you forever.”

Stiles nods his head, lips dragging over almost clean skin. He’s the lucky one. He won’t ever allow
Peter to let him go. He’ll fight to the death for him. He’d do anything.

“Lift up,” Peter says, tugging at his hair. Stiles pouts, trying to get one last lick. “Let me get
cleaned up,” Peter tells him. “Then do you want to come?”

“Please,” Stiles responds, shifting back.

“Get naked for me, baby,” Peter says. “No touching though. You don’t have permission. That’s for
Daddy.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

Peter gives him a smile, climbing off the bed and walking through to the bathroom on irritatingly
steady legs. Stiles pulls his T-shirt over his head, pushing down his pants, carefully not to let the
waistband catch on his cock. That could be classed as touching. He’s not bending the rules, not
even by accident. He lays himself out on his back, no urge to hide himself. He belongs to his
Daddy so he doesn’t have the right to withhold anything.

Peter comes back out of the bathroom, grabbing his underwear from the floor and pulling them on.
Stiles makes a noise of disappointment that goes ignored. Peter climbs onto the bed, lying on his
side next to Stiles, trailing a single finger down his body, his eyes following. Stiles whines, arching
off the bed. He’s so sensitive, his skin on edge.

“Somebody really needs to come,” Peter says casually, his finger tracing a line from the base of
Stiles’ cock up to the tip. Stiles lets out a strangled noise. “You like Daddy’s cock in your mouth so
much, don’t you? It got you all worked up. You need Daddy to take care of you?”

“Please,” Stiles grits out. “I can’t.”
Peter looks up at him, fingertips drawing patterns on Stiles’ thigh. “Do you remember when Daddy went to work and you got yourself off?”

“Please don’t make me,” Stiles begs.

“I’m going to take care of you,” Peter assures him. “I’m going to take such good care of you. But do you remember what you did to yourself?”

Stiles nods, eyes unfocussed.

“And do you remember what you told Daddy you wanted?” Peter asks.

Stiles whines. He doesn’t think he can handle that right now but he also knows there’s no way in hell he could turn it down.

Peter leans in close, breath against Stiles’ ear. “Ask.”

Stiles whimpers. He closes his eyes and takes a breath, squirming under Peter’s touch. “I want you to put a finger inside me.”

Peter’s lips curve into a smile against his ear. “Want me to fuck you with it?”

“Please,” Stiles says.


Stiles hears the drawer by the bed open, hears a cap flipping. He opens his legs without even realising it.

“Eager,” Peter teases. “Let’s get you a nice angle. Lift up for me.”

Stiles opens his eyes, trying to get his bearings, realising that Peter is offering a pillow to him. He lifts his hips, lets Peter slip it underneath him, move him like a ragdoll until he’s at the angle he wants. He melts down into it, toes curling into the blankets. He’s so exposed. He belongs to his Daddy, he reminds himself. It’s wrong to feel shame.


Stiles nods his head, making a helpless little noise. He grips hold of Peter’s bicep, feeling the muscles shift under his touch. It releases something in him, lets Peter dip his finger just inside. He moans, pushing his hips upwards.

“That’s it,” Peter praises. “Good boy. Let Daddy in.”

“Oh God,” Stiles gasps, clenching on instinct but then forcing himself to be open.

Peter keeps working him, firm and patient, like he knows the access code that Stiles has been fumbling for his whole life. Of course he does. Stiles’ body belongs to Peter, he could make it do anything. Stiles moans, rocks his hips into the touch, feeling Peter slipping in deeper. He pulls his finger back, drips some lube directly onto his hole, and then pushes it inside. Stiles nearly chokes on his own tongue. It’s so smooth. There’s friction and heat but no drag. It just feels good. So fucking good.

“You’re tight, baby,” Peter says, edging deeper. “I’m so glad you saved yourself for me.”
Stiles wants to laugh at that. Peter knows that no one has ever wanted him, he doesn’t know why he’d romanticise it now, but he wants to believe it. Maybe he was saving himself for this. He’s certainly grateful he gets Peter and not more drunken, teenage fumbles. They weren’t worth shit. This is the real deal. No one is ever going to be able to touch him, work him, unravel him like this.

“You want to come on Daddy’s finger?” Peter asks, rocking deep inside him, knuckles brushing against his tight balls.

“Please,” Stiles gasps.

“You want to come on Daddy’s cock?” Peter asks, twisting his finger for emphasis.

Stiles lets out a sob. “Yes.”

Peter chuckles. “That comes later. Much later. If you’re a very very good boy.”

“Good,” Stiles nods.

“Daddy’s going to make you come now,” Peter says.

Stiles doesn’t even have time to react. Peter wraps a hand around his cock, jerking him firmly, fucking his finger inside him, and Stiles is gone. He cries out, his whole body shattering like glass, falling apart in Peter’s hands. Stiles clings to him, scared he’s going to get washed away. He can’t bear the thought of not being with Peter. He shudders, Peter’s finger sliding out of him, and then he’s being pulled into his lap, safe and sound, where he can just let go.

He floats, fireflies dancing against the stars, warm and protected in Peter’s arms. He doesn’t know how much later it is when he comes down, Peter stroking his hair, but his mouth is dry and it doesn’t taste good. He grimaces slightly, looking up at Peter.

“Hi, there,” Peter says, looking amused. Stiles guesses he was out for a while. “You okay?”

Stiles nods. He wants to say something intelligent or reassuring but he’s got nothing. “Thank you,” is all he manages.

“For my cock or my come or fucking you with my finger or making you come?” Peter asks, eyes shining with amusement.

Stiles smiles. “Yes.”

Peter snorts a laugh, sitting him up a little. “Let’s get you dressed,” he says. “I need to go make dinner.”

Stiles makes a disgruntled sound but he doesn’t complain. He knows how this goes. Besides, making dinner is just another way for Peter to take care of him. He sits up, letting Peter out from beneath him. He grabs Stiles’ pants from the floor, moving to put them on him. Stiles looks down at his own come drying on his stomach, the lube smeared in and around his ass. He gives Peter a questioning look, eyes flicking towards the bathroom.

“Bath after dinner,” Peter reminds him, sliding the pants onto Stiles’ feet who still isn’t sure whether to let him.

“I want to clean up,” Stiles says.

Peter shakes his head. “You’re fine. Daddy likes it. Clothes on.”
Stiles still feels off balance enough that he lets Peter pulls his pants up, settling them on his hips and over the majority of his come. He meets Stiles’ eyes and then presses the fabric into the wetness, almost challenging him to say something. Stiles just stares at him.

“Good boy.”

Stiles doesn’t get it, doesn’t know why he’s good, but he lets Peter pull his T-shirt on. He looks down at himself. He can see the come soaking into his pants. He can feel the lube do the same. He squirms, looking up at Peter.

“It’s sticky.”

“But you smell so good,” Peter tells him. “I don’t want to lose any of it. I want you smelling just like that when I come back for you. Okay?”

Stiles considers it. He wants to do what Peter asks. Always. “I can have a bath straight after dinner?”

“Straight after dinner,” Peter promises.

Stiles nods. “Okay.”

“That’s a good boy,” Peter says, picking up his cuff. He buckles it in place, clicking the lock closed, making Stiles feel instantly secure. No one can steal him away when he’s like this.

Peter moves over to him, leaning down for a kiss, deep and sloppy, taking full advantage of the fact that Stiles is in no way together enough to do anything but let his jaw go slack. Peter presses their foreheads together, breathing in deeply.

“Delectable,” he says lowly.

Stiles blushes, wanting to reach out for Peter as he pulls away. He doesn’t though. He’s a good boy. He tries his best.

“No touching and no cleaning up,” Peter says as he leaves the room.

“I won’t,” Stiles promises.

He listens to Peter’s footsteps on the stairs and then falls back on the bed. He feels gross. He also feels proud and giddy and uncertain and, somehow, still a little bit turned on. He can’t make sense of any of it so he doesn’t really try. He did good, even if he didn’t quite finish. Peter doesn’t seem to mind. He’ll be better at it next time. Practice makes perfect. He hopes Peter lets him practice a lot.

He gets up, going over to his toy box and taking out the comic he started earlier. He can’t trust himself with his own spiralling thoughts right now, he’s far too vulnerable. He could stand to be wrapped up in Peter’s arms for another few hours if he’s honest. Peter has to be responsible though. Stiles benefits from that. After dinner Peter will put him in the bath, clean him up, and then he’ll take him to bed and hold him all night long. The thought makes Stiles a little warmer as he hugs his comic to his chest, going back over to the bed. He has to be a big boy. He has to be tough. Comics were the way he always did that growing up. Until Peter comes back for him, Stiles can be the little boy who escapes to Gotham in his mind.
The yoga settles Stiles’ body for about an hour. It’s a good feeling, stretched out and exerted, but it’s such a gentle exertion, not like doing lacrosse drills that make his lungs burn and his legs so shaky he’s fallen on his face more than once. This is much more peaceful, a quiet exhaustion. It’s nice. Stiles just wishes he could keep hold of it for longer.

He lies out in the window seat to study, tackling the next chapter of his book. It deals with the first Companions who worked with veterans rather than active military. These Companions never saw deployment and only ever had a domestic role with their Masters. It was a stepping stone to opening up the Foundry, where elite members of society could get their own Companions to do whatever they wanted with. Somehow it seemed less gross when it was tied into an actual role. The idea of the rich buying people for their own pleasure makes Stiles’ skin crawl. It was such a great way to make money that a whole industry was built up around the sick urge.

Stiles closes the book. He can’t handle this right now. He looks out of the window, imagines running through the woods, not to get away, just to blow off some steam. He’d takes Coach’s suicide runs over the frustration and restlessness that’s jittering away inside him right now.

He gets up from the window seat, stretching. He tries to shake himself off, get rid of the tension. All he wants to do is move but there’s really only so much he can do, restricted to this room. It’s not enough. He hates that it’s not enough. He wants to be a good boy and he feels like he’s failing.

He goes over to his toy box and takes out his MP3 player, slipping on the headphones before scrolling through the songs. He wants something to dance to, something he can put all of his energy into. He selects an old favourite, moving erratically and without grace, but it feels good. He gets into it, closing his eyes and jumping around, letting it take him over. He wonders if Peter can hear him stomping on the ceiling. He’s not above the study here, but still, werewolf senses. Peter is trying to work, he should be more considerate. Stiles needs this too much to stop right now though. Just a couple more songs.

By the time he’s done, he’s sweaty and panting, bent over with his hands braced on his knees. It feels good to have air heaving in his lungs, blood coursing through his veins. As he gets his breath back, he just feels silly and lonely though. He wants to be held while he comes down. He’s not sure how to do it on his own anymore.

He sprawls out on the bed, thinking about the time he danced with Peter, how good it felt to be moved around by him like a puppet, how good it felt to be held and swayed afterwards. It was such a safe feeling, wrapped up while his body learned to be still again, and he’d absolutely unravelled as a result. He wants Peter to cradle him like that now. He wants to be unravelled.

He switches over to a deep, brooding song, letting himself feel the bass thrum through him. He breathes and he listens and he feels, his body slowing down until it starts to feel like he has it under control again. Peter controls it so much better than he does though.

He pulls his headphones off, going over to the window seat and tidying away his studying. He’s not in the right frame of mind for it. He grabs a couple of comics instead, curling up with them and letting himself indulge. It’s easier on his brain and it helps to cheer him up. This is probably what he’d wish he was doing if he was at lacrosse practice or a cross country meet right now. Oh, sweet irony.

By the time Peter comes to collect him for lunch, Stiles is lying on his stomach on the bed, PS4
controller in hand, legs swinging absently in the air. He pauses the game when Peter walks in, glancing at the clock. He still has nearly twenty minutes of gaming time left. He tells himself it’s just the residual physical frustration that makes him grit his teeth. He’s not going to be ungrateful. It’s time for lunch, Stiles has to stop.

“You are just the cutest little thing,” Peter says, moving over to the bed. He sits down beside Stiles. “Don’t worry, I won’t cut you short,” he says, hand coming to rest on the small of Stiles’ back. “Lunch won’t spoil, you can finish your game, so long as you give me a kiss.”

Stiles smiles, angling his head up. Peter leans down to meet him, a firm brush of lips before he’s flicking out his tongue, and Stiles just goes slack. He loves being kissed. He hums happily as Peter’s tongue slides against his own, as his hand presses down more firmly on Stiles’ back. Peter kisses him deeper, all slow and sensual in that way that makes Stiles’ body sing. If he always felt like this, he wouldn’t need anything else.

Peter pulls back, teeth catching deliberately on Stiles’ bottom lip. He moves up, nuzzling at his temple. “You get turned on so easily,” he says, voice dark and pleased. “I know teenagers are horny but you are something else.” He drags his lips over Stiles’ flesh. “Don’t worry, I have so much in store for you. I’m not going to let you get bored.”

Stiles shifts uncomfortably, chewing on his own lip. “Can I ask you something?”

Peter pulls back, sitting up. “Finish your game first.”

Stiles hesitates.

“Tick tock, baby,” Peter singsongs. “This counts as gaming time. I’d get on with it if I were you.”

Stiles turns back to the game, unpausing it. As he plays, Peter rubs little circles on his lower back. It feels like perfection. Stiles wishes he could bottle this moment for all the times he’s going to need it. He progresses through his quest, but he can feel that Peter’s eyes are on him and not the screen. He wonders what he sees there. He can’t feel any impatience in him though, he seems perfectly content to sit and wait. Peter is fair with him. He said Stiles could have forty-five minutes and he’s letting him have it. That’s respect. And maybe Peter enjoys Stiles’ simple company as much as Stiles enjoys his. Stiles hopes so.

When his time is up, Stiles pauses the game, saving it before he sits up. It makes Peter’s hand trail down his back before he slides it away. Stiles gives a little shiver. He wants to fold into him. He shifts closer and Peter lets him tuck himself under his arm, pressing into his chest. Peter’s fingers trail up and down Stiles’ arm as he places a kiss on the top of his head.

“You wanted to ask me something,” he prompts.

“Oh, uh, yeah,” Stiles says. He’s reluctant to pull back but he needs to ask like a big boy. He sits up, Peter’s arm falling away. “I was wondering if I could go outside?”

“Outside?” Peter asks, like it’s the most absurd idea he’s ever heard.

“Get some fresh air?” Stiles says uncertainly.

Peter considers him. “You want me to tie you up in the yard like a dog?”

“No?” Stiles says, feeling himself falter. “I thought maybe we could go for a walk?”

“You want me to put you on a leash and walk you like a dog?” Peter asks.
“Not like a dog,” Stiles snaps. He takes a breath. Peter isn’t doing this on purpose. Stiles finds it hard to believe that he can’t read between the lines of this conversation, but it’s Stiles’ responsibility to make his requests clear. “Sorry,” he says. “I’m just getting a little restless and it would be nice to get out.”

“I told you, I’ll take you anywhere in the world just as soon as you’ve finished your training, sweetheart,” Peter says earnestly, touching his face. “And I’ve given you plenty of enrichment to keep you busy in the meantime.”

Stiles hates how frustrated the words make him. It’s so dismissive of his feelings now, like he’s not deserving until he finishes his training. Stiles knows that isn’t true though. Peter takes such good care of him. He just needs to explain himself better.

“At the Foundry, they let me have exercise twice a week,” he says. “It felt good to move around outside. I’m feeling a little cooped up.”

Peter nods thoughtfully. “Would you like me to take you back there?”

Stiles’ chest clenches, panic rising up. “Of course I don’t. I want to be here.”


Stiles blinks at him. “I can’t go outside? Not even with you? Just for a little bit?”

“I’ll think about it, baby,” Peter assures him. “There’s some logistics to work out.”

“I would never run from you,” Stiles insists.

Peter reaches out, placing a hand on his hand. “My beautiful boy, you wouldn’t stand a chance if you did.”

Stiles stares at him. He’s always good, so good. He doesn’t understand where the thinly veiled threat is coming from. Does Peter really think he’s still biding his time, that he’d get away from him if he could? He doesn’t trust him. Stiles needs to do a better job of proving himself. He needs to stay in line. He’ll prove to Peter how much he means it, finish his training, do whatever he wants. Then Peter can let his guard down. Stiles is going to earn it.

“I’m ready for lunch,” he says, making his voice softer, making everything softer. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter smiles at him, genuine and pleased. “I adore you.”

Stiles blushes, his chest swelling with pride. Those words can sustain him better than fresh air.

Peter unlocks his cuff and Stiles follows him downstairs, that happy little squirmy feeling inside him that he loves so much. He sits down at the island, waiting for Peter to serve him his food. This is how he cares for Stiles and he does it three times a day.

Peter places a plate in front of him as he slips into the seat beside him, looking at him fondly. “I had a little proposition for you.”

Stiles turns to face him, anticipation tickling inside him. He wants it. “Oh yeah?”

“Eat your food,” Peter prompts offhandedly. He takes a bite of his own and keeps talking. “I think we should have our date night tonight,” he says. “If you’re up for it.”
“I would love that,” Stiles says enthusiastically, unable to keep the grin off his face.

“I thought you would,” Peter says knowingly, irritatingly cool.

“So what do we do?” Stiles asks.

“We get dressed up,” Peter tells him. “I will cook us a three course meal. There will be candlelight. We will retire to the living room to watch a movie. Usually these types of occasions end on a certain note, but I don’t like to assume anything on a first date so I’ll leave that up to you.”

“I’m definitely going to suck your cock,” Stiles insists.

“Is that so?” Peter asks, raising an eyebrow at him.

Stiles retreats back a little, reeling himself in. “Can I, Daddy?”

“You can,” Peter agrees, offering him an encouraging little smile “But let’s see how the mood takes us. Don’t make promises you can’t cash.”

Stiles nods. “I want to, though.”

“You always want to,” Peter agrees. “Are you ever thinking about anything else?”

“There are permutations,” Stiles says, shifting in his seat. Playing along makes him feel a little dumber. As much as he wants literally all the sex Peter will give him, he doesn’t want to only be that. Then he’s no better than the clichés he joked about at school. “I think about other things too,” he says. “Studying and chess and…” He draws a blank. He has depths though, even if he doesn’t feel qualified to find them right now.

“I know, dear,” Peter says, but it sounds so dismissive. “I should tell you, this isn’t the only social engagement I have this week.”

Stiles looks at him. That sharpens his attention. “You’re going out?”

“A group of friends and myself, we take it in turns to throw dinner parties on the last Friday of every month,” Peter explains. “Tomorrow is my turn to host.”

Stiles’ first thought, absurdly, is that tomorrow is Friday. It seems like such a strange, miraculous thing. Days have kind of seized to have any meaning to him. Then Peter’s words sink in and he blinks, leaning in closer.

“We’re having a dinner party?”

“I’m having a dinner party, sweetheart,” Peter says carefully. “You’ll be upstairs.”

Stiles frowns at him. “I’m not invited? You’re going to hide me away upstairs?”

“I’m not hiding you, baby,” Peter assures him. “They all know about you. I have spoken at length about you. And as much as they would like to meet you, you haven’t finished your training yet, darling, so I don’t think you’re up for it.”

“Is this about the etiquette thing?” Stiles asks. “I can hold a conversation. And I’ll be good. I’ll be so good.”

“You would be immaculate, I’m sure,” Peter says. “But this isn’t something we’ve discussed yet. I just don’t think you’re ready for company.”
Tears prick at Stiles’ eyes. He feels ashamed. He’s worked so hard and he’s not good enough. It tightens his throat because it just adds to what they discussed upstairs. Peter doesn’t trust him and if he doesn’t trust him then he can’t possibly be as committed to this as Stiles is.

“Do you think I’d embarrass you?” he asks. “Do you think I’d try and ask for help?”

“I think you would be anxious and overwhelmed,” Peter says kindly, placing his hand on top of Stiles’. Stiles look down at it, feeling himself sag. Yeah, he’d probably be both of those things. Peter knows what’s best for him. He turns his hand over, holding onto Peter.

“I wouldn’t ask for help,” he assures him.

“That’s not what this is about,” Peter says. What he doesn’t say is that he believes Stiles. “The benefit of this little dinner party for you, apart from the food I’m going to be bringing up to you, is that I’ll need time to get everything set up tomorrow which means that I won’t be working. And no work means no bedtime so we can stay up late and enjoy our date. No work also means no morning alarm and we can stay in bed for as long as we like. That’s what you wanted, isn’t it? A nice lie in?”

Stiles nods, feeling himself settle. “That sounds awesome.” He grips Peter’s hand a little tighter.

“Thank you, Daddy.”

“You’re welcome, beautiful,” Peter responds. He lifts Stiles’ hand, placing a kiss against his fingers before letting go. “Eat your lunch, then we can talk a little more about our date.”

When Peter takes Stiles upstairs later, he has him take off his pants, swapping them for a pair of the slacks he bought him in charcoal grey. Stiles can’t change his trousers with the cuff on so this part they have to do together.

“You didn’t buy me any underwear?” Stiles asks as he sits on the edge of the bed.

“You don’t need it,” Peter tells him.

Stiles wants to argue, wants to ask to borrow a pair of Peter’s, but he doesn’t want to be a brat. Besides, it is kind of hot. He pulls on the trousers, fastening them at the waist. They’re a perfect fit. Peter nods approvingly before locking the cuff in place.

“You can choose the rest of your outfit yourself,” Peter says, going through the closet and selecting some things for himself. “I will be here to pick you up for our date later.”

Stiles can’t keep the smile off his face. He feels so giddy. He’s never had a real date before, not unless you count Lydia being bribed to go to a school dance with him. There’s a tug of humiliation warring inside him but he bites it back. He’s glad Peter is his first date. This is what he deserves. It’s what he’s been waiting for. Nothing else could compare.

When Peter is gone, Stiles goes over to the section of the closet where his own clothes hang. There’s not many, but they’re the nicest things he’s ever owned. Lydia would be proud. He wishes he could share it with her.

He picks out a deep red shirt that feel sexual and virile. That doesn’t describe himself but what he wants to elicit in Peter. He feels like it might match the colour of his Alpha eyes. Stiles wants to see them flash at him. He wants to bring out that primal part of him. He wants to feel its power.

He considers the jackets, pulling a couple of them out, but there doesn’t seem any point putting one on when he’s not even leaving the house. He slips on the waistcoat though, fastening the buttons in
the front. It fits just as snugly and perfectly as everything else. It makes him feel so sophisticated.

He goes through to the bathroom, checking himself out in the mirror. He looks good. He can’t remember the last time he was actually proud when he checked himself out. He wets his hand, running damp fingers through his hair and trying to get it into some kind of style, or maybe just under control. He wants Peter to know that he put the effort in.

He walks through to the bedroom, looking around. He knows Peter won’t be back for a while, he’s downstairs cooking them something delicious, something extra special. Stiles can barely keep his excitement in check. He sits down in the window seat, looking at the twilight outside. It’s really beautiful. Stiles watches the colours changing, getting to his feet as a deep navy sets in. He doesn’t want to look at the moon. It means too many things to him since Scott got the bite, and all Stiles wants in his head right now is Peter.

He sits down at Peter’s side of the bed, looking through his poetry book. The bite sized chunks are more about a feeling than a narrative but he likes that, even if he’s certain he doesn’t understand the subtleties. Just experiencing them seems like half of the point. He wants to write poetry about Peter.

A knock at the door startles him, making him spin around. He’s about to apologise for touching Peter’s things, but then he looks at him and his existence fills up literally all of Stiles’ consciousness. He puts the book absentely aside as he gets to his feet. Peter is wearing a crisp white shirt that looks anything but bland, tucked into dark blue slacks that look like the night sky and compliment the colour of his eyes. It’s so simple, and yet on him it’s perfection.

“Sweetheart, you look divine,” Peter says. “Come here. Let me see you.”

Stiles blushes as he walks around the bed, going to stand in front of Peter. He fusses with him for a moment, straightening his waistcoat, adjusting the buttons. He smooths his hands over it and smiles.

“I should dress you up more often.”


“Well, thank you,” Peter says. “May I take you on a date?”

“I’d love that,” Stiles agrees.

Peter bends down, silver cufflinks glinting as he unlocks Stiles’ cuff. He straightens up and offers out his arm. Stiles wants to roll his eyes at the corny gesture but instead he takes hold of it, perfectly charmed.

Peter promised candlelight, and he delivers. There are tall, elegant candles on the table that is set more elaborately than usual. There’s more on the island, casting a glow across the room. Beyond that, out on the porch, tiny lights twinkle through the window, swaying slightly in the breeze. It’s breath-taking, Stiles holding onto Peter’s arm more tightly as he takes it in.

“Wow,” he says softly.

“I’m partial to a little romance,” Peter admits.

Stiles leans into him, smiling. “I love it.” He looks up at Peter, feeling the warmth spreading through his body. “I love you.”
Peter looks down at him. It’s the same expression he wears when he wins a game of chess. “Baby, I love you too.”

Stiles grins, pushing up on his tiptoes to kiss him. It drags on for a few long moments, lips fitting together, before Peter pulls away, fingertips grazing Stiles’ cheek in consolation.

“We should eat.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “Sorry.” He steps back, allowing himself to be led to the table. “I do though.”

“Sweetheart, I know you do,” Peter responds, pushing in his chair for him before going to serve up the first course.

In a shallow china dish there’s a few pieces of delicate ravioli in a butter sauce. Stiles cuts into the first one, looking at the filling before he pops it into his mouth. The flavours melt over his tongue and he can’t help moaning.

“This is so good.”

“Don’t talk with your mouth full, darling,” Peter chides.

Stiles nods, swallowing it down. “This is why I’m not coming to the dinner party, right?”

Peter gives him an amused look, sensing his tone. “I told you, that’s for your benefit. I’m so proud of you, I can’t wait to show you off. But only when you can handle it.”

“I get it,” Stiles agrees.

“Let’s talk about something else,” Peter says. “Tell me about yourself, Stiles.”

Stiles frowns. “You know everything about me,” he says. “You have a book.”

“A person cannot be condensed into a book,” Peter says. “Besides, I only tackled the most pressing details pertaining to your training. There’s plenty I don’t know.”

Stile shrugs. “Like what?”

“What was your favourite childhood toy?” Peter suggests. “Who did you most admire growing up? What’s your biggest fear?”

“Those are all very personal,” Stiles points out.

“That’s the idea of getting to know someone,” Peter says. “And do you really have anything to hide?”

“What was your favourite childhood toy?” Stiles counters.

“A red fire truck,” Peter answers easily. “Which is painfully ironic, considering.” He gives Stiles a knowing look, but Stiles doesn’t know and he’s fairly sure he’s not allowed to ask. “What’s your biggest fear?” Peter asks.


“Oh, sweetheart,” Peter says. “All those monsters and that’s what keeps you up at night?”
“Monsters I can fight,” Stiles says. “I’m good with monsters.”

“There’s no monsters here,” Peter says. “And you’ll always be mine so you don’t have to worry about getting lost.”

Stiles nods, feeling himself welling up. He has so much more than he deserves.

The main course is lamb with gnocchi and vegetables and every part of it is perfect. Stiles tries to scrape up every bit of sauce from his plate because he doesn’t want to waste a drop. It’s better than any restaurant he’s ever been to. The conversation settles into something less loaded, flowing between them. Peter puts him so at ease that he’d spill all of his secrets without realising it. Maybe he already has.

Dessert is rich and chocolatey and far too decadent. After everything else, Stiles can only nibble at it, but it tastes so good. It hits every pleasure centre in his brain. He stares at Peter as he lets it coat his tongue, watching as he licks his spoon. Peter meets his eyes, giving him a shamelessly sexual look, and Stiles hopes dry cleaning gets precome stains out of fancy slacks.

“Are you done?” Peter asks.

“Uh-huh,” Stiles agrees. Peter gets up to clear the table. “You’re such a good chef. Like, amazing.”

“It’s something I like to do,” Peter says simply. “If you enjoy something enough you can become great at it. It just takes practice.”


“I’m sure you weren’t that bad,” Peter says. “Not if you cared.”

“No, I really was,” Stiles assures him. He smiles, not wanting to get bogged down in another thing Peter has to reassure him over. His sucky performance in lacrosse doesn’t even really hurt. It was just a fact. “I’m lucky my Daddy can make me such yummy food.”

“You are,” Peter agrees, his voice an octave lower than usual, eyes hungry. Stiles loves doing that to him. “How about we go watch this movie?”

Stiles nods eagerly. “Yes, please.”

“Come on, baby,” Peter says, offering out a hand. “Let’s go get nice and cosy.”

They start out snuggled together in the middle of the couch, but by the end of it Stiles is laid with his head in Peter’s lap, legs dangling over the arm of the couch. Peter’s fingers stroke through his hair, full of affection and familiarity. Stiles barely shut up throughout the entire film but he didn’t want Peter to miss anything and his own excitement just bubbled over. Every time he looked up at Peter though, he was looking down fondly at him, so Stiles chooses to believe it’s endearing. If Peter likes it, that’s all that matters.

As the end credits roll, Stiles tips his head back to look at Peter. “What did you think?”

“I think you’re adorable when you’re excited,” Peter says.

Stiles tries to resist the smile tugging at his lips. “What did you think of the movie?”

“It was enjoyable,” Peter says. “Not my favourite genre, but entertaining.”

“What’s your favourite genre?” Stiles asks. “What’s your favourite movie? We should watch that.”
“I like psychological thrillers,” Peter says. “And mysteries. Something to challenge the mind.”

Stiles nods. “I love stuff like that. I mean, I like the geeky stuff, but I also like movies where you have to piece it all together and you’re trying to work it out before the protagonist does.”

Peter pushes Stiles’ hair back, staring at the top of his head. “That brain of yours needs keeping busy.” He looks down at Stiles, meeting his gaze. “Are you ready to call it a night?”

Stiles sits up a little too quickly, shifting onto his knees as he turns to face Peter. “Date’s not over yet.”

“Oh?” Peter asks, irritatingly calm. “What did you have in mind?”

“I want to suck Daddy’s cock,” Stiles says, giving Peter his most earnest expression.

Peter opens his legs wider, a predatory look in his eyes as he gestures to the floor. “Get on your knees then, baby.”

Stiles slides down to the floor, trying not to preen, but maybe Peter would like that. He moves between Peter’s thighs as Peter slides his belt open, unfastening the front of his trousers. He pulls his shirt out of the way as Stiles places his hands on Peter’s knees, fingers twitching, but he doesn’t think he’s allowed to touch without permission. Peter does it for him anyway, pushing his boxer briefs down and taking his cock in his hand, giving a few strokes. Stiles makes a little noise in his throat at seeing it. He’s only half-hard but he still looks impressive.

“Go ahead, baby,” Peter says. “Put your mouth on it.”

Stiles moves forward, hands still gripped on Peter’s knees. He opens his mouth as Peter offers his cock to him, keeping his hand wrapped around the base, helping Stiles. It makes him feel a rush of affection. He closes his lips around the head of Peter’s cock, tasting him, sucking gently. He lowers his mouth, bumps at Peter’s knuckles, feeling so connected to him. Peter lifts his other hand, stroking his fingertips over Stiles’ cheek and Stiles make an appreciative noise, feeling Peter harden in his mouth.

Stiles has to pull back slightly as Peter gets hard, has to adjust his angle, but he keeps sucking. It’s better in this position, much easier than lying on his stomach on the bed, and he likes looking up and seeing Peter above him. He likes the ground solid and steady beneath his knees. He likes how easy it is for Peter to pet him. He has more control over the way he takes his cock into his mouth, and he can go a little deeper with it when Peter moves his hand out of the way, feeling a swell of pride.

“I knew from the second I met you that you’d love sucking cock,” Peter says.

Stiles doesn’t think that’s true, there was nothing in their first meeting to suggest anything of the sort. Stiles was disinterested at best. He likes the idea of Peter knowing him that well though, knowing him better than he knows himself, so he buys into the fantasy. He closes his eyes and sucks him down just a tiny bit further, feeling his confidence grow.

“You have no idea how pretty you look with a cock in your mouth,” Peter says. “Lips all stretched for Daddy, cheeks pink and hollowed from trying so hard.”

Stiles opens his eyes, looking up at him through his lashes.

“That’s it,” Peter says with something like wonder. “Those big Bambi eyes. All grateful and needy and overwhelmed.” He rocks his hips upwards, pushing himself deeper, and Stiles’ throat tightens,
Stiles shifts himself closer, hands sliding down Peter’s thighs. The waistcoat stretches across his back, restricting his movements. He’s not used to wearing anything but the identical, comfortable outfits Peter bought for him. He misses the family crest over his heart. He misses the softness of the material against a hard, sensitive cock. His slacks are stiff and rough in comparison. This isn’t about him though. Now is time to make Daddy feel good.

He wraps his fingers around the base of Peter’s cock but he doesn’t have to hold onto half of his length this time. He pulls back to lick at the head, groaning when he tastes precome and staying there for longer than he intended. Then he slides down, tongue pressed against the underside of Peter’s cock, taking as much of him as he comfortably can and then rocking himself just a little bit deeper, testing his limits. He’s got three quarters of it in his mouth before he starts to gag. He doesn’t panic, easing back and sucking rhythmically while he tries to relax and try again.

“You’re too hunched over,” Peter tells him, placing a hand against his throat. “You need to straighten this out. Open up.” His fingers stroke over Stiles’ throat and he swallows on reflex, his eyes widening slightly at the sensation. “You’ll get the hang of it,” Peter says.

His hand slides back, playing with the hair at the nape of Stiles’ neck, petting him so tenderly, and Stiles hums happily, still sucking absently midway down Peter’s cock.

“So you want Daddy to come in your mouth?” Peter asks. “Or do you want Daddy to shoot his come all over that beautiful face?”

Stiles makes a muffled noise and Peter’s hand tightens in his hair, dragging him backwards. Stiles whines as Peter’s cock slips from his mouth, standing up wetly an inch from his face. Peter clears his throat and Stiles forces his eyes away from it and up to Peter’s face.

“Remember what I said about talking with your mouth full,” he says, raising an eyebrow. “Come on, baby, tell Daddy what you want.”

“I want you to come in my mouth,” Peter says.

Peter smiles, eyes dark. “Open wide then, baby.”

Stiles does so without even thinking about it, opening absurdly wide, but as soon as Peter’s hand is guiding him back onto his cock, he closes his lips around it. He sucks enthusiastically, with purpose, sliding down and taking him as deep as he can. It already feels more natural. As his jaw starts to ache, he pulls back, lavishing attention on the head and tonguing at the slit. He loves the thickness of Peter’s precome cutting through the saliva, chasing more of it. As Peter’s fingers tighten in his hair, Stiles slides his wet lips back down his cock, sucking as hard as he dares, keeping his jaw slack so it doesn’t pull his teeth in. He feels so proud that he’s working it all out. He hopes it feels half as good for Peter as it does for him because he honestly can’t get enough.

“Look at me, baby,” Peter says, voice strained but still so deliberate. “I want to see you take it.”

Stiles lifts his gaze up, meeting Peter’s eyes and moaning at the sight. It’s subtle, the slight sheen of sweat, the size of his pupils, his eyes lidded from more than just looking down, but Stiles can tell that he’s close. He sucks harder, reminds himself to keep himself open, moans again as Peter’s fingers tighten painfully in his hair.

Peter cradles his face, staring down at him with unfocussed affection, watching as his cock disappears into Stiles’ mouth. The mental image makes Stiles shift his hips restlessly. There’s
sweat pressing at him underneath his waistcoat, but all he can think about it making Peter come. Peter pulls him down onto his cock, guiding him but never choking him, just urging him to go a little faster, and then he’s suddenly pushed back, only the head of Peter’s cock in his mouth as he comes.

Stiles gags, even though it’s nowhere near the back of his throat, because it feels like there’s so much of it, feels like he’s drowning in it. He fights the urge to pull back, sucking as best he can, but he can feel the panic rising in him, every instinct telling him to clear his airways. His vision blurs as his eyes start to water but then Peter’s hand is back on his throat, knuckles stroking up and down, and Stiles swallows, feeling everything ease. He does it again and again until he’s pretty sure he really is suffocating and he has to pull back to gasp in some air.

Peter lifts his hand, thumb trailing over Stiles’ lip and then pushing inside. “Don’t want to waste any,” he says. “Every drop, baby.”

Stiles suckles at it, opening his eyes, but everything is still blurry. He blinks a few times, bringing Peter into focus, adoration in his eyes as he watches Stiles, fingertips brushing over his cheek.

“Come here,” Peter says, pulling his thumb from Stiles’ mouth. “Come straddle Daddy’s lap, baby.”

He grabs Stiles under his arm, basically hoists him up because Stiles has no control of his body. Peter settles him there astride his hips, just gazing at him, gently touching his lips.

“This is a good look on you,” he says appreciatively.

Stiles makes a noise in his throat. It’s a sentiment that words couldn’t do justice. Peter drops his hand to Stiles’ crotch, squeezing his dick through his pants, the zipper digging in. Stiles moans, hips pressing upwards.

“You’re so hard,” Peter says, unfastening the front of Stiles’ slacks, pulling them open to let his cock spring out. It’s swollen and deep in colour, the skin taut. “That looks painful,” Peter says, trailing a finger down the length. Stiles makes a strangled sound, his cock jumping at the sensation. Peter looks up at him. “Do you want Daddy to take care of that for you?”

“Please, Daddy,” Stiles begs, his voice cracking.

“It’s okay,” Peter assures him, wrapping a firm hand around him. “Daddy wants you to come. You come for Daddy.”

Stiles nods his head enthusiastically as Peter starts to stroke him. He tries to fold forward, rest his head on Peter’s shoulder, but Peter holds him up with his other hand.

“You stay right there.”

“I can’t,” Stiles protests.

“Yes you can,” Peter says firmly. “If Daddy says you can, then you can.”

Stiles whines but he believes him.

“Daddy wants to watch you come,” Peter says.

“Okay,” Stiles agrees distractedly.
Peter holds him steady with a hand on his shoulder, the other one working his dick, and Stiles sways but he makes sure he doesn’t fall. Peter doesn’t ask much of him. No matter how much his head spins, Stiles can do this.

“So, so wet,” Peter says, hand moving slickly on his cock. “My beautiful baby boy must really love being on his Daddy’s cock.”

“Yes,” Stiles gasps out.

“I can’t wait until you’re a big boy and you can sit on it.”

Every muscle in Stiles’ body tightens as he feels it ripping through him embarrassingly quickly. His mouth hangs open, no sounds coming out as his back arches and Peter has to catch him before he falls. His fingers grip Peter’s shirt so tightly he feels like he’s going to tear the fabric as he comes over Peter’s hand, over both of their clothes.

As his body sags in the aftermath, Stiles feels his eyes roll back and then he’s tugged in tight, cradled against Peter’s body, wrapped up in his arms. He’s shaking, tears welling up in his eyes, pressing his face into Peter’s neck. He breathes him in but it’s not enough. He wants to smell his emotions. He wants to know if there’s pride mixed in there.


Stiles didn’t realise he was whining until Peter points it out. He parts his lips, mouthing as his neck instead, suckling on it rhythmically. Peter eases him, back, stroking the sweaty hair from his forehead, and Stiles stares up at him, needy and imploring, but he doesn’t know for what. Peter touches his lips, two fingers tracing them, and when they instinctively part, Peter presses his fingers gently inside, letting Stiles suck on them. Stiles makes a happy sound, closing his eyes and resting his head on Peter’s shoulder.

His whole body gradually eases, his fingers giving up their death grip on Peter’s shirt and just resting against him, feeling his warmth. He can feel his heart beating against his palm. It’s strong and steady. He smiles around Peter’s fingers.

“You are something else, baby,” Peter murmurs, like he doesn’t want to startle him. Stiles guesses he was in that other place for a while. That special place. Peter’s so good at taking him there, so good at guiding him back.

Stiles pulls off Peter’s fingers and then flexes his jaw. It’s aching even more now. He looks up at him, seeing nothing but affection on his face. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter smiles at him, stroking his face. “I think we ruined two sets of clothes, but it was worth it.” Stiles moves back, Peter catching him as he starts to lose his balance. “Don’t sit up so fast.”

Stiles looks down at their clothes, splattered with his come. “Will it clean?”

Peter shrugs. “I’ll try. I don’t really care. I’m not going to pass up the chance to buy you new pretty things, my sweetheart.”

Stiles smiles at him, eyes falling back down to the mess.

“My baby, however, I can clean up,” Peter says. “Let’s get you in a nice, warm bath.”

Stiles looks up at him, blushing before he even says the words. “You need a bath too.”
“I’ll be fine, I can get myself cleaned up,” Peter dismisses. “I’ll take a shower in the morning.”

Stiles hesitates, licking his lips. He should take Peter’s first answer, but he doesn’t think he understands what Stiles is suggesting. He should clarify. Clarification isn’t talking back, right?

“But your bath is big enough for two,” he says. “Right?”

“Oh,” Peter says, the corners of his mouth curving into a smile. “You want Daddy to get in the bath with you?”

“Yes please,” Stiles says.

“I guess we could do that,” Peter allows. “No bubbles, though. Grown up bath.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

Peter smiles at him. “Let’s go then, sweetheart.”

Stiles stands in the bathroom doorway as he watches Peter run his bath. Their bath. Instead of Stiles’ bubbles, Peter picks up the little bottle dropper he used on the first night.

“What is that?” Stiles asks, watching Peter carefully squeeze a few drops under the running tap. Peter screws the lid back on and turns to face him.

“It’s a werewolf thing,” he says.

“Like a scent thing?” Stiles asks. “A pheromone thing?” Peter just shrugs. “What is it?”

Peter sighs, getting to his feet. “It makes you smell like mine.”

Stiles raises his eyebrows. “Did you bottle your scent and then mark me with it the night you bought me?”

“That’s not exactly what it is,” Peter dismisses.

Stiles takes a step closer. “But don’t I already smell like you now?”

Peter nods, closing the gap between them and pressing his nose into the crook of Stiles’ neck. “It’s nice that I can mark you even when I’m cleaning you though. That way I can wash away everything but me. You’re mine even before I touch you again.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. “I like that.”

Peter smiles at him, brushing their lips together before shutting off the bath. He turns back to Stiles, pushing the waistcoat back off his shoulders, letting it fall to the floor. Stiles feels like he should pick it up, it’s too nice to get creased up in a heap, but he can’t drag his eyes away from Peter.

Peter unfastens each button on his shirt with painful deliberateness, stripping him like it’s an act to be savoured, like they didn’t just have each other. It feels like an act of worship. When he’s stood naked in the middle of the bathroom, Peter holds up a single finger to him, telling him to wait. He undresses himself with the same slow patience as he did Stiles. He takes off his cufflinks first, going through to place them on top of his dresser. He unfastens his shirt, tossing it straight into the hamper, pushing down his trousers and boxer briefs. Stiles can’t help greedily taking in the sight of him naked. He doesn’t see it often enough to not savour it every time.
Peter steps into the bath, sinking into the water and settling himself before he gestures to Stiles. He climbs in after him, sitting between his spread legs, Peter easing him back so that he’s laid against his chest. Perfect fit. Peter’s hands slide absently over his torso, leaving tiny waves in their wake, and Stiles closes his eyes, resting his head back against Peter’s shoulder.

“No falling asleep,” Peter tells him.

“Mmmhmm,” Stiles says.

“I mean it,” Peter says.

Stiles opens his eyes with a smile. Peter wraps his arms around him, pulling him closer. He places a kiss against his temple. Stiles breathes in deep through his nose.

“I wish I could smell it.”

“Don’t worry,” Peter says. “You always smell just like Daddy’s little boy.” He gives Stiles a nudge. “Pass me the washcloth.”

Stiles reaches forward, grabbing hold and handing it over. Peter wets it, cleaning Stiles’ chest first before sliding further down, moving in circles over his stomach. He washes what he can reach and then sits Stiles carefully up, holding him steady while he cleans his back.

“I need you to turn,” Peter tells him.

“Huh?” Stiles asks. He wants to press himself back against Peter again. Moving further away seems like a terrible idea.

“Trust me,” Peter says. “Turn around. Face me.”

Peter has never steered him wrong so Stiles lets himself be guided. He finds himself leaned back against the opposite side of the bath, legs splayed out, Peter knelt between them. Peter uses the washcloth to clean himself, and at first Stiles thinks he just made him turn around to give him a show. Peter is efficient though, brusque movements, the washcloth quickly put aside. He leans forward, taking hold of Stiles by the hips and tugging him into his lap. His ass is raised up while his top half slips into the water.

Peter gives him a reassuring smile before leaning over him, easing his head back until his ears are underwater. He runs his fingers through Stiles’ hair, wetting the strands just like he always does. Everything is muffled, just white noise and Peter’s touch and the fondness on his face as he hovers over Stiles. He lifts him, supports him, rubs in the shampoo with one hand, and then he’s dipped back under again.

His naked ass is against Peter’s soft cock, his lower back against his thighs. He wonders if this is what it will be like when they fuck. The thoughts coupled with the sensory deprivation of water in his ears and his body weightless in the water, it all puts him on the brink of fireflies, hovering in his peripheral vision.

Peter scoops him up, pulling him into his lap. “Is there anything that doesn’t turn you on?” he asks fondly.

Stiles wonders how he can smell it through the water and whatever it’s laced with, but then he realises he’s hard. He bites his lip, trying to push into Peter.

“No more orgasms,” Peter tells him. “You get one. Be a good boy.”
Stiles nods, represses the shiver that goes through him. Peter moves him like a ragdoll, manages to somehow get them laid out again, Stiles resting against Peter’s chest. He lifts a hand from the water, stroking over his throat.

“Tomorrow though, if you wanted to learn about deep throating, Daddy can show you,” he says. “You did really well, baby. I was so impressed. I think you could handle it.”

“Please, Daddy,” Stiles says.

“Tomorrow,” Peter says. “Right now, baby needs to make his cock go down. Then we can go to bed.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

He closes his eyes, trying to bring his body back under his control. Peter’s hands play absently over his torso and arms and Stiles thinks it should make him squirm but instead it grounds him. He concentrates on that, the affection that has nothing to do with sex, and it’s so empowering he feels like he could make his body do anything.

He tips his head back, looking up at Peter. Peter meets his eyes and then swipes his hand down over his now soft cock. It still gives a little jerk but it doesn’t get hard.

“Good boy,” Peter says.

He helps Stiles out of the bath, towelling him off and putting him in clean clothes before he deals with himself. It makes Stiles feel like the most precious thing in the world. Peter takes him to bed, locking his cuff in place before pulling the covers up over him. He turns off the alarm before climbing in beside him and Stiles feel a little thrill. A lie in. He snuggles into Peter’s arms as they wrap around him, making sure he gets that scent all over him for real.
Chapter 15

It feels so good to wake up naturally, his awareness coming back to him in increments rather than a sudden rush. First, he’s aware of warmth, then the softness of his pillow. Next, it’s the weight of Peter’s arm around him, the heat of him against his back. He shifts, Peter tightening his grip, pulling him instinctively closer. Stiles pushes back against him, reaching down to lace their fingers together, and he can’t believe that this is his life. It’s so domestic. So full of love.

He tries to be still, enjoy the moment, but stillness doesn’t come easily to him, especially when emotions are involved. Happiness makes him want to dance and flail, anxiety fidget and jerk. Right now, he feels like he’s going to burst. It’s an itch he has to scratch. He can’t be this close to Peter without having him.

He lets go of Peter’s hand, turning in his arms to press against him. Peter makes a noise in his throat but he doesn’t open his eyes. Stiles leans in, trailing his lips over Peter’s neck, pressing his hips forward to get their bodies tighter together. It doesn’t take long for his own to respond, dick hardening in his pants, pushed against Peter’s thigh. He’s so warm. Stiles rocks gently against him, lips finding Peter’s mouth.

Peter responds gradually, his arm tightening and dragging Stiles in closer. Stiles groans against his mouth, flicking out his tongue, but Peter shifts away, running a hand through Stiles’ hair as he nuzzles at his neck.

“Somebody’s awake,” he murmurs, pressing his thigh against Stiles’ cock for emphasis.

“Mmm,” Stiles agrees, fisting a hand in Peter’s T-shirt. “Please, Daddy.”

“Baby boy,” Peter says, pulling back to look at him. “Didn’t you want to sleep in?”

“I want my Daddy,” Stiles responds.

Peter breathes in sharply, his eyes lighting up. “Do you have any idea what you do to me?”

He rolls them, weighing Stiles down with his body, catching his hands and pinning them against the bed. Stiles whines, his whole body going hot. He’s never felt so safe, so wanted, so owned.

“I would give you the whole world if I could,” Peter says, voice rough, his fingers digging a little harder into Stiles’ wrists. “I would burn it all down and give it to you so that nobody else got a piece.”

There’s an intensity to him that Stiles hasn’t seen before but he knows it’s born out of pure protectiveness so it doesn’t scare him. If anything, it makes him feel powerful. Having Peter on his side is as good as being invincible. His Daddy would never let anything happen to him.

Peter leans in, fitting their mouths together. Stiles parts his lips, lets his jaw go slack, handing himself over. He can barely move beneath Peter’s body, but he doesn’t have to because Peter rocks against him, giving him a wonderful, steady friction until he’s sweaty, his whole body on edge. His lungs burn but he doesn’t want to pull away. He curls his hands into fists, moaning into Peter’s mouth.

He’s dizzy when Peter finally pulls back, gasping for air as Peter nuzzles at his neck, pressing his nose against Stiles’ flesh. Whatever he smells there makes him tighten his grip on Stiles’ wrists. Stiles arches his body, baring his throat further.
“You are so delicious,” Peter says, breathing him in again. “You started something, baby. Got Daddy all riled up. Gonna tell him what happens next?” He nips at Stiles’ jawline. “Nothing happens unless you ask. That’s always been the rule.”

Stiles nods, still trying to catch his breath. This is perfect, he wants to do this, wants to rut against Peter and be kissed breathless until he comes. It’s so instinctive, so lacking in design that it feels laced with easy intimacy. Stiles wants to stay in this moment forever. But he also wants to learn. He wants to finish his training. He wants to be good so he needs Peter to teach him what that means. Then he’ll be so much closer to all those things Peter has promised him when he’s fully trained.

He licks his lips, looking up at Peter. “I want to learn how to deep throat.”

Peter purses his lips together in consideration. “Pretty sure I said ask.”

Stiles resists the urge to roll his eyes, flexing his wrists against Peter’s grip instead. “Will you teach me how to deep throat, Daddy?” he asks, letting the tiniest note of impatience sound through in his voice.

Peter grins at him. “Seeing as you asked so pretty.” He releases Stiles, practically jumping from the bed.

“Wait, no, don’t go,” Stiles complains, suddenly bereft, body chilled where the blankets are half thrown off him. Peter pulls his T-shirt over his head, revealing his ridiculously toned body. “Okay, that’s not so bad,” Stiles says, eyes scanning shamelessly. “Do you work out?”

“I used to,” Peter says. “But staying home with baby has me piling on the pounds.” He pats his flat stomach.

Stiles wants to suggest that they go outside, go walking in the woods, get some exercise. Maybe he’s not the only one who needs it. He doesn’t dare ask though. Peter said he’ll think about it. If Stiles nags it’s only going to annoy him and Stiles wants nothing but his adoration. He can wait.

“Okay, I need you across the bed, head hanging over the edge,” Peter says.

Stiles hesitates. “I’ve seen that in porn.”

“I bet you have,” Peter says, raising an eyebrow at him.

Stiles still doesn’t move. “Does it work? Most stuff in porn doesn’t really work, right?”

“It works,” Peter says.

Stiles shifts uncomfortably. “How do you know that?” He hates the thought of Peter guiding someone else through this, nurturing someone else. He wants to be special. He wants to get something no one else has. Peter’s not like him though. Where Stiles is all fumbling inexperience, Peter is the epitome of been there, done that. Stiles is the only virgin in this room, he reminds himself.

“Do you want to play twenty questions, or do you want to learn how to take Daddy’s cock?” Peter asks. “Because if I’m wasting my time staying hard for you, I’d rather know now.”

Stiles’ eyes flick immediately to Peter’s tented boxer briefs. It should make him look ridiculous, or at least vulnerable, but somehow it just screams power. Stiles moves, lying out on the bed with his head close to Peter, teetering on the edge. He kicks his leg to straighten out the chain and then
settles back, looking up at Peter upside down.

“Just come a little more this way, baby,” Peter says, reaching forward to cradle his head as he coaxes him back. Stiles feels so defenceless as he loses the support of the bed, unable to hold himself up. He can feel the blood rushing into his skull already. “That’s it,” Peter soothes, easing away.

Stiles breathes, feeling precarious and off balance. The majority of his weight is on the bed but it feels like he’s on a teeter-totter and he might flip at any second. Peter pushes down his underwear, stepping out of them and moving closer to Stiles, which is a pretty good distraction. He strokes his own hard cock as he looks down at Stiles.

“This lines your mouth up with your throat, which means you should be able to take me deeper,” Peter explains. “But that’s a factual should, not an expectation. You also have to be into it. And even then, there’s no guarantees. You do what you’re comfortable with. If this doesn’t work for us, we’ll figure out something else.”

Stiles feels his heart swell. He’s never felt so supported. It also makes him determined to get this right. “Okay.”

“Open up then, baby,” Peter says, offering up his cock.

Stiles shifts on the bed, trying to make sure he has the right angle before opening up his mouth. Peter rubs the head of his cock against Stiles’ lips and then pushes inside, just enough to give Stiles a taste, get used to it. It’s weird, being the wrong way up, staring at Peter’s thighs, unable to make eye-contact. He closes his eyes, blocking it out. That’s not what this is about. He sucks, using his tongue, feels Peter’s fingers trail over his cheek. He gives a tiny nod, or tries to at least, and then Peter is sliding in deeper.

Peter goes slow and Stiles can feel his vigilance. Stiles has no power in this position, he can’t pull back or change the angle, but he feels safe. He trusts Peter, and Peter is proving himself with loving caresses and a slow build that’s filled with reverence. Stiles loses all track of time, surrounded so totally by Peter, all sensations lost except for the cock in his mouth that he suckles on as it thrusts in and out. By the time Peter is deeper than Stiles thinks he’s been before, Stiles is in some blissful, wonderful place, a heartbeat away from fireflies. Or maybe that’s just the blood pooling in his brain.

As Peter pushes deeper, Stiles’ throat constricts on instinct. It takes him out of the moment and he whines, not wanting to lose this headspace. Peter backs off, works him up again, petting him tenderly as he tests how much he can take, when that gag reflex will kick in. Stiles reaches for him blindly, grabs his hand and clings on. Peter gives it a squeeze, thumb stroking over Stiles’ knuckles, and Stiles moans because it’s the only way he has to show his appreciation. That and sucking harder.

Peter pushes into his throat again and Stiles clings to his hand, tears welling up at the corners of his eyes, but he doesn’t gag. He breathes deeply through his nose, gives a little moan because he’s enjoying this. It’s so intimate, so laced with trust. He feels connected to Peter on some other level, even though he can’t see him. He can feel him though, in every way that matters, and this is definitely love. There’s no other word that can describe it.

He starts to get used to the sensation of Peter in his throat, relaxing into it as he starts to suck harder. It’s such an inescapable sensation, he’s literally full, and then Peter is somehow deeper and Stiles moans, tears spilling over.
“Good boy,” Peter soothes, a ragged edge to his voice. “You are such a good boy. You’re taking it so well.”

Stiles moans in response, clinging to his hand. He feels dizzy, his whole body tingling like raindrops. He can feel Peter leaning over him, his measured thrusts faltering. Stiles sucks harder, tries to use his tongue, but he feels like gravity is against him.

“You feel so good,” Peter says, breathy and awed.

He grips Stiles’ hand tighter, his other hand stroking over Stiles’ throat, activating his swallow reflex. It feels weird from this angle and he nearly chokes as he feels himself tighten around Peter’s cock. Peter groans, hips stuttering.

“That’s it,” Peter says. “Daddy’s going to come now.”

He pulls back ever so slightly, rocking into Stiles’ mouth, Stiles trying to close his wet lips tighter, make a perfect seal, sucking constantly until Peter slams their joined hands against the bed. He coaxes Stiles’ throat again and Stiles swallows around the flood of come but gravity is against him and he can’t get it down as easily as he could last night. He coughs, his body retching, and then Peter is pulling back, Stiles instinctively spitting out the come. It ends up all down his face, dripping dangerously close to his eye.

He looks up at Peter desperately. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to. I tried.” His breaths are ragged, tears sliding down his temples.

“Shhh,” Peter soothes. “You did so good. Daddy’s proud of you.”

“But…” Stiles says hopelessly, feeling lost. He failed.

Peter drops down to his knees, giving him a soft smile, their faces so close together. Stiles knows he’s the one who’s upside down but his perception is screwy and it feels like Peter is on the ceiling.

“You took my cock so deep, baby,” Peter says. “That’s what we were trying to learn, right? Swallowing we can practice.” He leans forward, licking the come that’s closest to Stiles’ eye, taking his tears with it. Stiles whimpers. “Besides,” Peter says, tongue flicking out to lick up more of his come. “I don’t mind cleaning my baby up.”

Stiles shivers as Peter continues to lap up his own come and it feels so wrong but also like the hottest thing in the world and Stiles likes that Peter isn’t ashamed of it, that he’d do this for Stiles. As Peter licks into his mouth, Stiles goes lax, tasting Peter’s come on his tongue, lapping at it appreciatively. He moans, feeling something unravel within him. They share everything. Symbiosis.

Peter pulls away gradually, tongue exploring Stiles’ lips, making sure he has every drop of come, dipping back inside for good measure. The angle is so unique and yet so familiar. Stiles smiles to himself.

“Spiderman,” he mutters as Peter finally sits back on his heels.

Peter considers him for a long moment. “Sure,” he agrees, even though he clearly has no clue what Stiles is talking about. That’s supporting the one you love.

Peter stands up, leaning over Stiles and yanking down his pants. Stiles tries to lift his head to look at what he’s doing, but then Peter’s lips are wrapped around his painfully hard dick and he doesn’t
care, he just wants this. He cries out, hips lifting off the bed, and he feels like he’s going to tip himself backwards over the edge. Peter places his hands on his hips, holding him down before swallowing his cock like it’s the easiest thing in the world.

Stiles tries to twist as Peter does clever things with his tongue, things that Stiles tries to take note of because he wants to be this good. He wants to make Peter feel like this. He can’t focus though, not when he’s already so close and the pressure in his head from being laid like this for too long makes him feel like his skull’s about to cave in. Instead, he surrenders to it, hands fistling in the sheets beneath him as he feels himself unravelled.

He comes with a sob, Peter swallowing down every drop, his throat working around the head of Stiles’ cock. It’s too sensitive. It’s too much. He feels like he’s going to pass out.

“I need to sit up,” he says desperately.

Peter lifts off him, letting Stiles’ softening cock slip gently from his lips. He even does that with care. “Don’t move,” he says, shifting back to support Stiles’ shoulders, lifting him and placing him properly on the bed, his head on the pillows. He sits over him, stroking his hair back. “It’s okay, take some deep breaths.”

Stiles nods, closing his eyes as he does so. The pressure starts to clear, his eyes feeling like they’re not bulging out of his skull. It hurts as the balance returns to his body, the influx of blood to his head finally clearing out. He groans, reaching for Peter, not happy until he’s laid beside him.

“How do you feel?” Peter asks.


Peter pulls him close, continuing to pet his hair. “I can’t believe how good you are,” he says. “I don’t know many people who are doing that by their third blowjob ever.”

“I don’t think I really did anything,” Stiles responds. All he had to do was hold still. In that position, any idiot could do it.

“Most of it’s mind over matter,” Peter says. “Trust me, you did everything.”

Stiles smiles, snuggling closer. “I love you.”

Peter kisses his temple. “Love you too, baby.”

Stiles dozes off, his pants still tugged down to midthigh, the blankets somewhere at the foot of the bed. He has his Daddy though. That’s enough to keep him warm.

When he wakes, his clothes are righted and the blankets are up over him, but most importantly, his Daddy is still there. Stiles moves in closer to his warmth, mouthing at his neck.

“You can’t entertain yourself for one fucking minute, can you?” Peter teases. “The second you’re conscious, you’re reaching straight for Daddy.”

“Yes,” Stiles agrees, refusing to be ashamed of it.

Peter squeezes him tighter. “You’re so beautiful. My needy little boy.” He strokes his fingers through Stiles’ hair. “You like it when Daddy looks after you, don’t you?”

“Yeah,” Stiles breathes happily.
“And you like it when Daddy takes control,” Peter says. “When he holds you down.”

Stiles squirms at the lovely mental image. “So much.”

Peter nods. “I think we should talk about stage four.”

Stiles lifts his head. “Is that sex?”

“It’s all sex,” Peter responds. “I assume you mean fucking. When Daddy puts his cock in that tight little ass. Is that what you’re talking about?”

Stiles nods, biting on his lip as his dick wakes up and gets interested.

“I already told you, fucking is for when you’ve finished your training,” Peter says. “That’s your reward.”

Stiles tries not to pout. “What’s stage four then?”

“Stage four isn’t a specific act,” Peter says. “Stage four is where you trust Daddy to give you what you need. It’s about showing you what you’re capable of. Your body can do things you can’t imagine. I’m going to teach you.”

Stiles feels the air go out of him. That’s what he wants, what he’s wanted since the first time he let Peter touch him. “I want to do that,” he agrees.

“You have to understand what that means,” Peter says. “There’s no asking. Daddy just gives. And he takes. If you want to do this, you have to understand that I can touch you whenever I want, any way that I want. I can wake you up in the morning by sliding slick fingers into your ass. I can grab your cock while we eat breakfast and make you come in your pants. I can push you down to your knees and tell you to open your mouth while I rub my cock against your face. You’d be giving me blanket consent. The only way I back off is if you use your safeword. What’s your safeword, baby?”

“Silver,” Stiles says, voice firm. He wants to prove himself.

“Good boy,” Peter says, smiling gently at him. “It also means that you might not get everything that you want. Right now, you tell Daddy that you want to come and he helps you. Stage four means handing that over to me. Sometimes you’re not going to get to get to come. And sometimes you’re going to get more attention than you think you can handle. That’s what you’d be agreeing to.”

Stiles bites down on his lip, something squirming away inside him, hot and impatient and a little bit skittish. It’s scary but it’s how he gets to his end goal. He wants to give Peter everything. He wants to learn how to be his perfect Companion. And maybe selfishly, he wants every promise Peter has ever made about the things he can do to him.

He gives a little nod. “Okay.”

“Don’t answer me now,” Peter says. “This is something you need to think about. It’s going to be a steep learning curve, baby. We can keep playing around in the kiddie pool for as long as you need.”

The words fire Stiles up. He hates being condescended. He’s going to prove himself. “I want to do it.”

Peter leans in close, looking amused. “You’re going to tell me your answer later,” he says, brushing his lips against Stiles’. Stiles instinctively closes his eyes but Peter pulls away far too quickly.
“Right now, I’m going to go make us a hearty brunch, and then I need to start on food prep for tonight.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. He watches Peter climb from the bed, still naked. Stiles hugs the blankets to his chest, checking him out while he pulls on some clothes. It’s such a lovely view. Stiles could watch him forever.

Peter turns to face him. “Be ready for when I get back, baby. No falling back asleep.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says. "Hey, can I wash my face?” he asks. He can feel the remnants of dried come and saliva tight and itchy against his flesh.

Peter considers for a moment. “Sure,” he finally says. “I’m not going to have much time to enjoy you for the rest of today anyway, might as well make baby comfy.”

Stiles pulls his lip between his teeth. The words make Stiles feel instantly distant from Peter, lonely before he’s even gone. But Peter has plans tonight. His whole world can’t revolve around Stiles, as much as he’d like it to. “Thank you, Daddy,” he says instead.

Peter smiles, gazing at him with so much affection before he walks out of the door.

Stiles pulls himself from the bed, looking at his face in the mirror, but he can’t see any indication of what happened. It’s a little anticlimactic. He wants evidence, even if he’s going to wash it away. Maybe that’s why Peter doesn’t like him getting cleaned up normally. Scent seems to be what matters most to Peter and he wants Stiles to wear that evidence of what he’s done to him. Whether it’s motivated by esteem or vanity, Stiles wants to provide it.

He washes his face but not his dick where there’s probably arousal and come and Peter’s own scent. The thought makes him hot, blood pooling downwards. Being marked so intimately is the highest compliment he can think of. He belongs to his Daddy and he wants to gift Peter that knowledge, wants to wear it proudly. Maybe some other people tonight will be able to appreciate that fact too.

After brunch, Peter tidies away their dishes, turning to face Stiles. “I’m going to take you upstairs, and then Daddy’s going to be busy for the rest of the day.”

“You’re cooking?” Stiles asks.

“Prepping and cooking and baking,” Peter says. “It’s a ridiculous production really, but we do enjoy trying to outdo each other. We’re a competitive, unbearable bunch. The kind of people who are friends with each other because nobody else can stand them.”

“I don’t believe that about you,” Stiles says. “You’re charming and intelligent and easily the best looking person I’ve ever met in my life.”

Peter smirks, moving in close to Stiles. “I like this game. Tell me more.”

Stiles snorts a laugh. “Can I stay with you while you cook?”

“I don’t need you under my feet, baby,” Peter dismisses.

“I’ll stay out of the way,” Stiles promises. “I’m going to be alone all night. Don’t make me sit up there all afternoon as well. I hate solitary.”

Peter sighs, like Stiles is being deliberately manipulative. Maybe he is, a little bit. He really needs
this right now though. No space between them, that’s all he ever wants.

“You can study at the kitchen table, as long as you’re quiet,” Peter tells him. “If you want to do anything else, you have to go upstairs.”

Stiles nods eagerly. “Deal.”

Peter gives him an indulgent smile. “Go get your things then.”

Stiles races upstairs, cradling his study materials in his arms before jogging back down again. Peter is already busy organising ingredients on the kitchen counter by the time he returns. He doesn’t acknowledge Stiles, consumed in his methodical task. Stiles sits down, placing his supplies around himself before opening up the book. This is nice. Homey. Just like a real couple, sharing a space but doing their own things. Real couples don’t lock each other up when company comes around though. Stiles shakes his head. It’s not like that. He just needs to finish his training. Peter loves him, he’s said the words. Just because of how they came to be together, doesn’t mean this isn’t real.

He tries to concentrate on the next chapter, reading about the first Foundries, the kind of kids that ended up there. It was like his handler told him, orphans and runaways. Kids who had nowhere else to go. It’s beyond depressing.

He taps his pen against the table and then remembers that it’s a really annoying habit. He looks up to check if he’s irritating Peter but he’s so engrossed in what he’s doing, Stiles doubts he even noticed. It’s possible he’s forgotten Stiles is even there. Stiles kind of likes that though, seeing Peter unguarded. He’s measuring things into a pan on the stove, stirring and checking the consistency before adding something else. It’s like watching someone do magic. Stiles knew Peter was a good cook, he’s eaten plenty of the evidence, but he’s never seen it in progress before. It’s far more interesting than his book.

He leans on the table, eyes fixed on Peter as he moves from task to task. There’s no recipe books, he must be doing it all from memory, and Stiles wonders again about his past, where he learnt to do this. He wants to know everything about this man. He wonders if he could use his journal to make a little book of Peter. Peter is under no obligation to tell Stiles anything though so he’s going to have to play the long game.

“How do you want any help?” he offers.

Peter turns to look at him. “What do you know about making a consommé?”

Stiles stares at him. He’s not even sure what that is. “I could chop things.”

“I have it under control, thank you,” Peter says, the disdain dripping from his voice as he turns back to what he’s doing.

Stiles plays with his pen for a moment. “Do you think you could teach me some day? I’d like to know how to do that stuff.”

“That’s not your place, darling,” Peter dismisses kindly. “I am the provider. You are the pampered little boy.”

Stiles twists his mouth. “But…”

Peter turns to face him again. “Stiles, the prerequisites of your being here were studying and quiet,” he says pointedly.
“Right,” Stiles agrees, pointing his pen at him. “Quiet studying coming up.”

Peter gives him a curt nod, getting back to his cooking. Stiles looks down at his book for about three seconds before he goes back to staring at everything Peter is doing. He’s a visual learner. Maybe he can figure it out.

Peter places things in the oven, sets timers, turns down the burners on the stove. He wipes down the counter and checks over the things he has prepped before turning around to Stiles.


Stiles nods, closing his book and gathering up his things. “It smells really good.”

“Don’t worry, you’ll get to taste everything,” Peter says. “Daddy wouldn’t leave you out.”

He heads through to the living room and Stiles follows him, stopping when he realises Peter is going into his study. He waits, Peter returning with a couple of DVDs in his hand.

“Speaking of which,” Peter says. “Seeing as I’m having a special night, I wanted you to have one too. So no rules tonight, you can play video games for as long as you want, you can play with all of your nice things in your toy box, or you can watch these.” He holds up the movies, *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*.

Stiles smiles, feeling touched. He doesn’t want to be alone but Peter understands that and he’s doing his best to make it okay for Stiles. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter gives a nod. “You’re welcome, baby. Come on. Daddy needs to get ready before the guests start arriving.”

Stiles sits on the bed reading one of his comics while Peter takes a shower. The closer it gets to people invading their safe little space, the more anxious Stiles becomes. He takes deep breaths, tells himself he’s being stupid, he’s still safe here. He just really, with every ounce of his being, does not want this to happen. This place is theirs, their secret hideaway. If he wanted to be with other people he would have run away by now. He wonders if he’s kidding himself that he actually could if he wanted to.

He keeps his head buried in his comic when Peter comes back through to the bedroom. He feels like if he looks up he’ll give himself away and he doesn’t want to spoil Peter’s night. He deserves this. Stiles can’t sustain him forever. Stiles is expected to exist on only Peter though.

“Well,” Peter says, crossing the room. “How do I look?”

Stiles lifts his gaze and is instantly flawed. He’s wearing a three piece suit in a checked design that should look horrifically pretentious but Peter pulls it off to perfection. He could probably pull off anything. It’s tailored so flawlessly that it looks like it’s a part of him, showing off all of his best features. Stiles stares, feeling hot all over.

“You look good,” he says. “Really, really good. You shouldn’t go downstairs, you should just stay here and fuck me.” His eyes go wide the second the words are out of his mouth. “I’m sorry,” he rushes out, putting his comic aside and moving to the edge of the bed. “I’m sorry I said that, it’s a bad word, I didn’t mean to. Daddy, I’m sorry, please don’t put me in time out.”

“It’s okay,” Peter assures him, closing the space between them. “You know it’s a bad word. You corrected yourself straight away. That shows me that you’ve learnt.”
Stiles nods his head rapidly, his eyes damp. “I have. Daddy, I didn’t mean it. I wasn’t thinking.”

“Your heart is pounding, sweetheart,” Peter says, reaching down to press his hand against it. “Take a deep breath. Daddy’s pleased with how you handled it. I’m not going to put you in the corner when you already know that you’re wrong. That would be counterproductive, now, wouldn’t it, darling? Discipline is about correction, not punishment.”

Stiles takes a shaky breath. “I’m sorry.”

Peter smiles at him. “I’m going to take it as a compliment.” He pulls his hand away. “Come here. Give me a hug.”

Stiles pushes himself to his feet, wrapping his arms around Peter’s shoulders and hanging on for dear life. He presses his face into Peter’s neck. He has cologne on. Stiles doesn’t like it, not because it doesn’t smell good, but because it doesn’t smell like Peter. He rests his forehead down on Peter’s shoulder instead, wrapped up firmly in Peter’s strong arms, and everything feels okay. He tries to forget that it’s temporary.

“That’s it,” Peter says, rubbing his back. “Nice, steady heartbeat. That’s what we need.” He pulls back, looking down at Stiles. “I have to go, sweetheart, but I’m going to be up to check on you and I’m going to bring you yummy things. You have fun.”

“Okay,” Stiles says. He doesn’t want to let go through. Peter has to tug his arms free.

“Be good, beautiful,” Peter says. “I’ll see you in a little while.”

Stiles nods, forcing himself not to fall apart yet. He’s not going to ruin Peter’s night. “Have fun, Daddy.”

“You too, baby,” Peter says with a wink, heading out of the door.

Stiles curls back up on the bed, pulling his comic towards himself. He tries to concentrate, but he can’t fight the horrible thought of being set aside. Peter made sure he was okay though, he gave him special presents, he’s going to share the dinner party food with him. But he’s being segregated and he hates that feeling of being less than. He doesn’t want to have his status shoved in his face. He knows where the power lies between them, he knows that Peter is his Master, even if he doesn’t make him say it, but it feels like they’re sharing something when they’re together. He doesn’t feel like he’s serving Peter. It’s not a job to him. His emotions are real. But Peter has no problem setting him aside when he’s not useful. He doesn’t get to go to the dinner party. He’s not like Peter and his friends. This is a choice he’s made about Stiles’ standing in his life and it hurts.

When he hears the first car pulling up outside he abandons his comic altogether, getting to his feet. He’s at the back of the house so he can’t see anything, but he instinctively looks out of the window. It’s that beautiful twilight, colours across the sky. He doesn’t stay to enjoy it, going over to the bedroom door and listening carefully as there’s a knock on the door.

Peter greets whoever it is and everything sounds jovial, like old friends maybe. There’s a familiarity. Stiles hovers in the doorway, trying to listen in, but it sounds like they go through to the kitchen. He sighs, leaning against the doorframe. He’s not supposed to be in the hallway, even though his chain can reach, so he makes sure he stays on the right side of the threshold. He’s going to be good. He’s not going to give Peter any reasons to have to lock him away again.

More people arrive, the party moving through to the living room, but there’s too many people by then for Stiles to pick them apart. It’s just noise, bursts of laughter, clinking of glasses. It makes
Stiles feels incredibly lonely. He sinks to the floor, sitting against the wall and keeping his ears trained to the din just in case he can glean anything useful from it. It’s a pointless task. If he was a werewolf, maybe he could tune his ears in, but he doesn’t have any such skills. He has nothing that can help him here.

He hears footsteps on the stairs and he tenses. Every logical part of himself tells him that it’s Peter, no one else needs to be up here, there’s a guest bathroom downstairs, but he still feels himself paralysed with fear. What if one of them came up here? What if they took the sex slave thing literally? What if Peter let them?

He clenches his hands into fists. There’s no way that’s true. Peter loves him. Stiles means more than that to him. He follows the chain back to the bed with his eyes. He kind of looks like a sex slave right now though.

Peter steps into the room, stopping when he sees Stiles on the floor. He crouches down in front of him, a plate of something balanced on his hand. “Is my little boy feeling nosey?” he asks in a patronising voice.

Stiles shrugs, trying not to sulk. “I can’t even hear anything.”

“There’s really not much to hear,” Peter says. “We’re incredibly tiresome.”

Stiles looks at him. “Why do you keep saying mean things about your friends?” He hadn’t even imagined that Peter had friends, not like this. He’s built himself a little fortress against the world here and he seemed to enjoy the solitude. But he’s charming and he likes the sound of his own voice, of course entertaining would appeal to him.

Peter sighs, walking over to the bed and placing the plate down on the nightstand. He returns to Stiles, scooping him up in his arms and depositing him on the bed. “What do you want to do? Play videos games or watch a movie?”

Stiles stares at him for a moment, disorientated from being moved so brusquely. He didn’t even get a chance to lean into Peter’s body and enjoy it. “Movie,” he says. He can’t concentrate on much else right now.

Peter goes over to his console, putting in the DVD and setting it all up for him. He returns to the bed, handing Stiles the TV remote. “I brought you some hors d’oeuvres,” he says, gesturing to the plate. “Eat up. I’ll be back with the first course in a little while.” He walks back across the room, grabbing the stupid wolf plushie from the dresser. “Why don’t you and Wolfy look after each other,” he says, forcibly placing the toy under Stiles’ arm.

“I don’t want it,” Stiles says, putting it aside.

“He gives excellent cuddles,” Peter shrugs. “You look like you need one.”

Stiles looks up at him. He really does. He holds out his arms.

“I have guests downstairs,” Peter chides, but he moves in close, wrapping Stiles up. It instantly eases Stiles’ anxiety. Peter nuzzles at him. “Be a good boy,” he whispers in his ear. Stiles nods, letting him go. “Try those,” Peter says, gesturing at the nibbles as he steps away. “They’re good.”

Stiles looks down at them. “Thank you, Daddy.”

“I’ll be back in a little while,” Peter tells him.
Stiles settles back against the pillows to watch his movie, nibbling at the food. It’s amazing, because of course it is. He’s seen the movie before, but he likes it and it helps drown out the noise from downstairs. If he can’t make out what they’re saying, he’s rather not hear them at all. There’s occasional crescendos, when things get heated or hilarious, but mostly it’s a murmur that’s masked by the soundtrack. Stiles tries to pretend he’s just a teenage boy in his bedroom on a Friday night, watching a movie. It’s close to his real life. He doesn’t want to be that pathetic loser anymore though. He’s better now. Peter has made him better. And now he’s put him right back here.

He reaches out for the wolf, idly stroking its soft fur before he catches himself. He pushes it further away, grabbing a pillow to hug instead. He’s not sure what the difference is really, he’s still getting comfort from an inanimate object, but this feels less embarrassing.

Peter brings him up each course, checking in on him, and Stiles always gives him a smile, though he wishes he could ask him to stay. He feels so left out and it makes him wonder what he really is to Peter. He thought he was his whole world, but right now he feels like a subplot.

When Peter brings dessert up, Stiles puts the cushion aside, sitting up. “Have you talked about me tonight?” he asks.

“Baby, I told you, I’m not hiding you,” Peter responds. “I’ve told them all about you.”

“No, I mean, tonight,” Stiles says. “What do they say about me?”

Peter looks amused. “Are you fishing for gossip?”

Stiles shifts on the bed, trying not to let his frustration get the better of him. “I want to know how they talk about me.”

“They don’t have much to go on,” Peter says. He takes his phone out of his pocket, fiddling with the screen. “Maybe I can take a photo of you and ask their opinions.”

Stiles shies away. “I don’t want them to objectify me.”

Peter smirks. “That’s a big word.”

Stiles clenches his jaw. “I know big words.”

“You do,” Peter agrees, his tone softening. “My baby’s smart.”

“I just wanted to know what they thought of me,” Stiles says, playing with his hands.

“How can they think anything of you, they haven’t met you,” Peter says. “I can show them a photo and tell you their thoughts about that,” he says, but he slides his phone back into his pocket before Stiles can even answer. “You’re much more that a photograph though.”

Stiles gives a little nod, his body sagging. He feels so tired and worn down. He feels like he might not even be real. If he never sees the outside world again, is he really a part of it?

“You can meet them next time,” Peter says. “Six months. You’ll be done with your training by then and you can attend on my arm. We can host together. We just have to get you settled first. Okay?”

Stiles nods his head. He makes it sound so reasonable. It is reasonable, Stiles tells himself. He just needs to work hard. The thought of standing by Peter’s side, of touching him, with witnesses, sends a thrill through him. He wants everyone to know that he’s Peter’s.
“Eat your dessert,” Peter says, placing a kiss against his temple.

“Thank you, Daddy,” Stiles says.

Peter gives him that pleased smile before leaving him alone again.

Stiles eats his dessert, a white chocolate and raspberry tart with perfectly balanced flavours. He scrapes up every last bit and then puts the plate aside, reaching for his cushion. He considers it for a moment, his eyes falling on the wolf. It really does have soft fur. With a sigh, he puts the pillow behind his head, reaching for the wolf instead. He pulls it close, fingers playing idly through its fur.

He falls asleep before the second movie finishes, waking up to the feel of Peter’s fingers stroking through his hair. He hums happily, opening his eyes to gaze up at him.

“I knew you and Wolfy would get along,” Peter says.

Stiles realises with a flush of embarrassment that he’s hugging the plushie tightly to his chest. He frowns, pushing it away.

“Now now,” Peter chides, grabbing the wolf. “Say goodnight to Wolfy properly. Give him a kiss.”

He holds the wolf in front of Stiles’ face. Stiles just stares at him incredulously. Peter presses the wolf’s fluffy snout against Stiles’ nose, making a kissing sound. Stiles refuses to give.

“Poor Wolfy,” Peter says, placing the wolf on Stiles’ nightstand before looking down at him.

“Now let’s get you into bed.”

Stiles props himself up on his elbow. “I haven’t had my bath yet.”

“No bath tonight, baby,” Peter says. “These things tend to run a little late. Once the wine gets flowing everything becomes fascinating.”

“You can’t get drunk,” Stiles points out.

“No,” Peter agrees. “But once they’ve got a couple of glasses down them, they’re not observant enough to notice.” He pulls at the blankets. “Come on, baby. In you get.”

“I need my bath,” Stiles insists. “That’s my routine. It helps me sleep.”

“Sweetheart, you were already asleep,” Peter says. “Get into bed.”

Stiles pouts but he lets Peter move him, sliding under the covers. He’s definitely ready to drift off again but he tries not to show it. He’s not relenting that easily.

“I should have just moved you without waking you up,” Peter says, getting undressed. “I’m selfish though, I wanted to see my baby. I missed you.”

“Missed you too,” Stiles says, turning so he can continue tracking Peter’s movements.

“Well it’s just you and me now,” Peter says, climbing into bed beside him.

Stiles moves in close, resting his head down on Peter’s chest, Peter holding him tight. “Daddy?”

“Yes, baby?”
“I want to do stage four,” Stiles says. “I want to learn. I want you to show me.”

“Any time I want?” Peter prompts.

“Yes.”

“Any way I want?”

Stiles nods his head, snuggling in closer. “Yes. Please.”

“Okay, baby,” Peter agrees. “Go to sleep. Then, in the morning, Daddy is going to take charge. And you’re going to be such a good little boy.”

“Always,” Stiles promises, letting his eyes slip closed.

Peter kisses the top of his head. “Daddy’s going to show you how.”

The anticipation tickles at Stiles’ skin like a physical sensation. Peter wants to give him the world. Stiles is going to earn it.
Stiles wakes up to the feel of Peter’s hands sliding under his T-shirt. He’s dragged closer to Peter’s body, his back flush against Peter’s front, and he groans, pressing back with a wriggle. Peter’s hand slides further down, grasping his cock through the material of his pants, massaging it roughly. Stiles moans, arching his back, feeling himself get hard so fast he goes dizzy.

“What’s your safeword, baby?” Peter asks.

Stiles’ breath catches in his throat. “Silver.”

Peter drags his lips across the back of Stiles neck. “Good boy. Do you want to use it?”

Stiles shakes his head, hips pressing into Peter’s touch. “No.”

Peter grins against his flesh. “Then welcome to stage four.”

Stiles shudders, smiling breathlessly. “I love it already.”

Peter lets go of his dick, lifting his hand up and pressing two fingers into Stiles’ mouth. “Let’s see how you feel about it in a few minutes.”

Stiles moans, sucking on his fingers, wondering if this is some kind of skill test. Show Daddy what he’s learned from stage three. Prove himself. Stiles gets to work, sucking and licking while Peter fucks his mouth with his fingers. It’s nowhere near as satisfying as his cock but in his sleepy state, it’s enough.

When Peter pulls them away, leaving a trail of saliva down his chin, he yanks down the back of Stiles’ pants, placing his clean hand between Stiles’ shoulder blades and pushing him forward to bend at the waist. Stiles whines, hating being pushed away, but Peter moves with him, making it better, always making it better.

His wet hand slides between Stiles’ cheeks, slippery fingers touching his hole. Stiles immediately tenses, shaking his head.

“Relax, baby,” Peter coos. “I’m just warming you up.” He circles Stiles’ hole, finger gliding over the nerve endings, making him squirm. “Daddy’s going to get the lube before he fucks you with his fingers.”

Stiles moans, grasping a handful of his pillow. “Please.”

“Think we can get two inside you today?” Peter asks.

Stiles pushes back against him. “Yes, Daddy.”

Peter massages his opening with his wet fingers, plumping it up, making it too sensitive. Stiles whines, tipping his head back, wanting so badly to kiss Peter, to touch him. Peter nibbles at the side of his neck, teeth playing over the sensitive skin. Stiles imagines canine fangs digging in, claiming him. It’s the most erotic thing he can imagine. He wants to be his.

Peter shifts back, pulling his hand away as he turns. “I want you on your back, pants off, legs
Stiles is pretty sure that straightforward instruction isn’t supposed to make him as hot as it does but he doesn’t care, he embraces it. He rolls onto his back, kicking his pants down, and he can’t get them all the way off with his cuff but he does his best, letting them catch on his bound ankle as he opens his legs. Peter returns to him with the bottle of lube, throwing the covers off Stiles who squeaks, wanting to close his legs despite himself. Peter just looks down at him with such adoration on his face.

“You are so beautiful,” he says with wonder, shamelessly checking him out. “And so good for your Daddy.” He lifts his gaze, meeting Stiles’ eyes. “Daddy’s going to be good to you now.”

He flips open the lube, pouring some over his fingers. He trails his clean hand down the inside of Stiles’ thigh, making him shudder, but they instantly fall apart which he guesses was the goal. Peter reaches between his legs and Stiles instinctively lifts up for him, angling his hips to give him better access.

“Such a good boy,” Peter says, rewarding him with a slick finger pressing against his hole. Stiles arches up, handing himself over. “You’re a natural. You just give it up.”

He watches himself as he presses the tip of his finger into Stiles’ body, Stiles unconsciously clamping down on it, the sensation still new. He takes a breath, feeling the pleasure coursing through his body, and lets himself melt into it. Peter gently rocks his finger deeper, his eyes still focussed on what he’s doing, and Stiles whines, not liking being so on display. It feels pornographic, but then Stiles has watched more than his fair share of porn, so maybe he has no right to complain.

When Peter has his finger all the way in, he twists it, a new sensation that has Stiles rolling his eyes back, different to the simple friction of back and forth. Peter lowers himself over Stiles’ body, apparently done perving on him and wanting to get more intimate. Stiles lifts his head from the pillow, trying to kiss him, but Peter shakes his head, dodging away. He hovers there, watching Stiles’ face, and then he does something absolutely magical.

Objectively, Stiles knows what a prostate is, and he knew it felt good, but he didn’t know it felt like this. As Peter rubs against it, his whole body goes molten, consuming him as he fists his hands into Peter’s T-shirt, eyes wide, mouth falling silently open with a shudder.

“Did I find it?” Peter asks, looking rightfully smug.

“Daddy,” Stiles breathes out. It’s the only word he can form. Right now, he’s ready to worship at his altar forever.

“Feels good, doesn’t it, baby,” Peter says, before his finger is sliding back out. “That’s for later though.”

Stiles whines, lifting his hips from the bed, chasing that feeling again.

“Let’s work on getting two fingers inside you first,” Peter says and Stiles nods his head. Anything. Anything to feel like that again.

Peter works him slow and steady, breaching him with two fingers, stretching out his hole, Stiles trying not to tense up against the twinges. Peter goes back to one finger for a while, fucking him deep, never losing his patience. He alternates between shallow intrusions with two fingers and long, fluid fucks with one until Stiles can barely tell the difference and his body opens up,
stretching in a way that’s inescapable. Stiles has to hold his breath because he doesn’t think there’s room in his body for anything else, not even air.

“Imagine when that’s Daddy’s cock,” Peter says.

Stiles moans, nodding his head. Peter brushes his fingers against Stiles’ prostate and Stiles swears he sees stars. Maybe they’re fireflies.

“You like that, baby?” Peter asks.

Stiles just moans in response. Words are too much.

“You think you can come just like this?” Peter asks, starting to massage his prostate relentlessly. Stiles can already feel his cock leaking against his stomach. “You think you can come without having your cock touched?”

Stiles stares at him. That doesn’t seem possible but he knows that it is. In theory it is. Porn isn’t real life, but still.

“Daddy wants you to,” Peter says. “Daddy would like that very much. You coming on just his fingers. He wants you to learn how. Do you want to learn for Daddy?”

“Yes,” Stiles hisses out. His body is already restless and overloaded from the constant attention to his prostate.

“Good boy,” Peter says, glancing over at the clock. “Well, you need to concentrate then, because the alarm’s going to go off soon and when it does, Daddy has to get in the shower. I can’t play with my baby all day, much as I might like to. Daddy has responsibilities. Tick tock, baby.”

Stiles whines. It’s already too difficult to sort through these new feelings and work them into an orgasm when all he feels is pressure and heat and stretch and sharp pleasure like a knife. He needs time to let them resonate and settle into something his brain can make sense of. Adding in a time pressure makes it feel like an impossible task, like he’s being set up to fail.

He sets his jaw in determination, turning his face into Peter, pulling him closer as he concentrates on the drag of his fingers. It’s good. It’s a good feeling. So good. He can’t make it equate to any more than that and he knows good isn’t going to get him there. Good is a warm up.

He closes his eyes, breathing Peter in, trying to just let go. Peter wants this. It’s going to please him. Stiles wants to please him. There’s a nagging voice at the back of his head that tells him want isn’t going to override his body. Stiles hates that voice. He drowns it out with a fantasy, Peter doing this to open him up, Peter doing this because he’s going to fuck him. He imagines Peter between his thighs, imagines his hard cock against Stiles’ wet, open hole. He imagines how much more than this it’s going to stretch but how worth it it will be. He imagines Peter fucking into him in long, deep thrusts, touching his face tenderly, telling him how good he is, such a good boy.

It gets him close, really close, his body hot and needy and pulled taut like a string. He can feel it in his head, tingly and pleasure soaked, but it doesn’t crest, it just won’t crest. He imagines Peter’s hand around his cock, trying to trick himself, imagines him grasping the sensitive flesh, smearing precome down his length, saying filthy things to him. It doesn’t work though, his neglected cock giving a twitch against his stomach, displaying just how much it doesn’t buy his bullshit. He moans in frustration, arching his hips. It’s right there. It’s right fucking there. He can reach it. He has to reach it. It feels like he might die if he doesn’t come soon.

The alarm startles him, making his whole body jolt. Peter slides his fingers smoothly out in one
swift motion, turning to silence the alarm.

“No,” Stiles says desperately, his body bereft, mind swimming. It’s so disorientating.

“Times up, baby,” Peter says, matter of fact.

“But I didn’t…” Stiles says hopelessly.

“I’m aware that you didn’t,” Peter replies, looking at his dick pointedly.

Stiles lets out a sob, his eyes filling up.

“Shhh,” Peter soothes, running his fingers through Stiles’ hair. Stiles whines. Even that feels like too much. “Maybe you’ll get it next time.”

Stiles nods his head. He feels miserable, but he’s still learning, he reminds himself. He’s going to master all of this. He’s going to be the little boy Peter deserves.

“Daddy has to go in the shower now,” Peter says. “And while I’m gone, no touching yourself.”

Stiles nods again, trying to level out his breathing.

“And just so we’re clear, you put Daddy in charge, so you don’t get your one orgasm a day to play with anymore,” Peter says. “I know that before, Daddy gave you one a day and you could choose to do it yourself or have Daddy help you. None of that now. Daddy decides when you get an orgasm. Daddy decides if you get an orgasm. Baby doesn’t do any touching without permission.”

“Yes, Daddy,” Stiles agrees. He shifts on the bed, his whole body on edge, and he feels like he’s going to shatter. “Please. I need to come. It hurts.”

“Sometimes it’s going to hurt,” Peter agrees. “That’s when you need to be tough. Daddy warned you about that from the start.” He bends down, placing a kiss against Stiles’ cheek. “I know that you can do this or we wouldn’t have gotten this far. I’m so proud of you, baby. Keep making me proud.”

“Yes, Daddy,” Stiles says brokenly, even though all he wants to do is beg.

Peter places a chaste kiss on his lips before standing up. “Be good while I’m in the shower.” He stands by the bed, shamelessly taking in every inch of Stiles’ desperate, strung out body. “That is some beautiful inspiration.” He meets Stiles’ eyes. “Daddy can touch whenever he wants.” He smirks at Stiles before heading into the bathroom.

Stiles lies there listening to the shower start up, his skin so sensitive that the sheets against his back prickle. He closes his eyes, breathes in and out, but then Peter starts moaning above the comforting white noise of running water. Stile grits his teeth, tries not to feel angry, but the frustration is bubbling up inside him. He’s trying to calm down, abandoned on this knife edge, and Peter is getting himself off. Stiles tries to tell himself that he’s moved, he made his Daddy feel like this, but Peter is in control of everything.

He listens to Peter come, his hands curled into fists, his body vibrating with need. As Peter finishes his shower, it settles down to a low thrum but it doesn’t go away. He wants to cry, overwhelmed and unable to process all the sensations, the emotions, that are churning around inside him. Peter comes through to the bedroom, getting dressed while Stiles stares at the ceiling, still trying to level out. There’s too many hormones, it doesn’t feel possible.
“Are you planning on lying like that all day?” Peter asks, his tone conversational.

Stiles shakes his head, looking over at him. “Daddy,” he says. He doesn’t know what he’s going to follow it up with, he just needs him closer.

Peter comes to sit on the end of the bed, looking down at him fondly. “Is baby feeling a little bit too much?”

Stiles nods his head. “I need a hug. Please.”

“Come on,” Peter says, gesturing Stiles closer.

Stiles sits up, trying to ignore his body as he shifts across the bed. Peter meets him halfway, scooping him up and placing him in his lap. Stiles love that he can do that. It instantly makes him feel safe. His whole body eases when he’s cradled in Peter’s arms. He clings to him, the want still sharp, but he feels like he can handle it.

“Better?” Peter asks, holding him tighter. Stiles makes a little noise, nodding against him. Peter rocks him gently. “We need to work on your self-soothing,” Peter says. “I don’t mind doing this for as long as you need it, but you don’t want to be reliant. We want to make you all empowered, like a big boy. Right?”

Stiles snuggles in closer. He should want that. All he really wants is his Daddy though, even as he appreciates how much work that is for Peter. Stiles needs to pick up some of the slack. Peter doesn’t ask much of him. He nods his head. Peter places a kiss on his temple, holding him a little longer until his body eases and Stiles doesn’t feel like he’s falling apart. He doesn’t know how he’s supposed to give this up.

“Daddy has to go make breakfast,” Peter says. Stiles forces himself to sit up a little straighter, take some of his own weight. Peter smiles at him, lifting him and placing him on the bed, taking in the sight of him. “No getting cleaned up,” he says. “I might need that lube later.”

Stiles feels a little shudder of arousal, too sharp. He chews on his lip as he watches Peter get to his feet.

“No touching,” Peter reminds him. “Be a good boy for Daddy.”

“Always,” Stiles agrees.

He pulls his pants back up as Peter leaves the room, not letting himself be precious about the lube and precome that are going to end up smeared on them. This is what Peter wants. He goes through to the bathroom, washing his face and then spending a little too long looking at himself in the mirror as though something might have changed. He’s still his same awkward, big eyed self. He wants to see what Peter sees.

He mostly calms down by the time Peter comes to collect him for breakfast, but as he sits there eating he remembers what Peter said about their new dynamic. He can grab his cock while they eat breakfast and make him come in his pants. Stiles flushes, burning up. Once the idea is there, he can’t get rid of it, whether Peter shows any indication of doing so or not. It was a hypothetical example, Stiles know that, but it still makes him hard. He shifts on his seat, biting down on his whine a little too late.

“I’m going to spare you the embarrassment of spelling out to me every thought that is currently running through your filthy little mind,” Peter says. “But I do hope you’re thinking about me, sweetheart.”
“Always,” Stiles insists. No one else could ever make him feel like this.

“Then I shall take it as a compliment,” Peter says, leaning over to kiss him on the cheek. “But you’re still not getting an orgasm. Eat your breakfast.”

Stiles smiles. He doesn’t know what about that he finds charming. Maybe just the familiarity with which it was said, so much affection in the words. He focuses on his food, on each bite that Peter so carefully made for him, and it helps keep him in check. This is something he can do.

When Peter takes him upstairs and locks his cuff in place, he reminds him to be good and places a kiss on his forehead before leaving him. Stiles adores those little gestures of affection. He wants to fall back on the bed and smile at the ceiling like an idiot, but the bed is the last place he should be if he wants to distract himself. It’s not like he’s never been sexually frustrated before. Usually the problem is finding anyone who wants to start with him though. Starting and not finishing is a whole different kind of torture.

He goes over to his PS4, taking out the movie from last night and putting his yoga DVD in before going to retrieve his mat. It’s soothing, focussing on his breaths, the fluid motions that are starting to feel natural to him. Blondie talks about body awareness a lot and Stiles is all too aware of his body and what it craves, but this helps take the focus off his dick and spread it out, down to his toes, to the tips of his fingers, up his spine and to the crown of his head. It’s empowering. He’s more than his animal instincts.

He rolls up his mat, putting it away in his toy box and considering his study supplies. His head feels foggy, two nights of disrupted bedtimes knocking his sleep schedule off balance and making him feel lethargic. He never thought he’d cling to an ordered timetable so much but it feels good to have everything mapped out, to know what’s coming next, and to get some solid hours of good quality sleep at a time his body could predict. He’s already looking forward to bath time tonight, being put to bed. It’s such a comforting little routine. His Daddy knows what’s best for him.

If he wants to get back into his normal schedule he knows that he should get his book out and do some studying. Peter was kind enough to give him this opportunity, it would be rude of him to waste it. With a sigh that he admits it a little too dramatic, he grabs his study things from his toy box, taking them over to the window seat.

As he opens his book, he remembers that he was halfway through a chapter when he got distracted yesterday by more pleasant things. Stiles knows that this is important though, he asked for this book for a reason. He needs to understand what he is. He knows what he means to Peter, that’s not in doubt, but he wants to know what the rest of the world sees when they look at him. He wants to know what Peter’s friends thought about the fact that he was locked upstairs all night while they were partying. He wants to know how his father rationalised selling his only son.

Stiles’ stomach clenches, making him feel sick. He hasn’t thought about his dad in a long time. His brain instinctively pulls memories of tight hugs, being swamped in his dad’s arms after inevitably doing something dumb, but he pushes them away. At what point did his dad decide to do this to him? At what point did those hugs stop being real and start being about protecting his investment? Stiles was his pay-out if his dad could just hold on until he was eighteen.

Stiles wants to know when the idea occurred to him, wants to trace back through every memory he has. Did he decide when he got to the hospital too late on the day his mom died? The way his dad looked at him in that waiting room has always haunted Stiles, like this was somehow all his fault. Or maybe it was later, when he stopped drinking, because he finally realised that he had an out, that Stiles could save him if his dad just raised him long enough to get a good price for him. It could have been after any of the idiotic things that Stiles got in trouble for over the years, brought
into the station by disapproving deputies who treated him like a loveable stray dog. Stiles was just a heart attack waiting to happen, putting far too much stress on his dad.

Tears fall from his eyes and he hastily wipes them away. A man who thought so little of him isn’t worth his tears. He can’t stop his brain from spiralling though, every little thing that Stiles has done wrong in the last few years running through his mind like a tsunami. He wasn’t a good kid. Maybe he deserved this. Fear clenches in his chest. What if Peter starts to see in him whatever his dad saw? What if he doesn’t want to keep him either?

He lets out a sob, clamping his hand over his mouth and biting down on the flesh until it stings. He’s good now. He’s been so good. He’d never give Peter a reason to get rid of him.

He slams the books shut, wiping at his face, his hands shaking. His heart is beating too fast in his chest and he can’t breathe, his throat closed up around the tears he’s trying to hold back. He gets to his feet, pacing, running his fingers through his hair, but this isn’t what he needs. He need stillness. Comfort. He needs to stop.

He goes over to the bed, climbing under the blankets and pressing his face into Peter’s pillow. He can’t smell him, not like he needs to, his senses human and weak. He punches it instead, starting to cry again when his eyes land on Wolfy, still sitting on his nightstand. Peter gave it to him for a reason. If Stiles keeps being an ungrateful brat, Peter’s just going to see through to his unworthiness so much quicker.

He reaches across, grabbing the plush wolf and hugging it to his chest, pulling the blankets up over his head. It’s warm and dark, muffling his sobs. It feels safe with his misery in there. He grips Wolfy, fingers digging into soft fur as his body shakes. He’s a good boy. He’s a good boy. He mutters the words to himself over and over.

“Stiles?”

He clenches at the sound of his name. It’s not lunchtime yet. It can’t be. And Peter only uses his name when he’s unhappy.

Peter climbs onto the bed beside him, the mattress dipping. “Baby, what’s wrong?” He lifts up the edge of the blanket, looking down at Stiles with so much concern that it forces another sob from his throat.

“I’m sorry,” he says. “I didn’t mean to disturb you.”

“It’s okay,” Peter assures him. “I don’t want you upset on your own. You call me if you need me, whatever I’m doing. You understand?”

Stiles nods, sniffling, but he doesn’t quite believe it.

“What’s the matter, baby?” Peter asks, reaching down to stroke his hair back. “Is it your training? If you’re struggling with it, it’s important that you communicate that to me. We can always work it out. You’re not learning anything if you’re like this.”

“It’s not that,” Stiles insists. “I can do the training. I was just…” He trails off, sniffling again. He doesn’t want to say it out loud. He doesn’t want to give Peter ideas that haven’t occurred to him yet.

“Just what?” Peter asks. “Daddy can’t make it better unless he knows what’s wrong.”

He’s still petting Stiles’ hair and Stiles closes his eyes. It feels so nice. “I was thinking about my
“And that made you upset?” Peter asks.

“He didn’t want to keep me,” Stiles says. He opens his eyes, looking up at Peter. “You’re going to keep me, right? I’m being good. I’m doing my best.”

“Baby, of course I’m keeping you,” Peter says hotly. “How can you even think that? You’re mine. No one and nothing is ever going to take you away from me, I promise you that.” He moves the blankets back, climbing in and wrapping Stiles up in his arms. “You’re so good. You’re perfect. You’re everything I wanted, sweetheart, you’re my family. I am never letting you go.”

Stiles nods his head, burying his face in Peter’s neck. There’s so much fire in Peter’s voice that Stiles can’t even begin to doubt it. He clings to Peter, Wolfy stuck between them, as Peter rubs his back in soothing circles, nuzzling at his temple. Stiles feels something ease inside him. He can trust this. No one has ever cared for him like Peter does. He’s nothing but love and patience and understanding and he’s working so hard to broaden Stiles’ horizons, to help him, to better him. Stiles wants to learn what he’s capable of, like Peter promised. He wants to be the very best version of himself for Peter. He’s never going to let him regret buying him for a second.

When Stiles finally settles in his arms, his hands easing their death grip on Peter’s shirt, Peter tilts his head back, wiping his tear tracks away with his thumbs. He looks at him with such tenderness. “I really wish you’d called me,” he says. He looks down between them, smiling at the plushie. “I’m glad you had Wolfy at least.”

Stiles nods, stroking a hand through his fur. “I was trying to self-soothe.”

Peter sighs. “Oh, baby. I said that was something we were going to work on. I don’t expect you to do that all on your own. You still need your Daddy. That’s okay. Daddy’s always here for you.” He leans down, placing a kiss on his forehead. “Next time, call me.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, feeling small and silly. “I’m sorry, Daddy.”

“Shhh,” Peter soothes, pulling him in close again. “Everything’s okay. You’re with me now. Nothing’s going to hurt you here.”

Stiles closes his eyes, nestling into him. It feels so warm and safe here. Stile finds it hard to believe that anything exists outside of this room. He’s just starting to doze off when Peter eases him backwards, stroking his cheek. When Stiles opens his eyes, he sees nothing but love.

“Daddy’s going to get you a washcloth, clean you up, okay?”

“Okay,” Stiles says in a small voice.

Peter climbs out of the bed, going through to the bathroom and running some water. Stiles rolls onto his back, sniffing and trying not to think about the fact that he’s probably all snotty and gross. And that he just had his face buried in Peter’s doubtlessly expensive clothes. Peter doesn’t mind though, Peter’s not upset, so Stiles shouldn’t be upset either.

Peter returns with a washcloth soaked in cool water. It feels good against Stiles’ heated face. He closes his eyes and hums as it soothes over the puffiness there before swiping over his tight cheeks. He cleans under his nose, wiping away whatever mess is there, doing it all with nothing but affection.

“All better,” Peter says.
Stiles smiles, gazing up at him. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter reaches out, caressing the side of his face. “Your heart’s nice a steady now. I could hear it racing from downstairs. You scared me.”

Stiles knows those words shouldn’t make his heart swell, but just knowing that someone cares about him that much makes him feel invincible.

“Do you think you’d be alright on your own for a little bit?” Peter asks. “Daddy can stay if you need him to, I have no problem with that.”

“I’m okay,” Stiles says, and he means it.

“You should stay snuggled up there,” Peter says. “You look comfy. A nap might do you some good.”

“I don’t want to nap,” Stiles says. “I won’t sleep tonight. I want to get back on a proper schedule.”

Peter nods. “It’s been a tough couple of days for baby. I’m sorry. Nice normal day today to even you out.” He stands up, tossing the washcloth through to the bathroom. “Do you want me to pass you something from your toy box?”

“Can I have my comics?” Stiles asks. “And my music? Please.”

“Your wish is my command,” Peter says, going to retrieve them. He places them on the bed beside Stiles before leaning down, kissing him on the mouth. It’s chaste but still somehow heated, lips catching on Stiles’, lingering just a moment too long. “I adore you, sweet boy.”

Stiles can’t hold back the grin that breaks out over his face. “I love you, Daddy.”

“Love you too, baby,” Peter responds, straightening up. “Call if you need something. Anything.”

Stiles nods. “I will.”

He pulls himself into a sitting position, curling up in his nest of blankets as he slips on the headphones, selecting a chilled out song. He tucks Wolfy under his arm and starts to read his comics, letting himself get lost in the fantasy world.

He’s still there when Peter comes to collect him for lunch. He’s not sure how long Peter’s actually been standing there before he notices him in the doorway, the music masking his footsteps that are silent when he wants them to be anyway. Stiles doesn’t feel startled when he sees him there though, just happy. He takes his headphones off, putting the comic aside and moving out of the blankets as Peter crosses the room towards him.

“Hello, gorgeous,” he greets.

“Hi, Daddy,” Stiles says softly.

Peter takes his headphones, placing them around Stiles’ neck and taking hold of his hand to guide him to his feet. He turns the volume right up on the MP3 player so they can hear it through the headphones, muffled and distorted, but clear enough. Peter slips the player into his pocket and then wraps his arms around Stiles as he starts to gently sway him to the music. Stiles just gazes at him, wrapping his arms around Peter’s neck and letting himself be led. The wire stretches from Stiles to Peter, tying them together, and Stiles doesn’t think he’s ever felt so content.
“We should go eat,” Peter says when the song finishes.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees, even though he really doesn’t want to move. “I like dancing with you.”

“Maybe we can hook your MP3 player up to the speakers this afternoon and listen to it properly,” Peter says.

“You’d do that?” Stiles asks.

“It’s your house too,” Peter says. “Daddy’s rules, but if you follow them, you’ll always get nice things.”

Stiles smiles at him. “Best Daddy ever.”

“I’m glad we agree,” Peter says. He lets go of Stiles, lifting the headphones from his neck and pulling them free of the music player, holding them out to Stiles. “Tidy up, baby. That’s a good boy.”

Stiles happily puts his things away, taking his comics over to his toy box, tidying up the window seat where he left all his study things out. He turns to Peter proudly and Peter smiles at him, unlocking his cuff before taking hold of his hand and leading him downstairs.

After lunch, Peter takes Stiles’ MP3 player from his pocket and hooks it up to his sound system. He keeps it on Stiles’ chilled out playlist and then offers out his hand, actually looking touched when Stiles accepts, as though he’s ever done anything else.

They dance around the living room to Stiles’ songs, Peter showing him some new moves, but Stiles likes it best when they just hold each other and sway. He never happier than when he’s pressed against Peter’s body, held by him. Music is such an evocative thing and to have these songs that mean so much to him threaded through with Peter, touched by him, it makes Stiles feel like he’s whole. He can let go of the bad things, the people that didn’t care enough for him, but he doesn’t have to let go of himself, not completely. If Peter can love Stiles, he can’t be that terrible a person.

When Peter locks him into his cuff to go and make dinner for them, Stiles goes over to his toy box, taking out his journal. He wants to document this. It feels profound and important.

He opens up the journal, past the first page of his old life, and stares at the words on the second. With Peter. I belong. They settle something inside him, like the world slotting into place. He honestly doesn’t think he can improve on that. He leaves the words alone and goes for a fresh page, past the letter he wrote to Lydia, but the next page isn’t blank of course. Stiles stares at the single word at the top of it.

Scott

Stiles still has no idea what to put there. There’s too much history, too much of himself entwined with Scott. Stiles has never known how to separate them.

He turns the page again, trying not to get caught up in it. He sits on the floor with his back against the window seat, looking across the room at the messy bed he was snuggled in for most of the morning. It makes him feel a little calmer. He sees Peter’s poetry book sitting on the nightstand and remembers how he wanted to write about Peter. Poetry is all about emotion, right? He has plenty of that coursing through him right now. He grabs his pen, starting to write. It’s stilted and unsure but authentic.

I walked in the dark since I was a child
Never knowing quite which direction to turn
The trees grew around me, the moon casting shadows
But I never could find those fireflies again

I stumbled on tree roots, hit back by low branches
I made my mistakes and I paid for them too
I never could work out how to do the right thing
But being a good boy is easy when it’s for you

You took me in and made me safe and gave me rules to follow
You handed the fireflies back to me
You loved me, you grew me, you nurtured my heart
You made me feel worthy again

You hold me so tight and you make the world spin
My head getting dizzy, my knees getting weak
I know I can trust you to keep me in orbit
Your moon, your satellite, your shadow, your boy

He looks over the words and smiles irresistibly, feeling like he might burst. He wants to show it to Peter but the thought makes him far too vulnerable. Maybe another day. Right now, everything in his journal is private so he keeps it to himself.

After dinner, Peter suggests that they play chess. Right now, if he suggested that they go and commit murder together, Stiles would probably go along with it. They sit at opposite sides of the table, the game giving Stiles a sharper focus than he feels like he’s had all day. He’s been acting pathetic and Peter has taken it like a champ, has soothed him and shown him nothing but patience, but this isn’t what he signed up for. Stiles feels more capable as he moves the pieces around the board, figuring out his next move, and that makes him feel like a better Companion. The etiquette classes might still be lacking, but he can be good company when it counts. He can be what Peter wants.

Peter’s phone buzzes in his pocket, jarring Stiles out of the game. He knows that Peter talks to other people, he’s not an idiot, but they’ve never invaded their time together before. Peter takes out his phone, looking at it and giving a little huff before he types out a response, placing it on the table beside him and focussing back on the game.

“Everything okay?” Stiles asks. He’s sure he’s not supposed to, but that’s a vague and supportive enough question to ask, isn’t it?

“Work,” Peter replies dismissively, moving his knight.

Stiles nods, considering his next move. Before he can decide which strategy is better, Peter’s phone is buzzing again, lighting up beside him. Peter looks irritated as he picks it up, reading the message. He rolls his eyes, placing the phone down on the table with a little more force than seems strictly necessary.

“I’m sorry, baby, I have to go email something,” he says. “Everyone I work with is a fucking idiot.”

“I know that feeling,” Stiles responds. “It’s fine. I’m still working on my move.”

Peter gives him a tight smile and heads through to his office. Stiles listens to him typing on his laptop as he stares down at his board before his eyes are drawn to the phone that Peter left sitting
there. The screen is still lit up. Stiles instinctively grabs it before it can lock, touching the screen to keep it awake. He stares at it, not even sure what he’s going to do. Peter’s wallpaper is a photograph of a creek in the woods, stepping stones across it, and Stiles wonders if it’s around here. It feels like the most intimate insight he’s gotten into Peter and it fills him with joy.

He didn’t pick up the phone to look at the wallpaper though, he knows that. He glances at the office doorway, the sound of Peter typing still filtering through, and opens up the messaging app. He opens a blank message and types in Scott’s number without even having to think about it. Stiles was always losing or breaking his phone, he had to add these digits to his phonebook again and again over the years so he knows it by heart. It makes him feel so happy to see the numbers there, like a secret key to the universe.

Stiles doesn’t have to write a letter in a journal, doesn’t have to deal with all those feelings that he can’t reconcile. All he has to do is send Scott a text, tell him that he’s okay, put his mind at rest. That would be closure, something they could both understand, something they’d come to accept. He just has to work out how to put it into words.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

Stiles winces at the severity of Peter’s voice before the phone is snatched out of his hand. He cowers back. “I’m sorry. Daddy, I’m sorry.”

Peter is staring at the phone, incredibly still. He looks dangerous and volatile. Stiles has never seen him as such a threat.

“Whose number is this?” Peter asks, his voice carefully measured.

“Scott’s,” Stiles admits.

Peter closes his eyes for a moment, clearly seething. “Of course it is.” When he looks down at Stiles, there’s pure loathing in his eyes. “Corner. Now. Thirty-six minutes.”

Stiles feels the tears spring to his eyes, his world crumbling around him. “But…”

“I swear to god, Stiles, if you say one more word to me you’re going to be there for the rest of the night,” Peter spits out. “Corner. Now.”

The fear rolls through Stiles as he gets shakily to his feet. He doesn’t understand where his reasonable, comforting Daddy has gone. When Stiles was upset earlier, Peter seemed like he was willing to move the world for him. Now he can barely stand to look at him. Stiles fucked up, but he doesn’t think he deserves this much wrath.

He kneels down in the corner and Peter doesn’t say the rules again but Stiles knows them. No moving. No talking. Think about what you’ve done. Stiles thinks. He thinks about Scott looking for him. He thinks about Scott hurting while he missed him. Stiles was just trying to do a nice thing.

He squeezes his eyes shut, feeling torn apart. It all comes down to Peter not trusting him. Stiles can hear him, pacing up and down the room behind him, liked a caged animal. Stiles half-expects to be struck. He hates that he’s done that to Peter, that he’s upset the balance this much, but if Peter just let him explain then he would. He has to do his time first though.

When Peter finally sits down, something calms inside Stiles. He feels like this time out was as much for Peter as it was for him, to let him settle his anger before it turned into a confrontation. Stiles can appreciate that. He can be a good boy, be what Daddy needs. He wants to crawl over to
him now, put his head in Peter’s lap, let himself be petted. He hates being shut off from Peter. He hates being treated like less than, even if it’s true, because Peter doesn’t treat him like that. He knows that he still has a lot to learn and he’s eager to do that, but this is such a dumb idiotic mistake and he gets that. He doesn’t need to sit in a corner for thirty-six minutes to work it out.

His feet go numb and he wants to shift, but he daren’t so much as wiggle his toes. He doesn’t know how long it’s been but he can’t stand the thought of starting over and having to do it all again. He must be nearly there by now. He breathes, keeping himself still but for the rise and fall of his chest, trying to stay calm. The emotion that threatens to consume him isn’t remorse though. If anything, it’s indignation. Peter still thinks he’s looking for help, that he’s going to run. Stiles doesn’t know what else he can do to prove to him that he won’t. He’s been good for so long but Peter still sees him as a flight risk that has to be tied down. That means he doesn’t understand the depth of Stiles’ feelings for him. If that’s true then maybe none of it’s real.

The timer sounds and Stiles feels a tear roll down his cheek but he doesn’t move. He waits. He hears Peter move behind him, getting up, and then his hand in on Stiles’ shoulder, warm and solid, and Stiles just wants to fold.

“Turn around, baby,” he says, voice worn down and exhausted.

Stiles turns, sitting down against the wall, his knees clicking as he moves. He winces, finally wriggling his toes.

Peter crouches in front of him, wiping the tear from his cheek. “Why did you get put in time out, sweetheart?”

“Because I touched your phone and I shouldn’t have done that,” Stiles says. He looks up at Peter. “That’s not a rule though. You never said that was a rule.”

Peter raises his eyebrows at him, something shifting in his face. “Did you imagine I’d be pleased about it?”

“No,” Stiles allows. “But I didn’t break a rule.” He’s not being defiant, keeping his voice level, he’s just stating a fact.

“It’s not a rule, but what do you suppose would happen if you punched me in a face?” Peter asks tightly. “You’re a smart boy, Stiles, I shouldn’t have to spell it out for you.”

Stiles sags. “I’m sorry. I am. I shouldn’t have done it. But you don’t understand. I was only going to text him to tell him I was okay. He’s going to be worried about me and he’s going to be looking for me and I wanted him to stop.”

“Okay, let’s just play out that scenario, shall we,” Peter says. “Scott, True Alpha, receives a text message from an unknown number purportedly from his missing best friend saying that everything’s fine and he should stop looking for him. You know him better than me, Stiles. What does he do next?”

Stiles looks down. When it’s laid out like that, of course Scott’s not going to buy it.

“I’ll just run with it, shall I?” Peter says. “He’s going to do some research into my number. He’s going to find me or he’s going to trace the number but either way he’ll come knocking on this door, or maybe kicking it in. And when you tell him that it really was you and you really are happy, do you think he’s going to accept that? Do you think he’s going to just walk away and leave you here for some happy ever after?”
Stiles shakes his head, hugging himself.

Peter slumps down on the floor in front of him, reaching out to grip hold of his arm. “He’s going to want to take you away from me. Is that what you want?”

Stiles looks up at him. “No, Daddy.”

“Then you can’t talk to him,” Peter says.

“He’s my best friend,” Stiles says. “He’s my Alpha.”

Peter tightens his hold on Stiles’ arm until it hurts. “I am your Alpha.”

Stiles just stares at him. He accepts Peter as his Daddy, as his family, as his life partner, but somehow it doesn’t feel like pack. Maybe that’s why he can’t let go of Scott. He shares a bond with Stiles that Peter can’t replace. Stiles knows that isn’t strictly true though. He unfurls his arms from around himself, Peter’s hand dropping away as he watches him. Stiles reaches forward, offering up his wrist.

“Give me the bite,” he says. “Then you’ll be my Alpha.”

Peter looks at the delicate skin offered out to him with something like regret. “I don’t think now’s the time, sweetheart. You’re shaking.”

Stiles looks down at himself. It’s true. That doesn’t mean he wants it any less.

Peter takes hold of his wrist, placing a kiss against the flesh before handing Stiles’ arm back to him. He looks up at him with renewed focus. “Baby, why did you get put in time out?”

Stiles sighs, playing with his own wrist, watching the blood pulsing beneath it. One bite. That’s all it would take. Stiles could be cured of all the niggles that are holding him back.

“Baby,” Peter prompts.


“What does Daddy know best?” Peter asks.

“How to keep me safe,” Stiles says. “How to keep us together. How to stop anyone else trying to tear us apart.”

“What does Scott want?” Peter asks.

Stiles blinks back the tears. “He wants to tear us apart.”

Peter nods, looking proud. “Come and give me a hug.”

Stiles moves forward, wrapped instantly in an all-consuming hug. There’s something in the way that Peter holds him that feels different. Peter’s hands cling to him instead of soothing over his flesh, his head tucked into Stiles like he can’t get close enough. This isn’t just about offering comfort, it’s needing to be comforted too. Stiles has never seen this side of Peter before and he feels guilt that his actions have reduced him to this but he also feels validation. They have the power to do this to each other and that means they’re in it together.

When Peter finally pulls away, he smooths back Stiles’ hair just like he always does, as though the
world is righting itself again.

“I think we should call it a night,” Peter says. “How about I give you your bath, baby?”

“Yes, please,” Stiles responds softly.

“With Daddy?” Peter asks, and he is asking, checking, almost cautiously.

“Sounds perfect,” Stiles says honestly.

They hold hands up the stairs until Peter lets go of him in the bathroom doorway. Stiles watches him fill the bath, put in the special drops that make him smell like Daddy’s, and he leans against the doorframe, feeling a little bit high.

When the bath is ready, Peter strips Stiles and then undresses himself, guiding him into the bath. They settle in the warm water, Stiles’ back against Peter’s chest, Peter’s hands moving through the water and making it play against Stiles’ skin. After a while he starts to trail his fingertips across his flesh, a ticklish sensation that makes him shift against Peter, and then he’s pressing his palms against Stiles, caressing him for real, and Stiles’ can’t help the little moan that escapes him.

Peter reaches down, between Stiles’ thighs that he readily opens for him, fingertips sliding over his hole, cleaning away the lube that’s been sticky rather than slick for most of the day. Stiles whines, lifting his hips.

“We got a little side-tracked, didn’t we?” Peter says, voice thoughtful. “Never got to take advantage of this.”

“I’m sorry,” Stiles says. He been a series of disasters today. He’s lucky his Daddy is still being so nice to him.

“You have nothing to apologise for,” Peter assures him. “It’s been quite the rollercoaster though, hasn’t it?”

“Mmmhmm,” Stiles agrees, struggling to concentrate with Peter’s fingers still playing against his ass.

“We’ll have a nice normal day tomorrow,” Peter promises. He trails his hand back up, fondling Stiles’ cock almost idly. “But, for right now, how about a nice little orgasm, hmm? Does baby want that?”

Stiles feels a shiver go through his body, his cock already hardening under Peter’s teasing touch. “Yes, please, Daddy,” he sighs.

“Relax, baby,” Peter says. “Daddy’s going to take care of you.”

“Always,” Stiles says.

“Always,” Peter agrees.

He wraps his hand around Stiles’ cock, starting to stroke him beneath the water. Everything feels sluggish, slowed down, like a dream. The water drags, rippling over his cock, down his body, touching him everywhere. He tips his head back against Peter’s shoulder, arches his back, lost to the sensations. He forgets the desperation of earlier, when he’d been cut short, but his body catches up quickly, taking him to that beautiful edge, and it doesn’t occur to him that Peter won’t let him fall this time. He nestles within the feeling, the heat that courses through his body, how natural it
feels already to have Peter touch him like this. Stiles had begun to believe that he didn’t deserve this, that he was going to be the single person at every gathering for the rest of his life, but Peter took him in and proved him wrong. He showed him how much he’s worth.

Stiles comes with a shudder and a whimper, clouding the water as Peter strokes him through it. He hugs Peter’s arms around himself, shaky as he comes down. He’s weightless in the water, grounded only by Peter, his anchor.

Chapter End Notes

This self-imposed posting schedule that I’ve been keeping up with has been really stressful for me, it takes up my whole weekend and I ended up in a full blown panic attack last night so I’ve decided I’m giving myself next week off to get a little room to breathe. It’s a frustrating point in the story to take a break because I’m really eager to get into what comes next so I’ll probably end up writing anyway, but I’m not promising the next chapter until June 3rd. If it comes earlier, it comes earlier. Thanks so much to everyone for the support, it means the world to me <3
Stiles sits in the window seat, trying not to fidget. He needs to be a good boy. The last couple of days have been settled and Peter has all but doted on him. Stiles has been so content, having his Daddy’s attention, no distractions from the outside world. That all falls apart today though. Peter has to go to work.

Stiles tries to be reasonable about it. Peter has responsibilities outside of Stiles and Stiles respects that. He likes their little routine though, likes the predictability of their days, likes knowing that Peter is right there to take care of him if Stiles crumbles. Stiles isn’t going to crumble though. He’s going to be strong for his Daddy. This is part of their routine too, this one day where Stiles feels like he’s going to tear apart. It’s only until the summer. After that, Peter will be his forever.

He leans against the window and stares out at the trees, at the world that’s going to take Peter away from him. He presses his forehead against the cool glass and pushes the thought away. He needs to stop being such a brat. Peter has been so good to him and Stiles needs to pay him back.

He thinks about the way that Peter woke him the morning after his aborted text to Scott. He forgave him even though Stiles wasn’t sure if he deserved it, his hand stroking Stiles' cock inside his pants while he peppered kisses against the back of his neck. He made Stiles come like that, all sleepy and ethereal, and Stiles didn’t even mind that he had to wear his come stained pants all day. That was what Daddy wanted, and Stiles wanted what Daddy wanted.

Later in the day, they made out on the couch, Peter’s body weighing him down as he kissed him so deep and thorough that Stiles forgot anything existed except for him. Peter ground down against him until Stiles was a panting mess, and then he took his cock out and had Stiles jerk him off until he came. Stiles would have once said that jerking off was his specialist subject, but doing it to someone else was different, especially someone like Peter who knew what he wanted and had enough experience to not settle for anything less. Stiles got the job done though, feeling so proud when Peter came over his hand and his T-shirt. Stiles wasn’t allowed to change that either.

Stiles didn’t get to come that time, but Peter held him until he calmed down, rocking him and soothing him and making him feel so precious. Once the edge was gone, it felt like a better reward than an orgasm anyway.

Yesterday, Peter brought him up to their bedroom and had him kneel. He took out his cock and offered it up, sliding a hand into Stiles’ hair. As Stiles parted his lips, Peter’s hand tightened, holding him still as he slipped his cock into his mouth. Stiles couldn’t move as Peter thrust into his mouth, gentle and shallow at first, but the more Stiles relaxed, the deeper he’d go, until he was fucking his throat and Stiles was just gazing up at him with tears in his eyes. The way Peter was looking back at him, the way he had absolute control over Stiles’ body, it made something click in his mind and it felt like an out of body experience.

When Peter came down his throat, Stiles swallowed every drop, and then Peter let him stay there a little while longer, just suckling on him. He pulled back, his cock slipping from Stiles’ mouth as Peter caressed his cheek, looking at him with such adoration. He reached down, scooping Stiles up effortlessly in his arms before placing him gently on the bed. He stripped him and kissed every part of his body until Stiles was a writhing, shivery mess, and then he made him come. He held Stiles for a long time afterward while the fireflies filled his head, and Stiles had never been so sure that he was loved.

That’s what Stiles needs to remember. Peter loves him. Peter would never leave him unless he had
to. When he comes back, he’s doubtlessly going to spoil Stiles rotten again.

Stiles lifts his head as Peter comes into the room. He watches him place the tray with Stiles’ lunch on the dresser, Stiles forcing himself to smile as he looks over. Peter picks up a digital timer from the tray, one of the ones he used when he was cooking for the dinner party, fiddling with it as he walks over to join him on the window seat. Stiles pulls his legs out of the way so Peter can sit beside him.

“Daddy has a job for you to do today,” Peter says, looking up at him with a little sparkle in his eye.

“A job with the timer?” Stiles asks.

Peter smiles. “I’m going to set this for one hour. When it goes off, you are going to touch yourself, wrap your hand around your cock, use the lube if you want, fuck yourself on your fingers, whatever feels good. You’re going to get yourself nice and turned on for Daddy, get yourself right to the brink of that orgasm, and then you’re going to stop.”

Stiles blinks at him, his arousal stalling. “Stop?”

“You’re going to stop,” Peter says firmly, all light heartedness stripped from his voice. “Then you’re going to set this timer for two hours, you’re going to do whatever it is you want to do, study or read your comics or play a game. But when that timer goes off, you stop, and you work yourself up all over again. Right to the brink.”

“And then stop?” Stiles asks uncertainly.

Peter smiles at him, pleased. “And then you stop. You set the timer for another two hours. When it goes off, you do it all again. I want you on the cycle all day until Daddy comes home. You should be able to get five or six rounds in, depending on traffic and how long I spend in the city.”

“So,” Stiles says, frowning. “I’m not supposed to come?”

“You’re not allowed to come,” Peter says. “I want to be very clear on that and I’ll know if you do, even if you clean yourself up. And if you come without permission, Daddy is going to be very upset. We’re going to have to escalate that above corner time.”

Stiles shakes his head instinctively. He doesn’t know what could be worse that getting put in the corner, being shut off from his Daddy, being a disappointment.

“But that doesn’t mean you just get yourself hard and you quit,” Peter says. “I want you to find that limit for me, that’s what it’s all about. I want you to learn discipline with yourself and I want you to learn about your body, what it can take, get familiar with that edge without falling off it. Daddy has big plans for you, baby, but you need to learn these lessons first. Do you want to learn?”

Stiles nods his head. He wants to learn, wants to be moulded, wants to be perfect.

“Daddy’s going to teach you,” Peter says. “Daddy’s going to train you.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says, his toes curling with the intensity of Peter’s gaze.

Peter presses the button to start the timer, passing it over. “There you go then.”

Stiles watches the seconds ticking away, anticipation building.

“A couple more things,” Peter says. “First, you can have extra gaming time because I’m leaving
you alone all day. When Daddy works, you get two hours if you want them. Second, you got a lot of presents last week because you didn’t have anything yet and Daddy wants you to feel settled here. You won’t be getting that much every time I go to work so don’t get your hopes up. I am getting you a few things though, things I think you’ll like and that are going to help with your training.”

Stiles smiles. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter leans in, nuzzling at his temple. “You are such a sweet boy. Be good today. Use your timer. Find those limits for me, okay? Learn your body. Once you do that, we can do all kinds of things to it.”

Stiles chews on his lip, his dick half-hard, pointedly so through the soft material of his pants. “Okay.”

Peter kisses him, dragging their lips together, never quite giving him enough. Then he bends down, placing a chaste kiss against the bulge in Stiles’ pants. “You’re not allowed to touch that until the timer goes off.”

“I won’t,” Stiles promises. The thought didn’t even occur to him.

“I’ll see you this evening, beautiful,” Peter says, getting to his feet.

“Goodbye, Daddy,” Stiles says sweetly, waving to him as he leaves the room.

It still hurts when he hears the front door closing behind Peter, when he hears the car drive away, but his task gives him a sense of purpose. He’s still serving Peter all day, he’s still being a good boy for him, even when he’s not here. He feels giddy at the prospect. He gets up, grabbing his cookie from the tray and taking it back to the window seat with his comics, settling in until the first alarm goes off.

He nibbles on his cookie as he reads, trying to lose himself in the little world, but he’s glancing up at the timer every couple of minutes. It seems to take forever. When there’s only two minutes left he puts his comic aside, picking it up and staring at it. Two minutes is a very long time. When it gets down to twenty seconds he starts tapping his fingers restlessly against the casing. It sends a little thrill through him as it finally beeps, silencing it before he gets to his feet.

He lays out on the bed, wanting to be comfortable, wanting to enjoy himself. This is about discovery and pleasure and pushing himself. He can’t wait.

His cock didn’t go soft the whole hour he was waiting, and he reaches down a hand, squeezing himself through his pants, through the kiss that Peter left there for him. He bites down on his lip with a whine, hips lifting from the bed. He massages himself, his cock getting hard under his touch, straining up against him. He could probably get this over with so quickly if he wanted to but that’s not the point. He has a job to do. He wants to make Daddy proud.

He pushes down his pants, freeing one leg and letting them catch on the cuff of the other ankle. He spreads his legs, taking his cock in his hand and stroking it gently, warming himself up. He doesn’t need it, his body is screaming at him, but he’s not going to give in to that primal urge. He’s going to do it right.

He would have been ashamed of this, being so exposed, but he feels perfectly comfortable on display now. It’s not just the fact that he has the house to himself, that there’s no chance anyone is going to walk in and interrupt him. Peter has made him comfortable with his own body, with his
sexuality, and he has nothing to hide. He’s doing a good thing and Peter always tells him he’s beautiful while he does it. Stiles doesn’t want to disrespect him by not living up to that.

His body moves fluidly with his hands, hips riding upwards into his touch. He’s already leaking, smearing the precome down his length. He thinks about using the lube but he wants to do this one dry, or as dry as he’s capable of being, which usually isn’t very. He wants to do it naturally this time though, no aids, just him and his hands, like old times. Peter wants him to learn about his body and so Stiles thinks he should try something different each time. One vanilla, one with lube, one with fingers inside himself, maybe mix it up and try some different positions. He wants to know how his body responds to a variety of stimuli and see what works best for him.

No matter how slow he goes, he can feel himself getting close already, but he’s pretty sure it’s from the mental stimulation rather than the physical. He likes the idea of what he’s doing too much. He likes that Peter wants him to do it, knows that he’s doing it. If he looks at his clock now he’ll know that Stiles’ timer has gone off, that he’ll be touching himself. It makes Stiles cock pulse in his hand, a moan escaping his lips. He’s supposed to be focussing on his body though. He’s supposed to be feeling.

He closes his eyes, concentrates on his fingers wrapped around his cock. They’re wet with precome, sliding up and down, twisting at the head to send a little jolt of pleasure through his body with every stroke. It feels good. It feels familiar, well worn. He’s not sure if that’s what he’s supposed to be doing. He has to start somewhere though. Lead with what you know and the rest will follow.

The skin of his cock feels hot, taut, his balls drawing up in anticipation. There’s heat and tightness in his belly, winding up like a red-hot coil threatening to sear right through him. He’s sweaty, sensitive all over, aware of the way the sheets cling to his back. His head feels heavy and light at the same time, ready to drown him in waves of sensation when he tips over.

He gets so carried away with it, the momentum building, that he almost forgets what he’s doing. He’s about to let himself tumble headlong over the edge when his eyes fly open and he grips down on his cock too hard. No orgasm. He doesn’t want to get punished. He wants to do this right and learn Peter’s lesson.

He thinks about stopping but he’s not sure if that’s following the rules. It’s not about teasing, it’s about pushing to the limit. He can take a little more. He can get closer. He loosens his grip and starts stroking himself again, his breaths shallow as he concentrates on what he’s doing, feeling the pleasure build. He could get there in seconds from here. He could wait too though. He wants to know how long.

He holds his body still, moving only his hand, trying to feel everything, notice every bit of tension waiting for release. He won’t let it happen though. He’ll catch it in time. That heat in his belly is growing, pressure building inside him, his hand starting to lose its rhythm. He’s almost there, his fingertips practically on it, but as he feels a rush of something he pulls his hand away, his whole body seeming to throb.

It’s too much and for a second he thinks he might come anyway, even though he’s not touching himself. It subsides though, the urgency bleeds back into want and want he can deny. Within reason. He takes deep breaths, pressing his palms into the bed beside him to stop himself touching. He’s a good boy. He’s Daddy’s good little boy. He can learn control.

He still feels hazy as he opens his eyes, making a little noise against the assault of sensations that wrack his body. The timer is on the bed beside him where he dropped it and he picks it up, shaking fingers pressing on the buttons, making another two hours count down. Maybe by then he’ll be
able to breathe properly again.

It’s a strange feeling, wanting so badly and yet being disconnected from it. It’s not his to have and so he knows he won’t take it but there’s a primal part of his brain that doesn’t understand, that sends out the signals for his body to rut. He’s never felt more animal. Is this what it’s like to have a wolf inside you? Stiles imagines sharp teeth biting into soft flesh. Maybe Peter will let him find out one day.

When his body finally calms he redresses himself, sitting cross legged on the bed and wondering what to do next. His entire consciousness is taken up with his task. He wants to just exist for the next two hours so that he can keep working on the lesson that Peter has set for him. He thinks again of Peter, wherever he is, knowing what his little boy is up to.

Usually his first task after breakfast is yoga and so he decides to roll out his mat, turning on the TV. Body awareness is what today is all about and so this can only help. He goes through his routine, almost not needing the DVD now. He can do nearly all the moves, though not as well as Blondie, but he’s working on it. He wants to be toned and balanced and gorgeous for Peter. And flexible. So flexible. He wants to be bent over and fucked in every position Peter can think of. His cock gives an interested throb and he takes a breath, refocussing his energy into what he’s doing. He doesn’t get fucked until he’s finished his training so Stiles is going to be a model student. He’s going to ace it.

When he finishes the routine, the tension eased from his body, he still has forty minutes to go. He sighs, rolling up his mat and putting it away. He goes back to his comics, finishing the one he started earlier, getting into the next one when the timer finally beeps at him. He turns it off, returning to the bed, opening up the drawer in Peter’s nightstand and taking out the lube.

He takes off his pants again as best he can, dribbling lube over his fingers before wrapping them around his dick. He groans at the feel of it, already so sensitive. He hardens easily, hand gliding as he strokes himself, that wonderful sensation that Peter taught him about. He’s given him so much. Stiles lets that gratitude settle into his arousal, the slick slide narrowing down his focus until he’s not sure if he’s breathing.

It builds again so quickly, his body never really calmed, just waiting, like pressing the snooze button. He sinks into it, all of those sensations doubling back on him again, the heat and the pressure and the need. It’s not a need though, Stiles corrects, it’s a want. The line is starting to blur though and he’s already uncomfortably turned on. He’s not focussing on all those little tells anymore, he’s just trying to hold on. He wanted a slow build but that’s impossible when he’s already run through the motions once and he whines, thinking about having to do it again, having to keep doing it. He wants that voyage of discovery he had the first time but his body doesn’t care about that when it’s already on the edge and his mind is too busy drowning in lust to listen to reason.

He takes a breath, tries to get himself back under control, he can’t lose it this early when he has so much further to go. He focusses on his hand, on the lube, on his cock, on every molecule that touches between them. It’s good. Wet and hot and dirty and good. That’s an observation. He’s still learning. Lube is more like… like fucking? He doesn’t know. He’ll probably never know. He hadn’t quite had that realisation yet. So long as Peter takes care of him though, he doesn’t care. He grips himself harder, hips pushing up into his touch, and there it is, that pressure, that sharp as lightening pleasure that’s going to tear him apart.

He pulls his hand away, a sob ripping through him. This isn’t fun anymore. Can he safeword if Peter isn’t here? Can he explain that to him later? Will he still get punished? He’s not there yet but
three more times, four maybe. He doesn’t know if he can do it. His body is confused, shaky and
delicate, like the come down from a panic attack when the adrenaline starts to settle and it makes
you feel sick.

He pushes the thought away. He’s fine. It’s just jerking off. His whole equilibrium feels fucked
though and he doesn’t know how to get it back. His eyes fall on the timer and he swallows
solemnly, wiping his sticky hand down on the sheets. He knows what he has to do. Two hours is a
long time. In two hours he can get himself back on an even level. He sets the timer and tosses it
aside, instantly feeling bad for his carelessness. Peter gave that to him and he’s not treating it with
respect. He’s acting like a brat. Peter would be so disappointed.

Stiles sits up, righting his pants before going over to his PS4 and switching out the yoga DVD for
Skyrim. He’s allowed two hours. That will fill the gap until the timer goes off, give him something
else to focus his mind on. He can do this. He brings the controller over to the bed, instinctively
going to lie on his stomach like he usually does before he becomes too aware of his body. His cock
is still half-hard and too sensitive. He sits cross-legged instead, loading up his save.

The game is a good distraction, even as his body still thrums. After the first hour he’s settled
enough that he can get into his usual gaming position, trying not to let his hips fidget as he gets
comfortable. He plays through his mission, exploring the world, living through his character. He’s
always wanted to play this game, he’s heard the hype, and he’s so grateful beyond words that Peter
got it for him. He never had anything this nice back home. This is home now though. He doesn’t
ever have to think about anything else.

The timer makes him jump when it beeps beside him, pausing his game before grabbing it. He’s
not in the mood. Or maybe he’s too much in the mood to not finish. Either way, he’d rather just
play his game and forget he even has a physical body. He sighs. He’s being so fucking dramatic.
He used to come twice a day, at least, touching himself for a third time isn’t exactly unheard of.
The keyword is *come* though, not whatever erotic torture this is.

He saves his game and then lies back on the bed, shoving his pants off as he grabs the lube. If he
leaves his cock alone, focussing on his ass for a while, maybe that will feel better. He can’t come
from that anyway, so even if it’s frustrating, it won’t have the same level of challenge. He slicks
his fingers and trails them back, closing his eyes as he plays with his hole. It’s a sensation he loves,
but he prefers it when Peter does it. Peter knows Stiles’ body better than he does. Maybe that’s the
point though. Stiles is supposed to learn.

He dips a finger inside, his body responding so easily. He feels taken apart and he wishes Peter
was here because he always knows how to guide him through this. He’d stroke his hair and call
him a good boy and tell him how well he was doing, that he could take a little more, that
everything was okay. Peter trusts him to do this on his own though so that means that Peter *does*
think he can handle it. Stiles isn’t going to let him down.

He starts to rock his finger inside himself, working it deeper. He’s tight but there’s a give, relaxing
into his own touch as his hips move with him, finding a better angle. The muscles around him are
soft and warm, the slickness of lube making everything silky and fluid. This is what Peter feels
when he does this to him. It feels nice. It feels welcoming and he doesn’t know how Peter has the
self-control to not thrust his cock in here, especially when Stiles is begging for it. Soon, he assures
himself. He’s being so good. There can’t be that much more training, can there?

His whole body moves in waves with his finger, like it instinctively knows what it wants. It feels so
good, so intimate, to be touched from the inside. Everything is so sensitive, all those nerve endings,
like his body is designed just for this. He imagines his training over, Peter not having to work
anymore, being the centre of his attention. He imagines being in bed with him for hours, getting fucked long and slow, being so deeply, intimately connected to him. He presses in another finger, keens as he feels the stretch, imagines how it will feel when this is Peter’s cock, burning hot and so hard, owning every single inch of his body, claiming it as his own.

It makes a shudder go through him, makes him push his fingers deep as his other hand grabs instinctively for his cock. He moans, back arching, and he almost loses himself to it before he remembers that this isn’t about his pleasure. It’s about something much more important than that.

He breathes in, concentrating on the way his skin heats and prickles, his brain going into soft focus. He concentrates on the pressure that’s building already, like a hard knot low in his abdomen. His cock is so sensitive, swollen and straining, his ass tightening around his fingers at the too sharp pleasure as he strokes himself. He presses deeper, curls them like Peter did to find his prostate, but he doesn’t have the right angle or he’s not deep enough and he makes a frustrated little noise. It’s probably for the best though. He’s not sure how much more he can take.

His entire body trembles, his orgasm brushing against his fingertips, making his muscles jerky like his brain can’t quite keep up. It feels like it’s full of static, tickling at the inside of his skull. He grips his dick, fucks himself on his fingers a little harder, feels that wonderful build as it crests and then he pulls his hands away, fingers catch on his hole in his haste, making him wince. He just needs to stop touching himself. He needs to be left alone.

A tear falls down his temple as he presses his palms into the bed beside him again, a reset button for his body to just stop. It doesn’t listen at first, he can still feel those waves, and for a moment he thinks maybe he can do it untouched, maybe he can come just like this. The brain is the biggest sex organ in the body and he’s too close to pull back now.

It ebbs though, seeping away from his grasp, and he squeezes his eyes shut, letting out a sob. His cock throbs painfully, still so hard, his ass clenching around nothing. He grits his teeth, fingers curling into fists in the sheets beside him, but he reminds himself that he needs to relax. He needs to let it go. He flattens out his hands, taking deep, even breaths, pulling them in and pushing them out. He’s giving his body what it needs, even if it’s not what it wants. That comes later. He hopes.

As he starts to feel like he has control of himself again, like he’s controlling his body and not the other way around, he rolls onto his side, curling into a ball and hugging himself. He feels shivery, feverish, the sweat cooling on his heated skin. He feels vulnerable and taken over but Peter isn’t here to make it better, to make it okay. Stiles wishes he could call him, that he could just talk to him for one minute so that Peter could reassure him. He knows what Peter would do though. He’d wrap him up and he’d tell him how proud he was and he’d assure him he could take more than this if he put his mind to it.

Stiles moves, lifting up the blankets and seeing the timer lying there. Right. He’s supposed to reset it now. He sighs, pulling it closer to him as he puts another two hours on the ticking clock. He climbs under the blankets, burritoing himself up in them so that all he can feel is warmth and pressure. It’s not as good as being held in his Daddy’s arm, but it makes him feel calm and safe. He closes his eyes, pressing his face into Peter’s pillow, making sure he smells like him.

He’s not sure if he falls asleep but he definitely checks out. There’s no fireflies, no floating, he thinks maybe he needs his Daddy for that, but he switches off from his body, gains some distance from the deep down ache that makes him want to claw at his own skin.

When the timer cuts through it all he whines, working out a hand to shut it up. He lets it fall heavily onto the bed. He really doesn’t want to touch himself. Not unless he gets to come. This relentless torture is going to kill him.
He sighs. Peter isn’t doing this to make him miserable, he’s not trying to upset him. This is supposed to be a positive task, a chance to connect with himself, and he’s being such a total brat about it. He’s never going to get to the end of his training if he acts like this. He’s never going to learn everything Peter has to teach him. That means he’s never going to get fucked, and just that threat is all the motivation Stiles needs.

He rolls onto his stomach, grinding against the bed, trying to let his body just move on instinct. He’s too exhausted to focus on the whys and hows right now. He grips the pillow in his hand, giving a broken little moan as he rubs his dick against Peter’s expensive sheets, so soft, ridiculously high thread count, and it feels so good but he’s sore. His dick is raw, his pelvic muscles overworked from holding back. It’s a knife edge, balanced between pain and pleasure, and he knows that he’s about to get his orgasm torn away from him again. It makes it hard to even care about what he’s doing.

He circles his hips, gets some good friction, imagines being pinned here by Peter, his dick buried inside him. That makes him moan, full and deep. That’s what he’s working for, he reminds himself. That’s the prize. He feels something shift inside him, tilting his hips so that he’s presenting himself without losing contact with the bed. This would be such a good position, he’s sure of it. He loves when he can’t move for Peter, when he has total control of his body, when he physically and mentally and emotionally dominates him. That’s what he’s doing now, Stiles tells himself. He’s doing Peter’s bidding. He’s being his good little boy.

He pushes up onto his knees, sliding his hand beneath him to wrap around his cock. It jumps in his hand, needy and desperate, just like him. He whines, gripping tight and then loosening his hold, trying to find something that works. He imagines Peter’s hands on his hips, holding him there while he fucks him. He imagines Peter’s hand on his cock. He’s leaking precome but there’s still so much friction, bringing tears to his eyes. That pressure is back in his head, his groin, already teetering on the edge. He grips the pillow tighter, his knuckles turning white, trying to force himself to keep going. This is about limits, and it’s not a limit if you just quit.

It’s too much though, his whole body flushed and sweat soaked, feeling like it’s going to burst. He manages two more strokes before he rips his hand away from his cock, panting and shaking and trying not to cry. He stays there a long time, ass in the air, back arched, face crushed into the pillow. He hates everything about his existence. Except he doesn’t. Because he’s Peter’s. Daddy will be home soon to take care of him.

He pushes himself up onto his knees, dizzy as the blood pooling in his head suddenly vacates. He sways, taking deep breaths as it passes, trying to ignore the fact that his cock never seems to go flaccid anymore. He grabs the timer with resignation. Two more hours. Maybe Peter will be home before then. He looks at the clock. Maybe. Not likely though. He’s probably going to have to go again.

He climbs off the bed, walking on unsteady feet to the window seat. He’s naked from the waist down, dragging his pants with him, but he doesn’t even care. Dignity is not something he gives a fuck about right now. He scoops up his comics where he left them earlier, grabbing his MP3 player from his toy box and his sack lunch from on top of the dresser, taking them all back to the bed. Wolfy is on his nightstand and Stiles grabs him as well, pulling him close.

He reads his comic, snuggled up against Peter’s pillow, one hand idly playing with Wolfy’s fur in between nibbling on his food. He’s so soft and comforting. Stiles is glad he has him. He relaxes with all his comforts nearby, already getting used to the low level frustration that thrums through his body. He can feel it under his skin, in every muscle of his body, restless tension. It’s something he’s familiar with, his whole life felt like restless tension before, something that Peter has been
able to rid him of. Even then, when he lived his life in a state of constant anxiety, it never felt as physical as this. Stiles has spent plenty of time wanting to vibrate out of his own skin, but he never felt like it was actually going to happen.

He’s halfway through the last comic in his stash when the timer goes off. He glares at it. He just wants to be left alone. He tosses the comic aside with a sigh, shutting off the timer before he throws himself back in the bed. He slathers lube over his hand and then grabs his cock, getting right to it. If he has to do this then he’ll do it, but he doesn’t have the patience to analyse every second anymore. He doesn’t think he has anything left to learn beyond the fact that he hates being denied.

He grits his teeth, sliding his hand rapidly up and down his cock, trying to ignore the way it sets his entire body on edge. He needs to just get this over with. He jerks himself off like his dad’s going to call him down for dinner any second and he needs to have his orgasm and clean it up before he knocks on that door. He knows Peter wants him to move away from that, help him grow his sexuality into something much more meaningful, and maybe Stiles is failing him right now but he can’t handle all that slow and steady when he feels like he’s about to explode. His dick hurts, his balls hurt, his abdomen and his thighs that are shaking and quivering. He’s not strong enough to do this how Peter wants him to but he is doing it. That has to count for something.

He crests to the brink of his orgasm far too quickly, squeezing down on the base of his cock because he doesn’t think just stopping will be enough to push it away. He holds himself until it hurts, his insides feeling like they’re spasming, and by the time he feels safe to let go of himself, he’s crying.

With a sniffle he grabs the timer, praying to himself that Peter will be back before it goes off again. He wraps the blankets back around himself, turning himself into a burrito, and then he sticks his hand out, pulling Wolfy in with him. He closes his eyes and hugs him close, going to that place that’s not asleep or awake, where he can disconnect and let himself come down.

By the time he comes back to himself, his tacky fingers are sticking to Wolfy’s fur and he feels instantly horrible and dirty. He thought he wiped his hand off but clearly not well enough. He pouts, looking at the mess, and it’s only a little patch but it’s bad enough that he’s going to need washing. Stiles cleans his hand off better and then curls around him, reaching for his music.

He slips on his headphones, selecting his chillout playlist, but as the songs start to play he remembers the way he and Peter danced to them in the living room, their bodies pressed together, filled with intimacy. It turns Stiles on. He can’t handle being turned on right now. He switches over to some old favourites instead, music that was always playing in the background of his teenage years. It’s soothing, evoking something sun drenched and happy, even if his life was anything but. It wasn’t all that bad, but it’s so much better now.

When he hears the front door slam closed downstairs, feels it reverberate through him, he rips the headphones from his head, opening his eyes. Peter moves around downstairs, putting away groceries Stiles knows, and he tries to be patient, sitting up in bed, Wolfy still nestled against him. He fidgets, practically bouncing up and down, ears straining until he hears Peter on the stairs. He smiles, feeling something finally ease in him. Daddy’s home.

“Hey, baby,” Peter greets, coming into the room with a shopping bag. “You having a duvet day, sweetheart?”

Stiles glances down at himself. “I was, uh, doing my task. It was kind of intense.”

Peter sits on the edge of the bed. “Did baby play with himself so much he got all worn out?”
Stiles nods his head, feeling his cheeks heat.

“You’re a good boy,” Peter says, leaning over to place a kiss on his cheek. “Daddy’s very proud.”

Stiles sighs happily, his chest easing. That’s all he wanted.

Peter picks up the timer, looking at the display. “Forty-five minutes to spare.”

Stiles looks at the ticking numbers, feeling his stomach sink. “Do I still have to do that one?”

“Do you want to?” Peter asks.

Stiles twits his mouth. “Would I get to come this time?”

Peter smirks. “That’s not how it works, baby.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I don’t want to do it.”

“Okay,” Peter says easily. “Let’s just turn this off then,” he says, cancelling the remaining time. He puts it into his pocket and smiles at Stiles. “Come and give me a cuddle.”

Stiles moves over, pushing the covers back to clamber into Peter’s lap. Peter gathers him up and cradles him there, even as he looks amused at the state of him, pants still off and dangling from his cuff, sticky with lube and precome that Peter probably shouldn’t be letting him get near his expensive work clothes. He just rocks him gently in his lap though as Stiles closes his eyes and burrows into him, Wolfy still gripped in his hand.

“I suppose easy access was an advantage today,” Peter says, hand sliding down to grope Stiles’ bare ass. Stiles makes a little noise. “Maybe I should keep you like this all the time.”

Stiles pouts at him, lifting his head. He pulls his hand back to show him Wolfy. “I got lube on him. Will he wash?”

Peter takes it off him, holding it up to his nose and inhaling. “Lube and precome,” he comments. He leans in to smell Stiles’ neck. “You smell delectable, by the way. I could eat you up.”

“Yes please,” Stiles sighs, resting his head back down. He looks at Wolfy in Peter’s hand. “Will he wash?” he asks again.

Peter nods. “I’ll throw him in with these sheets you’ve been rolling around in all day. He’ll be fine.”

“Thank you, Daddy,” Stiles says.

Peter kisses his temple. “Let’s get you dressed. Then I’ll show you what Daddy bought you.”

Stiles smiles, letting Peter move him onto the bed, placing his feet into the pants for him. Peter pulls them up his legs and then pauses, taking in the sight of him. His cock is red and swollen, his balls heavy and tight.

“You look sore, baby,” Peter comments. Stiles just nods. Peter pulls the pants all the way up, Stiles lifting himself so that Peter can settle them on his hips. “Don’t worry,” he says. “Daddy’s going to make you come after dinner. Okay?”

Stiles licks his lips, nodding his head. “Thank you, Daddy.” His abused cock gives a throb. Stiles presses his thighs together.
“Present time,” Peter says, reaching into the bag. “I got you your comics, I know how baby likes those.”

Stiles grins, reaching out for them. “Thank you.”

“I also got you some lollipops,” Peter says, taking out a bag. “Sugar free, we don’t want you getting overexcited, but I thought they’d be good for you to work on strengthening those tongue and jaw muscles for Daddy. Keep that oral fixation in check too.”

Stiles takes the bag from him, chewing on his lip as his face heats again. It doesn’t mean he’s bad, it just means he can be better. That’s not an insult. Stiles wants to be perfect so he’s going to have to work for it.

“I also got you some sneakers,” Peter says casually, pulling them out of the bag. Stiles stares at them. He knows how much they must have cost. “So we can go for a little stroll in the woods,” Peter says.

“We can go outside?” Stiles asks, his heart beating faster in his chest.

“I think we can fit a little walk into our schedule,” Peter says. “And you’ve been such a good boy. You deserve to be happy. Daddy always wants you happy.”


“I love you too, baby,” Peter says, holding him tightly. “Just you and me.”

Stiles nods his head, clinging to him. Peter strokes his back, strong, firm movements that settle Stiles right down to his soul. He literally couldn’t want for any more. Peter kisses his temple and then eases him back, sitting him on the bed.

“Daddy got you one more thing,” he says. “This is for your training, it’s not for you to use by yourself. Daddy’s going to help you with it, okay?”

Stiles nods his head. Peter takes a wooden box out of the bag, handing it over to him. Stiles looks up at him, uncertain, but Peter just gives a little nod. Stiles unclasps the lock, opening it up like a book. It’s lined with something red and silky, probably actual silk knowing Peter, but set into each side is a variety of objects, all made from the same black material. Stiles swallows. He knows that they’re sex toys. Butt plugs. They vary in size from one not much wider than a finger to one that’s thicker than his cock. He reaches out to touch one of them, the material surprisingly soft, almost fleshlike.

“Don’t be scared of them,” Peter says. “We get nice and comfortable with the first one before we move on. They’ll help you get used to the sensation of being filled up so you’ll be ready for Daddy when it’s time. You don’t want it to hurt the first time Daddy fucks you, do you?”

Stiles shakes his head. The thought of Peter using these on him makes him feel squirmy and good much more than it makes him feel insecure.

“Daddy would never hurt you,” Peter says. “That’s why we need to train your body as well as your mind and your discipline.”

Stiles nods. He’s ready to learn. He’d put one in right now if Peter asked, no matter how much he feels like he’s unravelling. His cock is hard again, he doesn’t have any control, and he wants Peter so fucking much in whatever way he’s allowed. He wonders if that means he’s failing. This isn’t
good discipline. He’s not asking though, he’s not responding to his body’s pathetic pleas. He feels like that makes him the strongest person in the world.

“I’m going to take care of those,” Peter says, closing the box and taking it out of Stiles’ hands. He stands up, placing it in his dresser drawer before looking down at Stiles. “One more present. I got takeout. I had a feeling that by the time I got home, you’d be pretty needy for your Daddy.”

Stiles nods his head eagerly. He doesn’t want to be away from him for a second. He’s barely held himself together all day, he needs his Daddy to do it for him now.

“Come on, beautiful,” Peter says, offering a hand out to help him up. He steadies him on his feet and then turns to the bed, gathering up the sheets. “I’ll put these in to wash and we’ll eat our dinner. Then Daddy’s going to make you come before he cleans you up with a nice warm bath. Sound good?”

“Perfect,” Stiles agrees.

Peter grabs Wolfy along with his bundled-up sheets, leading the way down the stairs. He goes through to the utility and Stiles sits down at the table, leaning forward to watch him load up the washer, hoping he picks the right cycle for Wolfy. Kids toys get messy all the time, right? They must be machine washable.

Peter returns, giving him a little smile before he goes over to dish up the food. It’s from the same place as before and it smells so good. Peter places his food in front of him, handing him a knife and fork, and Stiles digs in. He ordered a different meal but it’s just as good as last time.

“So how did you find today?” Peter asks.

Stiles looks up at him, hesitating. “It was hard.”

Peter nods knowingly. “It’s hard right now, isn’t it?” he says, nodding towards Stiles’ lap. “Has it gone down all day?”

Stiles blushes, playing with his fork. “Not really,” he admits. “Not since the first time.”

“You must be absolutely desperate, baby,” Peter says. “But you didn’t touch it unless the timer told you to?”

Stiles shakes his head emphatically. “Never. I promise.”

“You don’t need to promise,” Peter says. “I believe you. You’re a good boy.”

Stiles smiles, feeling himself ease a little.

“But you found it difficult?” Peter asks.

“Yeah.”

“That’s okay,” Peter says. “You’re learning. Learning is good. You stuck with it.” He eats a mouthful of his food, looking carefully measured. “I must admit, I did have a little ulterior motive,” he says. Stiles looks up at him, his eyebrows raising. “I wanted you to go through that to prove to yourself that you could, to learn about restraint and overpowering your arousal,” Peter says. “But, I also thought, by the time you were done with yourself, you could probably manage to come from just my fingers inside you.” He meets Stiles’ eyes, his own shining. “You’re on a hair trigger right now, aren’t you, baby?”
Stiles lets out a shaky breath, nodding his head. He could probably come from the way Peter is looking at him right now.

“We’ll test out my theory when we’ve eaten,” Peter says, going back to his food like he hasn’t just made Stiles’ dick ache more than it has all day. Stiles gives a little whimper, chewing on his lip. “Eat,” Peter says. “No orgasm until your plate’s clear, baby.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, a little too sulkily, taking a huge mouthful of his food.

By the time Peter clears their plates away, Stiles is a squirming mess. Peter goes through to the utility, swapping the laundry into the dryer and coming back out with the bottle of lube from upstairs.

“Snagged this while I was tidying up that mess of a bed,” he says. “Figured we might need it.” He places it on the table in front of Stiles and offers out his hand. “Come here, baby.”

Stiles lets himself be led, pulled in close to Peter’s body as soon as he’s on his feet. Peter wraps his arms around him, holding him steady as he leans in to kiss him. It’s chaste at first, the brushing of lips, and Stiles feels like he’s literally going to burst out of his own skin. He clings to Peter, pressing closer, and Peter lifts him up, sitting him on the edge of the table and leaning between his legs. Stiles moans, nodding his head in approval as Peter starts to kiss him properly.

After everything today, Stiles thought that he’d reached his limit, but that was nothing compared to having another person kissing him, touching him. That was nothing compared to Peter. His hands slide under Stiles shirt, caressing his flesh as his tongue slides into his mouth, kissing him deep and dirty. Stiles opens his legs wider, wrapping them around Peter’s hips as Peter grinds against him and Stiles cries out, nearly coming then and there.

“Please,” he begs.

“Shhh,” Peter soothes. “You’re okay. Daddy’s going to take such good care of you.”

He lifts Stiles’ T-shirt up, Stiles lifting his arms to let him strip it off. Peter discards it onto one of the chairs, grabbing Stiles behind the knees and tugging his legs from around him. Stiles tightens them, not wanting him to leave.

“Be a good boy,” Peter says, a note of warning in his voice. “Daddy’s going to make you come now.”

Stiles swallows and does the opposite of what his body screams at him, unwrapping his legs from around Peter.

“Lift up for me,” Peter says.

Stiles puts his weight back onto his hands, lifting his ass from the table so Peter can pull his pants down. They fall to the floor and Peter looks at him, his straining cock a deep red that’s almost purple, leaking continuously.

“That does look painful,” Peter says.

“Please, Daddy,” Stiles whines.

“I know, baby,” Peter soothes, hand rubbing up and down his thigh. “I know. Lie back for me.”

Stiles stills. “Here?”
“Well you made a mess of the bed,” Peter says. “It’s going to have to be here.”

Stiles looks down at the table. “I’m going to think about this every time we eat dinner.”

Peter gives him a filthy smile. “I know.”

Stiles gives a huff but he’s in no position to complain right now. His entire body feels like it’s going to combust and there’s so much blood in his cock he doesn’t know how he even has gross motor function anymore. He shifts back, lying himself down, Peter lifting his feet so they rest at the edge of the table, bent at the knee. He’s so exposed but he doesn’t even care. He just needs to come, he can’t be fucking precious about it.

“Now, you can cling to the table or you can cling to Daddy,” Peter says, opening up the lube. “But you do not touch yourself.”

Stiles nods. “Okay.”

“Good boy,” Peter says. He looks down between Stiles’ legs. “You get yourself warmed up for me?”

“That was hours ago,” Stiles says, though it all kind of blurs into one. Peter touches a fingertip to his hole and he whines, tensing despite himself. Peter leans down and places a kiss against his knee.

“Here we go, baby.”

He pushes inside and Stiles whimpers, barely even able to make sense of the sensations now. Peter goes slow at first, making sure he’s open, but Stiles doesn’t think he has any resistance left. All of his walls are down and Peter could do anything to him as long as he let him come at the end of it. Peter presses another finger inside, the stretch making Stiles moan, his hips lifting up in response.

“Good boy,” Peter says softly, leaning over him, one hand stroking his hip. He curls his fingers inside him, pressing down on his prostate, and Stiles nearly jumps off the table his eyes going wide. “You feel how swollen that is?” Peter says, sounding pleased. “All that come. That’s what edging does to you. Makes you so full and sensitive. We’re going to empty you out now, baby. Just relax. Let Daddy take care of you.”

He pulls his fingers almost all the way out and then pushes them back in again, pressing right against his prostate. Stiles’ arms fly out, gripping hold of the edges of the table to hold himself steady. Peter sets up a rhythm, fucking him firmly with his fingers, every thrust hitting him square in his sensitive prostate, making him feel like he’s about to have an aneurysm. He can feel his cock dribbling against his stomach, can feel it building so sure and steady like a tsunami, and his instinct is to clamp down, make it stop, but he doesn’t have to do that now. He has Daddy’s permission.

He arches his back, head thrown back, and just embraces it. His whole body moves every time Peter thrusts into him and Stiles can’t wait until they’re doing this for real, Peter’s cock buried inside him. He feels like he has his training wheels on right now. Everyone has to start somewhere he guesses.

He feels the prickles, the pressure, the heat, all those little tells he’s been so focussed on all day. He pushes past them this time though, lets it all crash down on him, crying out as he finally comes, wave after wave of it, his body shaking as Peter pushes his fingers in deep and just massages his prostate. It’s like he’s in control of Stiles’ pleasure, like he’s forcing it out of him, and Stiles whimpers and keens, tears spilling from his eyes, so intense that it hurts but he never wants it to
Peter pulls his fingers away and Stiles feels one more wave go through him like electricity, his body jerking involuntarily. Peter is right there, leaning over him, stroking the side of his face and looking into his eyes. Stiles can barely focus on him but he’s so glad that he’s there. He feels like he might blow away in the wind if he wasn’t holding onto him.

A final little aftershock makes Stiles shudder and Peter smiles at him, so kind and proud. His eyes fall down, looking at Stiles body.

“There’s so much,” he says, trailing his fingertips through the mess Stiles has made of himself. He lifts them up to Stiles’ mouth, letting it dribble onto his lips, and Stiles laps at it instinctively before sucking the offered fingers into his mouth. He moans around them. Peter’s eyes are so soft, so full of love. He pulls his hand back, collecting a little more and licking it himself. “Mmm,” he says. “You truly are delicious.”

He leans over, kissing Stiles on the mouth, slow and lazy, warming Stiles’ entire body afresh. When he pulls back, Stiles tries to chase him, but he doesn’t have the strength to lift his head. Peter moves away, grabbing a paper towel and wiping Stiles down before discarding it.

“Come on, baby,” he says softly. “Daddy’ll look after you.”

Stiles smiles contentedly as Peter scoops him up, carrying him through to the living room and sitting on the couch with him, cradling Stiles carefully in his lap. Stiles sighs, leaning into him, letting the fireflies take him away.

When he comes around, Peter is petting his hair and rocking him gently, making him feel like the safest thing in the world. He lifts his head, looking up at Peter who smiles at him softly, brushing a kiss against his cheek.

“How about we get you in the bath, beautiful?”

“Yes, please,” Stiles says, gazing at him.

Peter stands up, still holding him, and for a moment Stiles thinks he’s going to carry him all the way up the stairs. That would be amazing. He sets him down on his feet though, steadying him carefully.

“When we get upstairs, I need you to tidy up your things,” Peter says. “I’ll make the bed, then we’ll have bath time. Sound fair?”

“Yes, Daddy,” Stiles agrees. Now that he thinks about it, he’s surprised Peter didn’t make him tidy up earlier, that’s one of the rules. He must have been able to tell Stiles was in no fit state for anything then. That fact makes Stiles feel safe. Peter knows when he needs the rules bending and he always accommodates him. He never has anything to be afraid of here, Peter is always going to tell him the right thing to do.

He puts away his comics and his music as Peter makes the bed, making sure the controller for his PS4 is put neatly away, that everything is in its place. That’s how Peter likes it. Stiles wants to please him.

Peter runs his bath and Stiles is already naked so Peter just helps him step right in. He washes Stiles’ body with reverence and care, Stiles trying not to flinch when he touches his still too sensitive cock. Peter slides his fingers inside him, cleaning out the lube, and Stiles moans even though he’s pretty sure he’s not supposed to. Peter places a kiss on the top of his head so he
guesses it’s okay.

Peter towels him off and puts him in fresh clothes before he leads by the hand to bed. He locks the cuff in place, pulling the blankets up over him and pressing a kiss against his forehead. “One minute,” he whispers before leaving the room.

Stiles doesn’t move, he knows he’s not supposed to, but he feels uneasy the whole time that Peter is gone. He’s probably just tidying up downstairs. Stiles left the kitchen in a mess. When Peter returns, he’s holding Wolfy in his hand.

“Fresh from the dryer,” he says.

Stiles takes him, his fur warm and clean. He tugs him under the covers, pressing him against his chest. “Thank you, Daddy.”

Peter walks around to his own side of the bed, climbing in, and Stiles instantly moves over to cuddle against him, Wolfy still clutched in his hand.

“Goodnight, my sweet thing,” Peter says.

“Night night, Daddy,” Stiles says, closing his eyes, his body so grateful to be still and sated.

He wakes up the next morning still snuggled up with Peter, but Wolfy has fallen out of his grip. Stiles lifts his head, seeing him lying at the other side of Peter. He’s fine there. Stiles has hold of the thing that matters.

Peter reaches over to silence the alarm, stretching his body in a way that makes Stiles cling to him harder. It’s a good body. Stiles wants to do so many things to it. Peter strokes his fingers through Stiles’ hair, looking down at him.

“Do you want to go for a walk today, baby?”

Stiles’ eyes light up. “Yes!” he says, a little too enthusiastically. “Please,” he adds.

Peter smiles at him. “After lunch,” he says. “If you’re a good boy.”

“I’m a good boy,” Stiles says.

Peter laughs. “I’m going to take a shower.” He sits up, catching Wolfy before he falls on the floor and passing him to Stiles. “Take care of your things.”

Stiles holds him close, pouting at Peter. Peter gives him that smile again, full of fondness and pride. Stiles doesn’t even pretend not to spy on him as he undresses with the bathroom door open. Magnificent body, and Stiles is the only one who gets to touch it.

With the promise of a walk on the table, Stiles finds it hard to think about anything else all morning. He does his yoga and he has his forty-five minutes of gaming. He studies while he sucks on a lollipop, twirling his tongue around it and feeling the muscles working. He does get tired when he’s sucking Peter’s cock. These are definitely a good idea and he’s going to train himself on it every morning. He reads one of his new comics, listening to his music, feeling happy and grateful, but none of it really compares to going outside. Actually going outside. Fresh air. Moving his body. He can’t wait.

His foot bounces as he sits at the island with Peter eating his lunch, his gaze fixed out of the window. He looks at Peter, almost scared to ask.
“Daddy,” he says sweetly. “Are we going for a walk?”

Peter turns to face him, a gentle smile on his lips. “We can go for a walk.”

Stiles beams at him. “Thank you, Daddy. I love you.”

“I know, sweetheart,” Peter says, measured patience in your voice. “I would like to use it to help with your training though,” he adds. “I’ll show you after we’ve eaten.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, nodding his head. He’d do anything Peter wanted if it meant he got to go outside. The breeze on his skin. Real sunlight not filtered through a window. He can barely contain himself.

After Peter has tidied up lunch he takes Stiles by the hand, wordlessly leading him upstairs. It feels a little ominous, the anticipation building. Normally Peter tells him what to expect but he just takes him through to their bedroom, only letting go of him to open up his nightstand, taking out the box he bought yesterday.

“I want you to wear one of these for me when we go out,” Peter says, opening up the box. “Just the little one. Two of Daddy’s fingers are bigger than that and you take them so well.”

Stiles shifts on his feet, watching at Peter takes it out, holding it up. It’s really not that big.

“I want you to get used to the feel of it,” Peter says. “You don’t have to keep it in the whole time. If it’s starts to feel uncomfortable, you tell me and I’ll take it out. Not painful, uncomfortable,” he stresses. “Don’t wait until it hurts to tell me. That’s too late. I only want you to have it in for as long as it feels comfortable. If that’s just to the end of the yard then we take it out at the end of the yard and you’re still Daddy’s good little boy. You understand?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says. He can’t argue with that.

“I just want to see how you respond to it,” Peter says. “It’s not a test, it’s research.”

“Sure,” Stiles says.

“Okay,” Peter says, taking out the lube. “Take down your pants and brace yourself against the bed for me.”

Stiles does as he’s told, leaning over, hands flat on the bed. Peter moves behind him, nudging his legs a little further apart before there’s a wet finger pressing against his hole. He hums, pushing back, Peter tracing the muscles a few times, waiting for that give before he pushes inside. Stiles closes his eyes, hands gripping hold of the blankets beneath him, his back arching as Peter teases his prostate before pulling back.

He pushes into him with two fingers, opening him up, and Stiles gives a soft little moan. Peter works him slowly, focussed on getting him ready rather than making it feel good. He’s not trying to get him off. For once, this is just the warm up, just like it will be when Peter fucks him.

Stiles’ cock is hard but he ignores it, just feeling the slide of Peter’s fingers, feeling his own body respond. Peter places a hand on the small of his back, rubbing gently, and Stiles keens in appreciation. It all feels so intimate. It feels so far away from sex. There’s nothing dirty or desperate about any of it. They’re doing something much more powerful than that.

Peter pulls his fingers out, his other hand sliding up Stiles’ spine beneath his T-shirt. “It’s going to be the plug now. Just try and relax, baby. It’s smaller than what you’ve just been taking for Daddy,
you’re going to be fine.”

Stiles nods his head, bowed between his shoulders. “Yeah,” he breathes.

He feels it pressing against his hole, harder than Peter’s fingers, not as hot, but it’s not cold and impersonal like he was imagining. Peter presses against him steadily and Stiles presses back into the pressure, feeling himself open up around it. His mouth opens in a little *oh* as he feels it start to slip inside. It’s different but it’s good. It’s still good. It’s still Peter.

He breathes through it, Peter working it deeper just like he did with his fingers, rocking back and forth, letting Stiles’ body take it at his own pace. When he settles it in as deep as it will go, Stiles can feel the flared base pressing against his ass. Peter gently adjusts it so that it lines up right, rubbing his back for a moment until he feels Stiles start to relax under him.

“Want to try standing up?” he asks.

Stiles nods his head, Peter’s hands guiding him, helping him straighten himself. It seems to push the plug a little deeper and he stands there for a moment, trying to file the sensation away, but it’s like nothing he’s ever experienced before. Having something inside him when he’s not being played with feels weird but he doesn’t dislike it. He meets Peter’s eyes, blinking at him.

“Okay?” Peter asks. “How does it feel?”

Stiles shifts on his feet. “Not bad,” he says. “I don’t know. It’s…” He shifts again, trying to identify it. “Your finger curves. It doesn’t curve. I think that’s it.”

“You think you can handle it for a little while?” Peter asks. “You can take it out whenever you want. You can take it out right now if you want.”

Stiles shakes his head. “It doesn’t hurt. It’s not uncomfortable. I want to try it.”

“Oh kay,” Peter says, leaning down to pull Stiles’ pants back up for him. He brushes a kiss against his lips. “Let’s go for a walk then.”

Peter sits him down at the kitchen table, Stiles reaching over and running a hand over it, remembering what they did there last night. He thought he’d be embarrassed but he feels kind of smug. He wants to do that on every surface in this house. He wants it to be filled with memories like that.

Peter returns to him with his sneakers and a pair of socks. He kneels in front of him, pulling his socks on for him, making sure they’re on snugly before he helps him get his shoes on. He ties the laces with such care, using a double knot, and Stiles feels so incredibly loved. His Daddy takes such good care of him. He’s the luckiest boy in the world.

Peter leads him over to the kitchen door, the one that leads to outside. Stiles can feel the anticipation prickling at him.

“Hold Daddy’s hand,” Peter says, offering out his own. “Do not let go.”

“I won’t,” Stiles promises, feeling a thrill as Peter twines their fingers together.

Peter opens the door, leading Stiles outside, and Stiles breathes in deeply, filling his lungs, a grin breaking out over his face. It feels amazing. Tears prick at his eyes but he blinks them back. He doesn’t want to miss a thing.
His senses are so assaulted as they step into the woods that he almost forgets about the plug that shifts with every step. The air moves over his skin, the sunlight blinding as it shines through gaps in the trees. Everything is bright and vivid, the green of the leaves and the yellow and pink of wildflowers growing at the edge of the path. He takes it all in, every little detail. He wants to run, wants to jump, wants to laugh and scream. He’s a good boy though, he stays by Peter’s side, holds onto his hand tightly.

“It’s so beautiful out here,” he says, wonder in his voice. He turns to face Peter. “Thank you, Daddy.”

“I just want to see you happy,” Peter says. “Daddy’s always going to make you happy. Always.”

“I know,” Stiles says easily.

“How’s that plug feel?” Peter asks, tugging him closer.

“It’s fine,” Stiles says. He barely even knows it’s there. “Let’s keep going.”

He hears water ahead and then they come to a creek, stepping stones dotted across it. It’s the spot from Peter’s wallpaper. Stiles stops, looking at it, so touched to be in this place that clearly means something to Peter. He doesn’t want to mention it though, doesn’t want to bring up bad memories. Stiles should never have touched that phone, he shouldn’t know about this place. That was an invasion of privacy and Stiles feels ashamed of himself. He leans into Peter as though he can make it up to him.

“How you want to go across?” Peter asks.

Stiles looks up at him. “Can we?”

Peter nudges him forward, letting go of his hand. “You go ahead.”

Stiles stands there, frozen. “On my own?” It feels like a punishment. He’s not supposed to let go.

“It’s alright,” Peter assures him softly. “Cross the stepping stones, baby. You’ll have fun.”

He doesn’t look angry but Stiles suddenly imagines a scenario where this is all some elaborate payback for Stiles touching his phone when he knew he wasn’t supposed to. What if Peter leaves him out here? Would he even be able to find his way back to the house? Would Peter care if he didn’t?

He pushes the thought away. He’s being ridiculous. The last few days have been so good, Peter has shown him nothing but love, if anything his slip up brought them closer together. They both know that all they want is each other, that anyone else would just get in the way. They wouldn’t understand. What Stiles and Peter have doesn’t require anything else. They’re on the same page. Peter would never leave him.

He turns, moving forward and hopping onto the first stepping stone. He feels the plug then. Maybe that’s the point. He jumps over to the next one, grinning to himself, feeling so free. It’s like flying and it pushes so pleasantly against the inside of his brain. Happy happy chemicals.

When he makes it to the other side he spins around to see Peter lowering his phone. “Are you taking pictures of me?”

“You look so cute,” Peter says, slipping his phone back into his pocket. “Conquering those stepping stones all on your own.”
Stiles lifts his hands dramatically over his head. “I’m the king of the world.”

Peter grins back at him, looking so happy. He holds his hands out. “Come back to me, baby.”

Stiles does, without question. Peter wraps him in his arms, lifting him up and spinning him around. Stiles giggles and clings onto him until he places him back on the ground. It jars the plug in him again. Stiles shifts on his feet.

“Do you think I can take the plug out?” he asks. “Please?”

“Of course you can, baby,” Peter says, smoothing his hands down Stiles’ back. “Let Daddy do it.”

Peter pulls him to lean forward against him, sliding his hand into the back of Stiles’ pants and easing the plug out. Stiles makes a little noise, grimacing. Peter straightens up, offering it out to him.

“Hold onto that for Daddy until we get home,” he says. “Then you can wash it and put it away.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees, holding it by the handle. Somehow it seems like a perfectly reasonable response.

“Let’s go home,” Peter says, taking hold of his other hand.

Stiles can feel the lube leaking out of him now the plug is gone but he tries not to think about that. He doesn’t want to sully this beautiful moment. Instead, he wonders if Peter is going to change the wallpaper on his phone, if he’s going to use the photograph of Stiles on his stepping stones. The thought makes Stiles feel giddy, Peter looking at him, thinking of him, every time he uses his phone to contact the outside world. He’ll always be right there with him, even when they have to be apart.
Chapter 18

Stiles stares out of the window as Peter places his lunch down in front of him. He can see the trees moving in the breeze and he remembers how it felt against his skin yesterday. He wants to feel it again. Desperately. Everything feels so still inside, like the air is pressing against him.

He picks up his fork, turning his attention to his lunch. He’s trying to be patient, he’s trying so hard, he hasn’t mentioned going outside once all day. He’s been a good boy for Daddy from the moment he was woken up to Peter urging him down under the covers, guiding Stiles’ mouth onto his cock. Stiles sucked on him, still half asleep, the world muffled away by the blankets that surrounded him, nothing existing except for Peter’s cock in his mouth and Peter’s hand gently petting him. It was transcendental.

He shifted himself, finding a better angle, taking Peter in deeper. As he opened his throat, Peter thrust gently upwards, and Stiles was incredibly proud that he didn’t gag once. He swallowed down every drop, clinging to Peter’s thighs, sweaty and oxygen deprived but content to stay there forever. Peter dragged him upwards though, into the air and light, kissing him slow and dirty, tasting his own come.

Stiles didn’t ask for anything in return, even though his cock was straining, painting the inside of his pants with precome. He let Peter kiss him until he had his fill and then, when he went to take a shower, Stiles stayed perfectly still and he didn’t even try to touch himself or rub against the blankets. He was a good boy. He’s such a good boy.

He didn’t say anything over breakfast about how much he enjoyed the walk yesterday or how much he wanted to do it again. He did his yoga and he studied and he had his carefully timed forty-five minutes of gaming. All the things that Daddy expected of him. None of it was even a chore, he loved his routines, loved everything Peter ever asked of him. He tried not to ask anything in return because Peter was so good to him already. Now that the possibility’s so much closer though, he can barely keep the question in.

“Daddy?” he asks sweetly, twirling his fork.

“Yes, baby?” Peter responds, a note of suspicion in his voice, but his raised eyebrow looks good natured.

“Are we going for a walk today?” Stiles asks. It’s an enquiry, not a request. That doesn’t make him a brat, right?

“Not today, sweetheart,” Peter says.

The sigh that Stiles gives probably does make him a brat.

“We need to work on your training,” Peter says. “Daddy has plans for you. I’d say we can go out after, but I don’t think you’re going to be able to walk by the time I’m finished with you.”

Stiles swallows thickly, his cock taking notice. He shifts on his stool, as though there’s any way he can hide an erection in these pants. “Okay,” he says.

Peter smiles at him, that pleased smile with the wolf just below the surface. “If you’re a good boy, I’ll make sure we have time to go out tomorrow,” he promises.

Stiles nods his head, feeling himself calm. He can wait until tomorrow. He had to wait so much
longer than that before. “Okay.”

“Eat your lunch then, baby,” Peter tells him. “You’re going to need your energy.”

Stiles smiles as he turns his attention back to his plate. He’s looking forward to it already. With any luck, Peter will wear him out so much he won’t need any exercise.

When they finish eating, Peter reaches across, pressing his hand against the front of Stiles’ pants and massaging his half-hard cock. “Always so eager for Daddy.”

Stiles keens, pushing his hips upwards. “Please.”

Peter smirks at him. “You’re going to be saying that a lot today.” He leans in. “Come give Daddy a kiss.”

Stiles meets him halfway, Peter fitting their mouths together and licking his way inside. Stiles lets his mouth go slack, opening up for him, grateful when Peter brings his hand up to support the back of his head because Stiles isn’t sure he could hold it up on his own. Peter’s other hand is still squeezing his cock through the soft material of his pants, making Stiles whine as his hips move into the touch.

He feels so precarious balanced on the stool, holding onto Peter to keep the vertigo at bay. He trusts Peter not to let him fall, but he doesn’t trust his own idiot body not to lose balance anyway. He wishes he knew how to be graceful and sure. Maybe that’s something Peter can teach him. He’s already learnt so much more about his own body from Peter than he managed the rest of his life.

Peter pulls back, caressing his cheek until Stiles opens his eyes, looking up at him through his eyelashes. It makes everything seem like it’s in soft focus.

“You’re getting a wet patch,” Peter says, still working his cock.

“Mmm,” Stiles agrees, nuzzling into him.

Peter smiles, kissing the side of his face. “You’re going to be one big wet patch by the time I’ve finished with you.”

“Yes, please,” Stiles says.

Peter gives a little chuckle, standing up slowly so that he doesn’t knock Stiles off balance. “Come on, baby,” he says. “Let’s get you laid out on that bed for me.”

Stiles allows himself to be led up to their bedroom, a familiar feeling by now, but Stiles hopes it never loses the ability to make him so wonderfully squirmy and filled with giddy anticipation. He wants his life to be a series of moments just like this.

Peter lets go of his hand as they step into the room, going over to the closet and grabbing a couple of pillows. They’re the ones that used to lie down the middle of the bed to separate them, but there’s never any space between them now. Stiles can barely remember why they needed any. He was slow to trust, Scott always pulled him up on it, but he had good reason. Peter was patient with him though, he proved himself, and Stiles couldn’t be happier to be proved wrong on this occasion.

“Take off your clothes, sweetheart,” Peter says, taking the pillows over to the bed and stacking them in the middle.

Stiles pulls his T-shirt over his head before tugging down his pants, careful not to let the waistband
catch on his hard cock. He doesn’t know if that counts as touching himself but he doesn’t want to take the risk. He wants to follow the rules, always.

Peter turns to face him, just letting his eyes roam over Stiles’ body for a moment, taking him in. Stiles tries not to shift on his feet. Being on display is still new to him, sharing any of this with anybody is new, but Peter makes him feel safe. Stiles wants to give him everything and he’s not going to be disrespectful and shy away from his gaze or dare to assume it’s anything less than genuine. He needs to learn to see himself how Peter sees him and so he needs to let Peter see him.

Once he’s had his fill, Peter holds out a hand towards him. “Let’s get you nice and comfy.”

Stiles steps forward, accepting the offered hand and letting himself be pulled close. Peter reaches up, running his fingertips down Stiles’ side and Stiles shivers, so helplessly responsive. Peter smiles, guiding him onto the bed.

“I want you face down, hips on those pillows, pretty little ass in the air for me.”

Stiles complies, even though the position makes him feel ridiculous. He braces himself on his forearms, trying to balance, but really the only thing he can do is sink into the mattress and let the pillows hold him up. It’s such a vulnerable position that demands surrender. Stiles wants to give.

Peter comes to sit on the bed beside him, running his fingertips up and down Stiles’ back, setting his skin alight. “This is a learning opportunity,” he says. “For both of us. Daddy wants to see how much you can take. He wants to help you find your limits. When I gave you the task with the timer, that was about learning to control yourself. This is about learning what happens when you truly let go. This is going to be the opposite of that.”

Stiles whimpers, not sure if that’s a good thing of not. He didn’t like getting so worked up and never getting to finish, but he has a feeling this is going to be just as rough.

“So you can come whenever you want,” Peter says. “You have permission to come. Open permission. Daddy wants you to. But I need you to understand that when you come, I’m not going to stop. Daddy’s going to work your body right through your orgasm, out the other side and just keep going. We’re not going to stop until you’re completely empty and you’re coming dry for me. Do you understand?”

Stiles whines. That sounds like hell. But he really wants it.

“Baby,” Peter prompts. “Daddy asked a question. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Daddy,” Stiles says, his voice already breaking.

“Tell me,” Peter says.

“Daddy’s going to show me how much I can take,” Stiles says.

Peter leans over him, pressing his lips against the base of Stiles’ spine. Stiles can feel him grin against him. “Daddy’s going to wreck you.”

“Yes, please,” Stiles sighs.

Peter moves, climbing fully onto the bed and easing Stiles’ legs further apart. Stiles adjusts himself, trying to get comfortable, and then Peter is kneeling between his thighs and Stiles knows he isn’t going to be closing them for a long time. He should probably get used to this.
Peter just touches him at first, flat hands stroking down his thighs to the sensitive skin at the back of his knees. He keeps going, down to his ankles, sweeping over them before he’s travelling back up again, hands stroking outwards over the cheeks of his ass, pulling them farther apart. He starts again, smooth movements repeating the motions over and over until Stiles just melts beneath him, his body giving.

Just when Stiles is getting lost in the repetition, Peter’s hands sweep over his cheeks, pulling him open, but then don’t move away. He’s held there, exposed, even more so than just being propped up on these cushions, and he tries not to whine, tries not to squirm. He wants to be good.

He can feel Peter move behind him, the miniscule shifting of the bed, and then air is being blown directly over his hole. He bucks, unable to help himself, making a broken little noise. Peter grips his cheeks tighter, a reassuring gesture, and he shifts again before there’s wetness against Stiles’ hole. It takes him a moment to understand what it is, too soft to be a finger, but it’s not until Peter licks wetly from his balls right up to the top of his ass that Stiles realises what he’s doing.

He freezes. He feels embarrassed, skin crawlingly so, even as he tells himself that Peter is the one who should feel that way. It doesn’t feel right to let Peter do this to him, it’s too intimate, and he feels like it should be beneath Peter. He’s putting standards on it that don’t apply though. If Peter is doing this, that means he wants to and he’s never steered Stiles wrong.

As Peter’s tongue begins to lick circles around Stiles’ hole, every nerve ending is set alight in ways it hasn’t been before. Stiles moans and goes utterly molten beneath him, grateful for the pillows holding him in place. Peter’s definitely never steered him wrong. He licks over him, slippery and supple, a softer sensation that he could never achieve with his fingers. It takes Stiles under so quickly, hands fist ed in the sheets beneath him, eyes tightly closed as he just feels. And it feels so good.

Peter’s tongue dips inside him, his body so relaxed and open to him, and Stiles appreciates distantly how this must be good foreplay for a long session. Peter could already do literally anything to him and Stiles wouldn’t dream of protesting. He isn’t even sure he could.

Peter alternates between licking him, fucking him with his tongue, occasionally sucking at his hole, until Stiles is a whimpering mess. He’s not sure how long Peter does it for, but it’s about twice as long as Stiles thinks he can take. He wants more, needs more, something solid inside him, Peter’s finger or his cock or a plug. He also really wants Peter to never ever stop though because it’s taking him to another plane of existence.

Eventually he pulls back though, sitting up between Stiles’ thighs. His hands are still on Stiles ass and he blows on him again, the sensation so much more intense on his wet, open hole. He squirms, whining, Peter letting go of his ass, but his cheeks don’t really close in this position. He’s still on display. He doesn’t try and fight it.

“Such a good boy,” Peter says, leaning over him to get to the nightstand. “Let’s get you an orgasm.”

He grabs the lube from the drawer and sits back, Stiles listening to the sound of the cap opening, his body filling with anticipation. He forces himself to be still, to relax, to wait. He’s in capable hands. He jumps when a slick fingertip traces his hole, a firm pressure that’s so different from his tongue. Peter pushes it inside, nice and slow, letting him open up to it. Stiles presses his hips back, wanting more, wanting to be filled.

“So, so eager,” Peter says. “Let’s see how long that lasts.”
There’s something in his tone that sets Stiles on edge and yet makes him want even more. He moans softly as Peter’s finger slides in deep, rocking inside him before pulling almost all the way out and doing it again. He falls into a rhythm and Stiles melts beneath him, losing himself to the easy predictability. Peter is so good at being steady, at working his body in such tiny increments that he barely notices it happening. Stiles wants everything but he knows not to be greedy. Peter will get there. The more Stiles lets go, the quicker that happens.

Peter twists his wrist and then his finger is against Stiles’ prostate. It sends a rush of pleasure through Stiles, tensing around Peter as he whines, hips lifting upwards in invitation. Peter hooks his finger again and again, not massaging it like he has done before, just nudging against it in short little bursts which is somehow both better and worse. He moans, hips stuttering, not sure if he’s supposed to be moving or not. Did Peter tell him? Were there rules?

“Daddy,” he says, voice embarrassingly high.

“You’re okay,” Peter tells him, pulling his finger out, and that’s not what Stiles meant. That’s not what he meant at all. His hands slide over the sheets for purchase, trying to find a way to express himself, but it just comes out like a moan as he lifts his head, looking at Peter behind him. “Hush,” Peter says, not meeting his gaze, his eyes fixed on what he’s doing as he pushes two fingers into Stiles’ body. Stiles arches his back, making a grateful noise. “Daddy’s not going to be leaving you empty,” Peter says. “Not even when you start begging for it.”

Stiles nods his head, taking a breath. “Wha’?” he tries, but his tongue feels heavy in his mouth.

“Go ahead, baby,” Peter encourages, but his fingers don’t stop sliding inside Stiles’ body. “What do you want to know?”

Stiles makes a pathetic little noise. “I don’t know the rules,” he says, wincing, feeling ashamed of himself. “Do I stay still?”

“Good boy for asking,” Peter praises, his free hand sliding up and down Stiles’ back, a comforting gesture. “You can move. You can come. You can fuck yourself on Daddy’s fingers if you want. You can hump the pillow but you can’t touch yourself. You don’t have permission to touch but anything else if fair game. Daddy’s going to play with you, he’s going to see how long you can take it for, you make that easier on yourself any way that you want so long as you keep your hands to yourself. Orgasms are encouraged. There’s going to be more than one of them.”

Stiles whimpers, nodding his head. “Thank you, Daddy.”

“I’m so proud of you for asking,” Peter says, curving his fingers up to hit Stiles’ prostate. “That shows me you’re engaged, that you want to make Daddy happy.”

“Yes,” Stiles whines as Peter’s fingers massage his prostate. “Happy.”

“Good boy,” Peter says, and then he pulls his fingers back, fucking them into Stiles.

Stiles moans, putting his weight onto his knees so he can get some leverage, rocking back against him. He’s so ready for Peter’s cock. He could take him like this easily. Maybe a little more lube, the angle is already perfect, he could do it. Peter’s the prize he gets for being a good boy during his training though. Stiles wonders how much more he has to learn. He wonders if he’s supposed to be able to take all of those plugs that Peter bought him before he’ll be deemed ready. There’s six in total. Stiles has already proved he can take the first one. He’s not sure how much more Peter will make him prove it before they move onto the next one though.
He tries not to think about that right now. He focusses on Peter’s fingers inside him, the slick slide, the way they push against his prostate with every thrust. He thinks about how vulnerable he’s letting himself be, everything that he’s handing over to Peter. It makes him feel empowered rather than helpless. This is what he wants. Surrender isn’t a weakness when you embrace it like Peter has taught him to.

“Lift up for me,” Peter prompts, a hand on his hip. “Let me get my fingers on that lovely cock.”

Stiles makes an eager noise of agreement, pushing up onto his knees so that there’s some space between him and the pillows. True to his word, Peter wraps his hand around Stiles’ leaking cock, stroking in time with the fingers he’s thrusting into him.

“Go ahead, baby,” Peter says. “Come for Daddy.”

Stiles whines, thrusting into Peter’s grip, but that just pushes him away from the fingers that are inside him and that won’t do. He wants everything, all at once. He wants every inch of his body under Peter’s control, as though it isn’t always. Peter fucks him harder, twists the hand he has on his dick every time he reaches the head, hitting his prostate so perfectly every time his fingers go deep.

It doesn’t build so much as it drowns Stiles, crashing over him, his body shuddering with his orgasm as the duel sensations take him over. Peter keeps working his body as Stiles moans, riding out the aftershocks, and he waits, wanting to slide back down onto the bed. Peter stops stroking him, he can’t when he goes soft, but he keeps massaging his dick, so painfully sensitive, his fingers never faltering inside him. Stiles can’t make sense of it, can’t work out what’s happening, because it’s supposed to stop now, but clearly Peter isn’t done. He said he was going to push Stiles’ limits but Stiles thought he might be allowed to catch his breath first.

“That was one,” Peter says, leaning down to place a kiss against the small of his back. “Good boy.”

Stiles just whines, his body fidgeting, trying instinctively to get away. Peter lets go of his cock and Stiles lets himself fall back onto the pillows, right into the wet patch. He frowns but there’s nowhere else to go. Peter’s fingers still move inside him but that’s easier to deal with than having his soft cock played with. He imagines getting fucked by Peter again, imagines pushing through his own discomfort to finish Peter off, to feel him come. That’s something he might have to do. It’s something he hopes he gets to do. He needs Peter to fuck him so badly.

“I’m going to train you to come on command,” Peter says. “You’re going to come whenever Daddy tells you to, even if no one’s touching you.”

Stiles moans. He doesn’t doubt that Peter could do that to him. Part of him believes that he’d come again right now if Peter told him he could.

“You’re obedient,” Peter says. “You’d pick it up in no time.” He presses his fingers against Stiles’ prostate, rubbing against it until his hips buck helplessly, not even sure whether he’s trying to get towards or away from the sensation. “We should start tomorrow,” Peter says. “Do some edging, get you on that hair trigger, then Daddy will tell you to come for him. Positive association. You’re so susceptible to it.”

Stiles hums in agreement, even though he feels like there might be a vague insult in there. He only has one working braincell right now though, the rest of them are in his prostate being tormented by Peter’s fingers, so he just settles into pride at Peter’s words. He’s capable of doing what Peter wants of him. That means he’s capable of doing this.
Peter pulls his fingers out and Stiles sighs, his body going limp over the pillows. He feels so lovely and content now that hard edge is gone and he can start to soak in the afterglow.

“Don’t get too comfy,” Peter tells him. “I’m just topping up the lube. Then I’m coming back with three.”

Stiles makes a helpless noise, shaking his head. “Please.”

“Shhh,” Peter says. “You’re fine. We’re nowhere near your limit yet.”

His fingers press back at Stiles’ hole and Stiles keens, trying not to tense as he feels them pushing in. Three fingers is still a stretch but it gets easier every time. He can take it. He likes it. He could just use a breather right now. Peter’s right though, he can keep going. Peter is being gentle with him, working him back up, a steady slide of his fingers in and out. Stiles’ cock is already taking an interest again. He’s done this to himself before, chased one orgasm right after another, usually when he was anxious, but still, he has restless energy right now he can use.

By the time Peter’s fingers are deep inside him, pressing against his prostate again, Stiles is hard, even though it hurts. It’s not as bad as when he had to keep denying himself though. Peter’s here for one thing, and that always makes everything better. Peter will look after him. Peter will keep him safe.

Stiles presses his hips down into the pillows, rubbing his cock against them, trying to embrace what his body is doing. He’s turned on, even if it’s all a little intense and his body isn’t reading the signals quite right. The pain and pleasure are starting to blur.

He’s so hot and he wishes the window were open, fantasising about a breeze over his flesh. That’s tomorrow. He needs to focus on the now. He wishes he could turn over, wishes his could see Peter, could touch him, kiss him. He feels disconnected in this position, cut off from his favourite part of sex, but he knows Peter put him like this for a reason. It gives him easy access to what he needs without having to contort Stiles and make him more uncomfortable. It stops Stiles’ needy groping from getting in the way. There’ll be cuddles later, Stiles is sure. He just needs to get through this first. He needs to learn Peter’s lessons.

The damp material of the pillows that are doubtlessly ruined by his come makes his sensitive cock even more on edge, dragging against the fabric. He winces, trying to shift over, but he can’t move with Peter’s fingers shoved so firmly inside him, and he doesn’t really want to risk the instability of being anywhere other than dead centre. He absolutely can’t hold himself steady right now.

Peter starts to fuck him with his fingers, hard thrusts that hit his prostate, and Stiles moans each time his body is forced into the pillow. He feels like a puppet on a string, completely at Peter’s mercy, and that thought makes his cock throb. He loves it when Peter takes charge of him. He loves it when he shows him just what he’s capable of.

He thrusts harder against the pillow every time he’s pushed down, whimpering as he grips the sheets below him, so close but it feels just out of his reach. He can’t come again this soon. He can’t handle all these sensations without coming. He feels like he might break right out of his own skin, it’s too tight and too hot, he’s covered in sweat, but it’s not there.

“Please,” he whines, not even sure what he’s asking for. “Daddy.”

“Put your hands above your head,” Peter tells him.

Stiles makes a questioning noise, even as he follows through on the instruction. He can’t not. Peter
leans over him, fingers still buried in his ass, his other hand gathering up Stiles’ wrists and pinning them to the bed above him. He can’t move, arms trapped in place, legs held open by Peter knelt between them, hips forced down by the fingers fucking into him. He kicks his legs, just because it’s the only part of him that he has any control over, but it doesn’t do any good.

“That’s it,” Peter says. “Daddy’s got you.”

Stiles moans, wrapped up in Peter, even though in reality they’re barely touching. Peter’s fingers stay deep, massaging his prostate, twisting against it, and Stile is coming again, crying out, tears filling his eyes. He squeezes them shut, rides it out as Peter holds him steady. He won’t ever let him go, Stiles knows that. He’s safe here in this moment. Daddy has him.

The wet patch beneath him grows, the aftershocks running through him like static electricity, jerking his muscles. He starts to even out, finding his breath, waiting to be released, but Peter doesn’t stop. After a few seconds of unaltering thrusts, Stiles realises he’s not going to.

“Please,” he says brokenly. “I can’t.”

“Yes you can,” Peter says simply.

Stiles shakes his head. “No,” he says. “Stop. Please.”

“I want to be very clear about something,” Peter says, his voice level and calm. “Are you listening to me?”

“Yes,” Stiles says and he means it, even as he tightens around Peter’s fingers involuntarily, wanting them out.

“Stop is not a safeword,” Peter says firmly. “Neither is crying.”

Stiles opens his wet eyes, not realising tears were running down his face. He gives a little sob despite himself.

“Only one thing works as a safeword,” Peter says, fingers still working maddeningly slowly inside him. “What is it, baby?”

“Silver,” Stiles says, his voice cracking.

“That’s right,” Peter says. “Are you going to say it?”

Stiles pauses, taking in the question. Does he want to quit? Or does he want to let Peter show him the conclusion to the lesson they’re working on. He doesn’t doubt that Peter would stop in a heartbeat if Stiles really did say that word, and that makes Stiles feel so safe. He’s not in this against his will. And he’s not in any pain. It’s just discomfort. If he’s honest with himself, most of it is psychological. His brain is telling him he’s done. Peter is telling him he isn’t. Right now, he trusts Peter. He wants whatever he’s offering.

“Keep going,” he says, even though it comes out as a helpless whine. He means it. He knows that Peter can tell. He can smell his emotions, can hear the way his heart is beating too hard in his chest, but Stiles is sure it doesn’t falter.

“Good boy,” Peter says. “You’re making Daddy so proud.” Stiles feels himself glow at the praise. Peter lets go of his wrists, sitting back again. “You stay just like that for me.”

Stiles crosses his wrists over and presses them into the pillow above his head. It doesn’t feel secure
like when Peter does it, but Peter is still the one who put him in this position, who has told him to keep them there, so Peter is in control of his body just like he was before and Stiles is just as likely to stay still and take it.

Peter pulls his fingers out of him, letting him breathe for half a second, and then he’s back, but instead of going deep, he dips two fingers just inside Stiles’ ass and then scissors them, holding him open. Stiles whines and squirms. This is a different feeling of exposure and he’s sure it’s too much. Then Peter’s tongue is there too, licking inside him between his fingers, and Stiles feels like he might explode, a feral noise escaping him. He wants to thrash but he holds his hands still as though Peter really is pinning him down.

“You’re so open, baby,” Peter murmurs against his hole before his tongue is tracing the stretched-out rim between his fingers. Stiles’ eyes roll back in his head. “Must be getting sore,” he says, making his tongue deliberate catch on the worn-out muscle. “You’re going such a good job,” he says before pushing his tongue in deep, fucking Stiles on it. Stiles lets out a sob. Peter pulls back. “I think we’re nearly there, sweetheart,” he says. “Stick with me.”

Stiles nods his head in agreement, tuning himself into his body, listening to everything it’s telling him. Mostly it’s just screaming, but there’s subtleties in there. Stiles is supposed to be learning, he remembers. He can feel the way everything is connected, his prostate and his balls throbbing together, washing his cock with pleasure. He can feel every internal muscle trying to clamp down, working in unison. His body is so much more than a series of parts that respond to stimulation. It’s a chain reaction and Stiles lets go, wanting to feel his instincts kick in, wanting to learn how his body ticks so he can set himself on this course at will.

Peter dips his tongue back in again and Stiles learns that he really likes that. He really likes it. He can’t even remember why he shied away from it earlier. Peter eats him out and Stiles forgets that he’s supposed to be overwhelmed, his body going molten and limp. He whimpers as he gets all sloppy and wet but he doesn’t fight it, the sharp sensations of his body easing as everything goes dreamlike around the edges, as though the world in in soft focus. He just breathes and moans and submits. It feels like the most natural thing in the world.

By the time Peter lifts his head back up, Stiles isn’t even sure where his body ends on the bed begins. He’s losing his grip on the physical. It’s like a spiritual experience, like he’s part of the universe, and he can feel himself swaying with the trees outside, the breeze replaced with the slide of sweat over his skin.

“I think one more and we’re done,” Peter says. “You’re doing so well. You always go further than I think you can. You’re just the most beautiful thing in the world.”

Stile moans because he can’t remember how to do anything else, then Peter’s fingers, he doesn’t know how many, slide in deep and crash into his prostate. Stiles is back in his body with a cry, painfully aware of every twinge. Peter rubs up and down his back as he presses mercilessly against his prostate and Stiles wants to tell him that he’s not even hard, that Peter’s being too rough, that they need to work up to this, but Peter knows best. Stiles should never doubt him.

He rubs at Stiles over and over, a relentless rhythm, and Stiles is somehow coming, letting out a sob, waves of pleasure pulsing low down and oozing out of his cock. He can’t make sense of it, it’s not like a proper orgasm, the whole body aspect of it is missing, the pressure in his head and the shudders that go through him, but he can feel the wetness pooling beneath him, can feel his balls contracting, but something feels off. He didn’t even get hard.

As Peter pulls his fingers out though, Stiles gives up on trying to learn and just feels. He’s absolutely wrecked, crying and shivering and sore. Peter gathers him up, pushing the pillows out of
the way and sitting against the headboard, cradling Stiles in his arms. It’s his favourite place to be.

“My baby,” Peter murmurs, kissing his temple. “My beautiful baby boy.”

Stiles smiles, feeling a blanket pulled up around him, and then he just lets himself go, fireflies filling his brain.

He comes around in Peter’s arms, just like he always does. He keeps his eyes closed, basking in Peter’s warmth, his love and affection. He wants to enjoy it while he’s vaguely conscious. He snuggles into him, resting his head on Peter’s shoulder with a little hum.

“Hey, gorgeous,” Peter greets, sensing that he’s back in his head. All those times Peter asked him where he went, Stiles gets it now, even if he still doesn’t know the answer.

He makes a little noise, his arms still too heavy to move, but he doesn’t need to cling when Peter is holding him so securely. Peter starts to rub a hand up and down his spine, long, soothing strokes, and it brings Stiles more firmly into his own body, grounding him. He opens his eyes, gazing up at Peter softly and Peter touches his cheek, gazing back. Stiles is overcome with how much he wants him in every way possible. He keeps expecting to get used to that feeling but he never does.

“Daddy?” he asks sweetly.

“Yes, baby?” Peter responds.

“When are we going to…”

He stops himself. He’s not allowed to say that word. He’s not even sure if he can hold his own head up right now, there’s no way he could kneel in the corner. Not that it matters, being bad is the worst feeling in the world and he’d do anything to avoid it. He worries his lip between his teeth, trying to find the right words.

“When are you going to put your dick in me?” he asks.

“Daddy does that all the time,” Peter says painfully earnestly, tracing Stiles’ lips with his finger for emphasis.

Stiles tries very hard not to roll his eyes. “In my ass,” he says.

“Oh,” Peter says, pulling his finger away. “You want Daddy to fuck you?”

Stiles nods his head. “Yes, please.”

“I think I’ve been perfectly clear about this, baby,” Peter says, his voice patient but firm. “Daddy’s not going to fuck you until you’ve finished your training.”

Stiles nods again. Peter’s right, he knows that. He feels so close to Peter though, he hates that there’s this thing he’s being denied. It doesn’t feel like they’re really together if there’s barriers between them.

“How much more training do I have to do?” he asks. He’s not being petulant and he hopes it doesn’t come off that way, he’s more than willing to put the work in, but the open-endedness makes it difficult for him to make peace with it.

“We’re getting close,” Peter says. “Physically I’m sure you could manage it, especially after what you’ve just taken.”
He slides his hand down, pressing at his still wet hole. The tip of his finger slips in and Stiles keens, feeling his face heat. He presses it into Peter, squirming, but he’s not really trying to get away. If Peter wants to fuck him with his fingers again, Stiles is more than happy to go with it. Peter pulls his hand away though, resting it on Stiles’ hip. Stiles looks up at him.

“But?” he asks. There’s a but, he can tell. If there wasn’t, Peter’s cock would be in him right now.

“But bodies are easier to train than minds,” Peter confirms. “And you’ve been such a good boy, you’ve come a long way, Daddy is so proud of you. I didn’t think we’d get you here so quick. But you’re not done yet. You have lessons to learn about who you are. Daddy’s going to teach you. He’s going to keep working on you and shaping you into everything you can be. You’re not finished yet, sweetheart, but you will be. And then you get everything.”

Stiles smiles at him. “I love you so much.”

“I love you too, baby,” Peter responds simply, pushing back Stiles’ hair. “You ready to get up yet?”

Stiles snuggles into him. “A little longer?”

“We’ve been sat here a really long time,” Peter says. “Daddy’s legs are going numb.” He makes no move to let go of him though.

Stiles frowns. “Sorry. I guess we could move.”

“That would be nice,” Peter agrees.

Stiles tries to sit up and Peter helps him but he still doesn’t let him go. Instead, he leans in to join their mouths together. It’s slow and lazy and so intimate that Stiles just melts back into him. He can’t help himself and really Peter brought this upon himself.

When Peter pulls back, he catches Stiles’ bottom lip between his teeth. Stiles whines but Peter doesn’t let go, grinning at him as he nips Stiles’ lip. If he broke the skin, would that be all it took? Stiles goes weak at the thought. *Alpha*. It lights up something inside him. He can’t belong to Peter any more viscerally than that.

Peter finally releases him before giving him a chaste little kiss, a comfort or a consolation prize, Stiles isn’t sure. He pulls back, considering Stiles for a moment.

“You’re probably not up for a game of chess right now,” he says.

“I don’t want to use my brain,” Stiles says, trying not to let it become a whine. “Or my body.”

“So a coma then,” Peter says, a little smile playing over his lips. He combs his fingers through Stiles’ hair. “You still need lots of looking after when Daddy plays hard with you,” he says. “And that’s okay. That’s what Daddy trains you for. Someday you’ll be fucked out and still good company.”

Stiles frowns at that, hating the feeling of inadequacy that seeps in. He’s not good enough yet. But Daddy’s going to help him.

“Don’t worry,” Peter says. “I still adore every second that I’m with you. I’d rather do nothing with my baby than have an adventure all by myself.”

Stiles settles at that. He’s Peter’s Companion. His family. If he keeps working hard, one day they’ll
be able to go on those adventures together.

“So, seeing as intellectualism is off the table,” Peter says, “I thought we could relax and watch a little TV? You’ve worked hard, you deserve a treat.”

“In bed?” Stiles asks hopefully.

Peter gives him a look. “No TV in bed,” he says firmly. “Daddy’s going to clean you up a little bit, because you are a mess and I don’t need you squirming. Then I’ll dress you and we can go downstairs.”

Stiles tries not to pout. “Okay.”

Peter gives him a smile of approval, kissing his temple before easing him back. Stiles goes with it, letting himself be sat on the bed so that Peter can move himself away. He looks stiff as he steps off the bed, stretching his arms above his head, the movement causing his T-shirt to ride upwards, revealing a strip of skin at his lower back. Stiles wants to lick it but he’s pretty sure that’s not allowed so he settles for licking his lips instead.

“Lie out on the bed for me,” Peter says without turning around as he heads into the bathroom.

Stiles feels cold without Peter and the blanket wrapped around him but he does as he’s told, laying himself out on the sheets, legs spread, body pliant and full of surrender. He closes his eyes to the sound of running water, not flinching when he feels the bed dip beside him, a wet washcloth swiping over his stomach. The come is dry and flaky so Stiles guesses he’s been in this state for a while. As Peter cleans his abdomen and cock, Stiles lets his hand wander, finding the pillow he was laid on. It’s still wet so it isn’t hours he’s lost at least.

“Now I need to clean your hand,” Peter admonishes. Stiles opens his eyes as Peter lifts it from the pillow, swiping over it with the warm washcloth. “Wandering hands is a bad habit.”

Stiles just gazes at him, the care with which he treats Stiles, placing his hand back down on the bed and then moving the washcloth between his legs, cleaning up his hole. This should be humiliating, if someone told him he would be in this position he would have pulled something from cringing so hard, but with Peter it’s okay. Peter loves him. Peter looks after him. He would never demean him.

Once he’s cleaned up, Peter collects Stiles’ clothes from the floor and dresses him, arranging his clothes carefully on his body. He looks him over and then takes a step back, pulling his own shirt over his head.

“You got Daddy all messy,” he says, tossing the dirty shirt towards the bathroom.

He turns around, opening up his dresser and pulling out a fresh one. Stiles perches on the edge of the bed, taking in the expanse of flesh, willing him to turn around, but Peter pulls the shirt on with his back still turned. Stiles can’t hold back the little disgruntled noise that bubbles up inside him.

Peter turns to face him, raising an eyebrow. “You’re not done yet? Because I can keep pushing if you want it.”

Stiles’ face heats but his body shies away. He definitely has no come left, not a drop, but he’s sure Peter would take his time making sure. He shakes his head. He’s ready for the pampering that comes after he’s proved what a good boy he is.

Peter offers out his hand. “Let’s go then.”
They end up watching a nature documentary about Patagonia, Stiles sprawled across the couch, his head in Peter’s lap. He doesn’t think there’s a thing in the world that could make him more content. Peter gently strokes through his hair, eyes fixed on the screen.

“Have you been there?” Stiles asks. “You’ve travelled to South America, right?”

“I have,” Peter confirms. “I visited Cueva de las Manos. It’s stunning, the artwork in the caves. And haunting. Well worth the trek.”

Stiles smiles. “Your life is so impressive.”

Peter looks down at him. “Maybe I’ll take you some day. Or we can go explore somewhere new together. The world is full of endless beauties. I want to take you to all of them.”

“I want to go,” Stiles agrees.

“We will,” Peter agrees. “I have so much to show you.”

Stiles hums happily, turning his attention back to the TV. The landscapes are beautiful and they fill Stiles with wanderlust. He imagines Peter holding his hand, guiding him, keeping him close. He imagines sunsets and shared awe. They could have it all.

When it’s time for dinner, Peter takes Stiles upstairs, Stiles sitting on the bed and lifting his foot up to have the cuff put on. He watches happily as Peter secures it into place, nice and snug. He places a finger under Stiles’ chin, tilting his head up to meet his gaze. When Stiles looks at him, he gets a soft smile in return before Peter kisses him firmly.

“I was thinking,” he says. “We should have another date night tomorrow.”

Stiles feels the excitement stirring inside him. “Yes, please.”

“Get all dressed up, have a nice romantic dinner, watch a movie,” Peter says.

“And then orgasms?” Stiles asks in his sweetest voice. He stops short at fluttering his eyelashes, but only just.

“My dear boy, I have plans for you,” Peter promises with a telling smirk.

Stiles shifts on the bed, restless already. “Can’t wait.”

Peter takes in a deliberate breath through his nose, his eyes going dark. “I can tell.” He places a chaste kiss against Stiles’ lips and then straightens up, pulling his hand back. “Daddy has to go make dinner now. Be good.”

“Always,” Stiles agrees easily.

Peter gives him a fond smile, heading for the door. Once he’s gone, Stiles lets himself fall back on the bed, sprawling out bonelessly. It feels so good. He was still recovering from teasing his body all day when Peter was at work, this afternoon just reminded him exactly which places were still sore. He has a few new ones to go along with them too. His abs feel like he’s done a hundred sit-ups, or what he imagines that would be like at least. He hates fitness drills. His cock is sensitive, his balls tender. His ass feels fucked out and he can feel lube leaking, even though Peter cleaned him up. It was a superficial wash, he’ll get a real one at bath time. He wonders if Peter will get in with him again. Stiles loves the intimacy of being in the water together while Peter cleans him.
He takes a deep breath, letting himself relax. He wonders if Peter has any more plans for him today. He cleaned him up so probably not. He likes to keep him dirty if he’s going to use him again. Stiles loves the promise that comes with his own come, or Peter’s, drying on his skin, all marked up for Daddy to come back to. His cock stirs but he ignores it, stretching his arms up over his head. He loves the feeling of his body extending, opening up, the yoga teaching him just how good it feels to free up all of that tension and let himself move freely. He thinks it makes him more flexible too. He can’t for Peter to try out that theory.

A loud bang from downstairs tears him out of his thoughts. He bolts upright, staring wide-eyed at the door. He’s about to call out to Peter when he hears shouting voices.

“Get down on the floor, hands behind your head!”

Stiles’ entire body goes too hot and he feels like he might throw up. They’re in the middle of nowhere, Stiles has seen those kinds of home invasion movies, there’s always unhinged assailants and bloodshed. He gets to his feet, creeping towards the door, knowing there’s nothing he can do to help from here. But Peter can handle it, right? He can just get the claws out and save them.

“Where’s the kid?” a voice demands.

Stiles freezes. Has someone been watching them through the windows at night? They never close the blinds. What exactly have they seen? He thinks of all the intimate moments shared that could be twisted and used against them now.

Heavy footsteps on the stairs snap him out of it and he grabs hold of the bedroom door, swinging it closed. He’s just signalled his location, but they’ll be coming for him anyway. All they have to do is follow the chain. He crosses the room, rushing into the bathroom and slamming the door shut behind him. He turns the lock, cowering back against the bath, his knees drawn up in front of him.

He hears the bedroom door open, hears footsteps moving around the room, and he doesn’t know what they’re waiting for, they must see the chain stretching from the bed under the door. If they’ve made it this far though, that means Peter’s probably not okay.

“Clear,” a voice calls out.

Stiles frowns at that, the terminology jarring. Before he has time to ponder on what it means, the door is kicked open. He lifts his arms up, shielding himself, bracing for the worst, but nobody touches him.

“Hands above your head!”

Stiles instinctively raises his arms up, seeing the men in front of him for the first time. They have guns. And FBI vests. Stiles stares at them. Are they the good guys? Does mean Stiles is the bad guy?

“We found him,” one of the guys says into a radio. Stiles feels like he must be in a lot of trouble if he’s the one they were looking for.

“Is there anyone else in the house?” the other guy asks him.

“Just Peter,” Stiles says helplessly, his mind still reeling.

And then Agent fucking McCall is standing in the doorway with his gun drawn. He says when he sees Stiles, letting out an audible breath as he holsters his weapon. “Don’t worry, we have Peter,” he says, coming to crouch beside. He looks at the cuff, giving the lock a tug. Stiles tries to draw
away from him. McCall looks up at the other agents. “Get me some bolt cutters and clear the rest of the house.”

With a nod they’re gone and Stiles is sat staring at McCall, not even knowing where to start. “What?” he asks, completely uncomprehending. He feels like he might be in a dream. Or a nightmare.

“It’s okay,” McCall tells him. “You’re safe.” He glances upwards. “And you can put your arms down.”

Stiles slowly lowers them, not even realising they were still in the air. He wraps them around himself, hugging tight.

“We’re going to get you out of this,” McCall says in the softest voice Stiles has ever heard him use, nodding towards the cuff. “Then we’re going to get you back to Beacon Hills. Your dad is going to be so pleased to see you.”

Stiles blinks at him. “My dad wants me back?”

McCall frowns. “Of course he does. He’s been going out of his mind trying to find you.”

“‘He has?’ Stiles asks.

McCall gives him a strange look and Stiles suddenly realises what that voice is. It’s his well-trained voice for coaxing victims. That must make Stiles the victim. He opens his mouth to correct him but one of the agents is back with bolt cutters. McCall takes them and then the other man is gone, McCall leaning down to snip away the padlock.

“Peter has the key,” Stiles says, trying to shift away, but he’s literally put himself in a corner. He can’t bear the thought of such a special thing being broken.

“Peter’s on his way to Beacon Hills to answer for himself,” McCall says, cutting off the lock like it’s nothing.

Stiles feels tears filling his eyes as McCall pulls off the broken lock, unbuckling the cuff. It’s such an intimate thing between he and Peter and he hates that McCall is inserting himself in between them like he has any right. It feels so cruel to strip Stiles of this without his consent. He sniffs, a tear falling down his face, and McCall looks up at him, face full of concern.

“It’s going to be okay,” he says in his soft don’t startle the victim voice, but then he places a comforting hand on Stiles’ shoulder and Stiles pushes it violently away, glaring at him. McCall backs up a little, holding up his hands, like he’s trying to placate a caged animal. “I’m sorry,” he says, watching Stiles carefully. He stands up, taking a step back. “How about we get you out of here?”

Stiles considers his options. He doesn’t really have any. Still, if Peter is on his way to Beacon Hills, Stiles wants to be there too. He nods his head, getting to his feet and following McCall through to the bedroom. He pauses, looking around the room, hating that his sanctuary has been invaded. It feels so wrong. He looks at Wolfy sitting on Stiles’ nightstand and he wants so desperately to grab him but he’s embarrassed. He hates that he’s embarrassed. Peter never makes him feel that way. Now all this shame is creeping in and he can’t stand it because he hasn’t done anything wrong. They haven’t done anything wrong.

He goes over to the closet, opening it up and pulling out one of Peter’s soft, V-neck sweaters. He ignores McCall watching him as he pulls it on, liking the fact that it’s a little too big. It belongs to
Daddy but nobody has to know that. This is a comfort blanket he can sneak under the radar. He starts to feel a little bit better.

“Do you have shoes?” McCall asks, looking down at his bare feet.

“Yeah,” Stiles says. “In the kitchen.”

McCall gives a nod and steps out of the doorway, motioning for Stiles to go first. Somehow it feels like a trap. He goes down the stairs to find the house crawling with agents going through all of Peter’s things. He feels sick. This is such a violation of privacy, it shouldn’t be allowed. How did they even get a warrant?

He moves through to the kitchen where dinner is half-cooked, the back door kicked in, panes of glass broken. His legs nearly buckle under him as a sob rises up in his throat. He clenches his hands into fists. How dare they tear their home apart. They don’t deserve this.

He retrieves the expensive sneakers that Peter bought him with such love and care, remembering how he’d sat at the kitchen table while Peter put them on for him, tying up his laces, looking after him. He puts them on by himself now and he feels so hideously lonely.

McCall walks him back through to the front of the house and Stiles looks into Peter’s office to see agents emptying out of all his drawers. His chest clenches.

“He doesn’t like people in his study,” he says, though he knows his voice isn’t strong enough to carry. He looks at McCall, trying to appeal to him. “Everything’s in order, it needs to stay that way. It’s his work, it’s important, please tell them to stop.”

“Don’t worry about it,” McCall dismisses, like it’s nothing. “With any luck, he won’t be back here in a long time anyway.”

Stiles draws his eyebrows together. There’s no way they’re going to be able to hold him for shit. Is there?

McCall steps out of the open front door, turning to look at Stiles expectantly. Stiles takes a breath, stepping up to the door, feeling the air against his face. He’s not supposed to go outside. Not without his Daddy. The evening air is cool and he pulls the sweater down over his hands. It was a good idea, regardless of sentimentality. He grips the soft material in his fists. If he leaves, will he be allowed to come back?

“Stiles?” McCall says.

Stiles looks at him. “I’m supposed to stay in the bedroom until he comes to get me. I shouldn’t have let you break the lock.”

“He’s never coming to get you again,” McCall says softly, as though he thinks that will console him.

A tear rolls down Stiles’ cheek at the thought. He’s never felt so hopeless in his entire life. Not even when he was in the basement. They’ve taken Peter though and the only thing Stiles can do is follow him.

He steps outside, feeling like the world might literally end, but it doesn’t. People are milling around outside, talking radios, swapping notes, giving instructions. None of it makes any sense to Stiles but he has to get to Peter. He has to go and tell the truth so that all these people will get out of their lives and they can build their sanctuary again, stronger this time. It won’t be so easy to
As they approach McCall’s car, he opens up the trunk, taking out a seat cover. He goes to the passenger side of the car, putting it in place. “It’s just to…”

“Preserve evidence,” Stiles finishes for him. “Yeah.” He’s seething but this is the hoop he needs to jump through so he climbs into the car.

McCall closes the door for him, walking around to the driver’s side. He gets in beside Stiles, putting his keys in the ignition. “Let’s get you home.”

Stiles looks at the house. He’s already home but they’re tearing it apart.

McCall reaches into his pocket, taking out his phone. “Do you want to call your dad?” he offers. “He’s been notified that you’re safe but I’m sure he’d like confirmation from you.”

Stiles stares at it, remembering when he had Peter’s phone in his hand. It hadn’t even occurred to him to call his dad then. He equally doesn’t want to now. He shakes his head, wrapping his arms around himself.

“Sometimes it’s easier in person,” McCall says, putting the phone on the console between them. “It’s a long drive. Just grab it if you change your mind.”

He pulls on his seatbelt and Stiles follows suit, clicking it into place as McCall starts up the car. As they start to drive away, Stiles bites down on his lip so hard that it hurts but he needs something to ground him. His heart is beating too fast in his chest and he doesn’t feel like he can breathe, the panic closing in around him. He’s going towards Peter, he reminds himself, as the house fades away behind them. He’s going towards Peter. That’s what matters.

They drive through the winding woods, the private drive that none of these people had any right to come down. They’re trespassing. Stiles hopes Peter sues all of them.

By the time they get to the main road, Stiles is starting to zone out, or maybe he’s just disassociating. He wants so desperately to remove himself from this situation. He reaches a hand under his sweater, Peter’s sweater, feeling the family crest over his heart. He traces the lines of the embroidery over and over until nothing else exists.

It’s a long time until Stile starts to recognise anything, but once they get close to Beacon Hills, it’s like something in Stiles snaps into stark focus. He can’t ignore the world around him now when it’s a place that’s so embedded in him. He feels strangely nostalgic and then he hates himself because this is not home. It’s not. There’s nothing for him here.

He pulls his hand out of the sweater, looking over at McCall. “My dad called you to help find me?” he asks, his voice laced with uncertainty. He doesn’t know which answer would be worse.

“Scott did,” McCall responds.

Stiles nods, sagging back in his seat. “Scott did,” he repeats. “Yeah, that makes sense.” He’s filled with so much love for him because of course he tried everything. Of course he did.

“I’m sure your dad would have,” McCall adds. “He was so far buried in the investigation when I got there, I don’t think he’d come up for air since you went missing.”

Stiles snorts a humourless laugh at that. He grits his teeth.
“There were no leads, it was a nightmare, he did everything he could,” McCall says. “Then we got a break a week ago. Your phone turned on.”

Stiles frowns. “I don’t have my phone.” Did Peter have it? Had his belongings been handed over when he was bought from the Foundry?

“We tracked it to some kids a couple of towns over,” McCall says. “They were skateboarding in the warehouse distract and they found it. The screen was cracked but they took it home and charged it to see if it still worked. I had them take me out there, and then I took Scott to see if he could pick up a scent. He found the basement.”

Stiles’ stomach turns over. The thought of Scott being there, seeing what he went through, it must have hurt him so much. But if Stiles is going to Beacon Hills, maybe he can see him before he goes home. Maybe Peter will let him. Then he can tell him that it’s all okay. He can put his mind at rest and nobody will look for him again. Everyone will leave them alone.

“The techs found your DNA,” McCall goes on. “And blood. Not enough for you to have been killed down there, but it looked like you were hurt.” He drives past the Welcome to Beacon Hills sign and Stiles feels a wave of terror roll through him. “The plus side was that your kidnappers left fingerprints all over the place and they were in the system with a variety of DUIs and aggravated assault charges. We brought them in and once they realised they had the Sheriff’s son, they were pretty eager to cooperate. They led us to the Foundry whose records led us to you.”

He looks at Stiles like he’s proud of himself but Stiles can barely hear him over the beating of his own heart.

“You could have just knocked on the door,” he says incredulously, tears filling his eyes again.

“We didn’t want to risk a hostage situation,” McCall says. “And your dad would have been there in person, but we also didn’t want to give an angry parent a firearm.”

Stiles looks at him, fear crawling under his skin. “Why is he angry?” he asks in a small voice. He never did anything to deserve this reaction from his father.

“That you were taken,” McCall says slowly, giving a questioning sideways look.

They pull up outside the Sheriff’s Station, a place that Stiles has been a million times before, but it doesn’t feel like a safe haven now. He swallows back the bile. He can’t move. Peter is in there, he reminds himself. He has to get to Peter.

He steps out of the car as his dad bursts out of the doors of the building. Stiles flinches and then Stilinski is gathering him up in a crushing hug, holding onto him so tightly. Stiles just stands there, arms hanging limply by his sides. He doesn’t get it. He doesn’t trust it. He can’t quite bring himself to pull away though.

When Stilinski steps back he places his hands on Stiles’ shoulders and just stares at him in wonder. There’s tears in his eyes. Stiles still doesn’t get it and he knows that he’s staring at Stilinski like he’s a maniac but Stilinski doesn’t seem to care. Or maybe caring would ruin the act.

“I thought I lost you,” Stilinski says.

“No,” Stiles says bluntly. He’s not sure if he’s calling him a liar or dismissing the notion. He wasn’t lost though and he wasn’t anyone’s to find. He looks past his dad into the Station. “Where’s Peter?”
Something changes on Stilinski’s face, hardening as he steps away. “He’s in the interrogation room. They’ll get everything out of him, don’t worry.”

“I’m going to go check how things are going,” McCall says. He turns to Stilinski. “Why don’t you get set up in your office. We can take the statement then get him out of here. No need to drag it out.”

Stilinski nods and McCall heads into the building. Stiles instinctively doesn’t want to go in there. McCall’s words roll around in his brain. Get him out of here. Where are they going to send him next? He just wants to go home with Peter. He just wants to see him. Peter will tell him everything’s okay. He’ll make it all better.

“Stiles?”

He snaps out of it, looking at his dad.

“Shall we go inside?” Stilinski prompts.

Stiles shrugs but he steps forward, pushing his way through the doors. Every Deputy in the place stares at him, he can feel their eyes, their pity, their hunger for the juicy details. He doesn’t look at them, just grits his teeth and strides through the Station, letting himself into the Sheriff’s office and sitting in the chair across from his desk. Stilinski closes the door behind them, sitting down in his own chair at the opposite side of the desk.

Stiles stares unseeingly across the room as he draws his foot up onto the chair with him. He chews on his thumbnail, his other hand absently playing with his ankle, and he realises that’s where his cuff should be. He fights back a sob.

“I don’t know what you’ve been through,” Stilinski begins.

Stiles turns to face him sharply. “Hell,” he says. “It was awful. You fucked up.”

Stilinski stares at him and his face is as carefully considered as McCall’s was the whole ride over here. Friendly, understanding law enforcement professional meets victim. Stiles rolls his eyes and has to look away.

“You paid for amateurs,” he says, trying to hold back the angry tears. “They hurt me. They locked me up in that place. I didn’t know what was happening.”

“I should have called McCall in earlier,” Stilinski says and Stiles wonders what the fuck that has to do with anything.

“I didn’t deserve that,” Stiles says, but the words sound weak and the tears finally fall.

“You didn’t,” Stilinski agrees.

Stiles turns to face him, furious. His false pity is repugnant, especially when there’s not even anyone here to benefit from it. It must be second nature by now while everyone else was trying to find his son.

“Don’t talk to me,” he spits out. “Just… Just don’t fucking talk to me.”

Stilinski looks hurt and Stiles almost wavers. He pulls his other leg up onto the chair, hugging his knees as he buries his face in them, pathetic sobs taking over his body. This is the last place in the world he wants to be. He just wants to go home.
He looks up when the door opens, McCall coming in. Stiles wipes at his face, sniffling, and his dad places a box of tissues beside him on the desk. Stiles takes one, grateful, trying not to meet Stilinski’s eyes. He cleans himself up, looking at McCall.

“How’s Peter?”

McCall seems to find his phrasing strange but he comes further into the room, sitting on the small couch. “He’s cooperating.”

“Good,” Stiles says. “He didn’t do anything wrong.”

“He had you chained up,” McCall points out gently.

Stiles can see his father flinch across the desk. “That was just keep me safe. He was making dinner.”

McCall stares at him for a while but he doesn’t comment. He clasps his hands together, refocussing. “Let’s just get through this then we can get you home,” he says. “First things first, physical evidence.”

Stiles looks down at himself, his heart sinking.

“We need your clothes,” McCall says, as though Stiles hadn’t already worked that out.

“No,” Stiles says. “They’re mine.”

“I understand this is uncomfortable,” McCall says. “But we need to make sure we have every bit of evidence we can possibly collect before this goes to trial. We want this case to be watertight.” His eyes scan Stiles, the hesitation clear. “So we need your clothes and we need to take evidence from your body. We have professionals who are trained in this, they can make it as comfortable as possible.”

Stiles feels sick, closing his eyes against the rising tide. He shakes his head. “I’m not taking a rape kit,” he says, looking over at McCall. “You can’t make me. I wasn’t raped so I’m not taking one.”

“Stiles, I understand that this can feel incredibly intrusive when you’ve already been through so much,” McCall says. “But we only get one shot at this. As soon as you shower, it’s gone, then it’s just a game of he said, she said.”

“He didn’t rape me,” Stiles insists. “And I’m not taking a rape kit. I know my rights. You can’t force me.”

McCall sighs, like he’s not even trying to hide his irritation now. “This is going to help you…”

“No means no, Agent McCall,” Stiles says, giving him a challenging look. The expression of frustration he gets in return is so familiar it’s almost comforting. That’s the McCall he remembers, the one who saw Stiles as nothing more than a cocky little pain in the ass. He’d rather be that than a victim.

“Well, I can force you to give me those clothes,” McCall says. “I can call a judge and have them sign a warrant demanding that you hand them over.”

“But you can’t stop me walking out of the building and setting them on fire in the parking lot before you get your stupid warrant,” Stiles counters.
“Stiles, just give him the damn clothes!” Stilinski snaps.

Stiles turns to look at him, feeling himself cower back into the chair. He blinks back fresh tears. Stilinski sighs, looking tired and sorry. Stiles is determined not to fall for it.

“We all just want to get this over with,” Stilinski says, his voice calmer, more practiced. “We all just want to make sure you’re safe and get you home. But this is what we need to do. Please just do it.”

He reaches down, opening up his desk drawer. He places some clothes down on the desk. Stiles recognises them. They’re his. He reaches out to touch them like they might be a mirage.

“You just happen to have a drawer full of my clothes?”

“For the scent,” Stilinski says. “We’ve been trying to track you. The wolves have. I kept them handy.”

Stiles feels strangely touched, but then his dad wasn’t the one out there actually doing the looking by the sounds of things. Stilinski grabs a couple of evidence bags, handing them over the desk to him. Stiles takes them, along with the clothes, looking at Stilinski.

“I’m sorry to be such a constant inconvenience in your life.”

Stilinski opens his mouth to say something but Stiles turns away, already heading out of the door. He locks himself in the bathroom and puts everything down on the counter, looking at himself in the mirror. He’s already totting up what evidence they’re going to get from his clothes. Peter’s DNA will be on them, skin and hair fibres, but that doesn’t prove anything, they were sharing a living space. They’ll find lube, which will raise questions, and Stiles’ precome from this morning when he was sucking off Peter beneath the blankets. That feels like another world now. Stiles wants to go back there. Peter didn’t come on him today though. There shouldn’t be anything incriminating on him that they can twist to their narrative.

He sighs, pulling the sweater over his head. He holds it in his hands for a moment, taking in the softness. He buries his nose in it but it just smells clean. He hopes Peter isn’t too mad at him that he got it taken away. His own clothes he has plenty of in the dresser in their bedroom, but Peter still might tell him off for being careless. He should take better care of things. This is out of his control though. Peter will understand.

He folds the sweater carefully, placing it in the bag. He pulls his T-shirt over his head next, looking at the family crest as tears fill his eyes again. He shouldn’t be letting go of this. It’s too special. Too personal. This is just for him and Peter. He places a kiss against the embroidery and then, with shaking hands, he folds it, placing it with the sweater.

He toes off his sneakers, lifting them up and looking at them. Nearly brand new, not even worn in. They were a symbol of how much Peter trusted him. He remembers their walk in the woods, holding onto Peter’s hand, all the fresh air and beauty. All that time he wanted to get out of that house and now all he wants is to be back inside it. When they get home, he’s never going to ask if he can leave again.

With a sigh he puts the sneakers in a second bag. They’re expensive and he’s wasting them. He feels so ashamed. It’s not his fault though, he reminds himself. None of this is his fault. These bastards are just against them.

He pushes down his pants, knowing that’s where they’re going to find so much evidence to fit their
theories. Stiles consented though. He always consented. Peter never did anything he didn’t want. He respected his boundaries and he was kind and gentle with him. He gave him all the time in the world to work out what he wanted, held him back from taking too much too soon. He wonders if this is going to set his training back. He can’t stand that thought.

He screws the pants up, throwing them in with the rest of this clothes. He’s giving them fuel for their fire. He looks at the sink, wondering if he can wash them, but if he hands over soaking wet trousers he’ll be accused of tampering with evidence. He doesn’t have a choice. With a huff he seals up the bags, putting on the now unfamiliar clothes.

There’s jeans and a T-shirt and a plaid shirt. He lifts them up to his face to sniff them. Mostly they’re just musty. Stiles is pretty sure they were in his hamper. He doesn’t want to wear them but there’s no other options available to him. When he gets home he’s going to ask Peter to throw them out. For now though he tugs up the jeans, the material course and stiff. He can’t remember the last time he had jeans on. He hates them, they make his skin crawl. Tears spill from his eyes again as he fastens them reluctantly. He wants his soft pants that Peter chose so carefully for him. This feels like such a cruel punishment.

The T-shirt is old and worn in so it’s much softer, but nothing like the smooth material of the clothes Peter bought for him. He pulls on the plaid, looking at himself in the mirror. He doesn’t look like Peter’s anymore. He hates it.

He grabs the evidence, heading back through to his dad’s office. He throws the bags at McCall without comment, falling back into his chair. He hugs himself but it’s not as comforting now he has these awful clothes as a barrier. It’s like they’re stripping away who he is.

“Thank you,” McCall says. “I know this is difficult and a lot of it probably feels unnecessary, but we need to make sure we protect the physical evidence.”


“We just need a statement,” McCall says.

Stiles makes an irritated noise. A statement about what? How much better his life is and how they should all fuck off and leave he and Peter alone?

The door opens and Stiles looks up to see a flustered Scott barging into the room. Stiles grins at him and everything is suddenly amazing. He throws himself at Scott, clinging to him, and Scott holds him back just as tightly.

“I am so glad to see you,” Scott says fiercely. He’s holding him so hard that it hurts but Stiles really doesn’t care. It makes him feel safe. “I’m so sorry that I lost you,” Scott says, his voice cracking. “I ran when you called but you were gone and I couldn’t get a scent.”

“They put me in a van,” Stiles says. “It’s okay.”

“I tried to find you,” Scott insists. “I’ve been looking for you every day.”

Stiles smiles, resting his head down on Scott’s shoulder. “I knew you would. But it’s okay. I’m okay.”

Scott can hear his heartbeat. He knows he’s not lying. He dips his head, putting his nose nearer to Stiles before he’s straightening up, a frown creasing his brow. Stiles lifts his head, looking at him.

“He’s a werewolf?”
“Oh,” Stiles says. He’d kind of forgotten that meant anything. “Yeah.”

“Peter’s a werewolf?” McCall demands. He’s looking towards the interrogation room, worry all over his face.

“He’s a powerful Alpha,” Stiles says proudly. “So the fact that he let himself get brought in means that he has nothing to hide.”

McCall exchanges a look with Stilinski and then looks back to the interrogation room, clearly wondering if his men are safe. They are. Stiles is certain of that. He’s not in any rush to reassure McCall though.

McCall looks up at Scott who’s still holding Stiles, giving a little huff. “I didn’t think you were going to rush straight down here. It’s a school night.”

“You thought you were going to tell me that my best friend who’s been missing for months is safe at the local Sheriff’s Station and I wasn’t going to rush straight down here?” Scott asks incredulously.

“Okay, fine, but it’s a school night,” McCall says, getting to his feet and trying to usher him towards the door. “Let’s go.”

Scott looks at Stiles. “Are you okay?”

Stiles nods, giving him a smile, but he can’t quite make himself step back. “I’m good. I’ve been good. Really.” He swallows thickly. “I just really missed you.”

“I really missed you too,” Scott agrees, and then they’re hugging again.

Stiles can see McCall roll his eyes but he mentally gives him the finger. He’d do it physically but he doesn’t want to let go of Scott.

Scott pulls back again, hands still on Stiles. “Are you done here yet?”

Stiles shrugs. “I’m supposed to give a statement.”

“I can stay,” Scott offers. “Do you want me to stay?”

“It’s okay,” Stiles tells him. “You have school. I got this.”

The thought of Scott leaving fills him with dread but he doesn’t want to make him sit through this. It’s humiliating enough that he’s apparently going to have to spell it out to his dad and McCall.

“I’ll come see you tomorrow,” Scott promises.

Stiles frowns. “Uh. I’m not sure if you can.”

“Of course you can,” Stilinski cuts in. “Come any time you want, Scott. Come for dinner if you like.”

Stiles looks at him, frowning. What say does he think he has on who can come to Peter’s house? Maybe he should let Scott stay and hear what he has to say, then Peter will have no excuse to keep him away, right? He’ll understand the situation. He won’t try and tear them apart.

“I’ll see you tomorrow,” Scott says, taking the decision out of his hands. Just another thing he has no control over.
Stiles nods and hugs him one last time, trying not to cry on him again. McCall ushers him out of the door, evidence bags in hand, and Stiles sits back down, watching them through the glass window. Scott leaves and McCall hands the evidence bags off to somebody, giving them instructions before checking in with his team. Stiles sighs, looking away, staring blankly at the wall. Peter has taught him how to be patient so Stiles just needs to wait for him.

“He felt so guilty,” Stilinski says. “Because he was there that night.”

“It wasn’t his fault,” Stiles says.

“Being so close when it happened just ate away at him,” Stilinski says.

Stiles turns to glare at him. “It wasn’t his fault,” he hisses, giving him a meaningful look.

“I know,” Stilinski says warily.

“Good,” Stiles says. He’s not letting his dad off the hook that easily.

“He really was out there looking for you every day,” Stilinski says.

“Well, somebody had to,” Stiles responds, his eyes going back to the window. They land on Peter signing some paperwork and getting his belongings. They’ve finished with him. They’re letting him go. “Peter,” he says, filling with joy. He gets up, bolting for the door.

“Stiles,” his dad calls after him.

Peter doesn’t stop, he just heads straight outside. He probably didn’t hear him, but that doesn’t explain why he would leave without him. Maybe he’s getting some fresh air after being told Stiles still has to give his statement. They’ve finished with him. They’re letting him go. “Peter,” he says, filling with joy. He gets up, bolting for the door.

“Stiles,” his dad calls after him.

Peter pauses but he doesn’t look at him. There’s something so tense and unnatural in his stance. It scares Stiles. He moves towards him but finds himself grabbed from behind by his dad.

“Get off me,” he says, trying to pull his arms away. Peter opens the door of the car. “Peter, wait. Where are you going? You can’t leave me.”

He can see the hesitation in Peter, the reluctance to get in, but he still doesn’t look over.

“Peter, please,” Stiles says, his voice raw and desperate. “I didn’t do this. I didn’t call anyone. I want to go with you. Please don’t leave me here.”

He tries to move forward but Stilinski holds him firm. Stiles digs his nails in, clawing at his arms as Peter starts to climb into the car. “No,” Stiles says. “No, you can’t leave me. Don’t leave me here.” Tears are running down his face and he screams in frustration as the car door closes and he can’t get away. He kicks at Stilinski, scratches him viciously. “Get off me! Get off me! Get off me!”
Stilinski finally lets go of him but only when it’s too late, when the car containing Stiles’ whole life is driving away. He lets out a wail, tempted to chase after it like a dog, but he just spins around, glaring at his dad. And then he sees the blood. His nails have ripped into the flesh of Stilinski’s forearms, leaving dull gouges that well with blood. He stares at them, his heart pounding in his chest, his whole body shaking. He did that. He’s such an awful person. He doesn’t deserve Peter.

“It’s okay,” Stilinski tells him.

Stiles looks up at him with wet eyes and shakes his head sadly. “It’s really not.”

McCall comes out of the Station, no doubt hearing the commotion. He looks between the two of them, clearly trying to plan out his next move. “Let’s go back inside,” he finally says. “We’ll get that statement then you can both get out of here. It’s been a long day.”

Stiles doesn’t take his eyes off his father, feeling the guilt pressing down on him. Sorry is on the tip of his tongue but it makes him want to throw up. This still isn’t nearly as bad as what Stilinski did to him. He turns, numb and in shock, following McCall back into the Station.

He knows that everybody’s looking at him this time but he just stares at the floor in front of his feet, making his way to Stilinski’s office. Peter will be back for him. This is just a punishment, like corner time but bigger. The thought makes Stiles feel like he’s about to drown. He didn’t even break a rule. Does Peter really think he would do this? Maybe it’s a test of loyalties. Stiles will pick him every time. He’d pick him over anything.

“Okay,” McCall says, closing the door behind him. Stilinski goes back to sit in his chair but he doesn’t say anything. Stiles is grateful. “We had to let Peter go because he did everything above board and his story checked out,” McCall says. “He bought you in good faith from a registered Foundry and he filled out all of the required paperwork. We don’t have anything on him. I am going to be going through him with a fine-toothed comb though. If there’s anything I can pull him up on, trust me, he’ll be back here.”

“He didn’t do anything wrong,” Stiles says. “I told you that.”

“We’ll see,” McCall responds. “What I need from you, Stiles, is everything you remember about being taken and how you ended up at the Foundry.”

Stiles shrugs. “I don’t know,” he says blankly. He’s too tired for this and he really doesn’t give a fuck anymore.

“What do you remember about the woods?” McCall prompts.

“It was dark,” Stiles says. “I hit my head.”


Stiles rolls his eyes, giving him a weary look. He shakes his head.

“How about I tell you what we have and you can fill in the blanks,” McCall says. “The two men have admitted to kidnapping but they claim they were working with the Foundry for a pay-out. We’ve searched through that place from top to bottom and we can’t find anything and no one’s talking. Is there anything you remember about that place that could help us?”

Stiles sighs. “I don’t know.”

Stiles fidgets in his chair. These clothes are so uncomfortable. His skin feels so uncomfortable. He tries to think about the Foundry but he doesn’t want to go back there, not even in his mind. He remembers how it felt waking up there, the dawning realisation of what was in store for him, the way his handler was so blasé about it all. He looks up at McCall.

“My handler,” he says. “He told me he faked my paperwork. He knew I wasn’t supposed to be there.”

McCall narrows his eyes at him. “He told you that?”

Stiles nods. He shifts in his seat. “Is it true that there are companies you can hire to fake kidnappings in order to transport kids to the Foundry?”

“I’ve seen it,” McCall responds distractedly, clearly not connecting the dots. “What was your handler’s name?”

“Uh,” Stiles says, thinking back. “Nick. He said his name was Nick.”

McCall sits up a little straighter at that, exchanging a look with Stilinski. Clearly that means something to him. “Do you think you could pick him out from a photo line-up?” he asks.

“Definitely,” Stiles says. “He was the only person I saw the whole time I was there.”

McCall gets to his feet, clearly excited. “Give me one minute.”

He goes out of the room, leaving Stiles and his dad in tense silence. Stiles plays with his hands, trying to remember how to breathe. It shouldn’t be this difficult.

“What you went through…” Stilinski starts.

“Shut up,” Stiles tells him.

Out of the corner of his eye he sees Stilinski nod, sagging back in his chair, defeated. He refuses to feel bad about it. He stares down at his hands, twisting them together, trying to shut everything else out.

“I love you and I’m glad that you’re back,” Stilinski says.

The words are a little rushed like he’s scared he’ll get cut off again, but they sound so genuine, and just like that, Stiles is crying again. He wipes at his tears, hating the fact that he’s so weak and vulnerable. Stilinski nudges the tissue box closer to him and Stiles grabs one, wiping his face and blowing his nose. He calms down, remembering all the times that it was just him and his dad, and he tries to trust it, but everything just lines up so perfectly against Stilinski.

“I’m sorry I tore up your arms,” Stiles says reluctantly, the words directed towards his own lap. “But you wouldn’t let me go.”

“I couldn’t,” Stilinski says sadly.

“Peter’s not the bad guy,” Stiles says. “He looked after me.”

“Then I’m grateful,” Stilinski says. “But you were never his to buy.”

Stiles shrugs. “I’m his now.”

McCall comes back into the room, spreading out a handful of pictures across the desk. Stiles scans
over them, instantly able to pick him out. He jabs his finger at it, his stomach turning over.

“You’re sure?” McCall asks, and his poker face is useless.

“Positive.”

“And you’d be happy to get up on the stand and testify to that?” McCall asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles says, still staring at the photograph. He never thought he’d have to see that bastard again. He’s definitely up for destroying his life though.

“In that case,” McCall says, gathering up the photos. “I’m going to bring Nick back in and see if he feels like talking yet. You write up a statement with your dad to support what you just told me and then get yourself out of here. Okay?”

Stiles looks up at him. “Can I give a statement to somebody else?” he asks. He looks through the window to see who’s on duty. “Can I give it to Parrish?”

McCall looks up at Stilinski, clearly not loving being in the middle of this.

“It’s fine,” Stilinski says. “You stay here. I’ll get Parrish. Let me know when you’re done.”

Stiles nods. “Thanks.”

Parrish comes through, polite and professional, doing what needs to be done, and Stiles is grateful. He can’t handle having to watch his dad’s reaction right now. He can’t handle having to care about it.

Once they’re done, he goes to find his dad. He’s sitting at Parrish’s desk, looking exhausted. He puts on a brave front when he sees Stiles but that just makes him feel worse. Both of their dreams have been shattered today and now they’re stuck with each other.

“You ready to get out of here, kiddo?”

Stiles nods. “That much is true. He just doesn’t like where they’re going.

It feels strange, stepping back into his old house. It looks smaller, more oppressive. There’s nothing friendly or comforting about it. He wanders through the downstairs rooms like he’s in a mirrorverse. Nothing makes sense.

“Are you hungry?” Stilinski asks. “Do you want to eat?”

“No,” Stiles says distractedly.

He heads up the stairs, opening the door to his bedroom. Nothing has moved. Literally nothing. The bed is unmade and his homework litters the desk. It’s such an eerie feeling. He’s lived a whole other life since he’s been gone. How is he supposed to slot back in here again? He sits heavily on the bed, touching the sheets that feel too rough, and wonders what Peter is doing now. Is he in their bed? Can he sleep without Stiles? Can he live without him?

He feels himself getting choked up again so he forces himself to his feet, going to his dresser. He grabs some pyjamas, taking them through to the bathroom to get cleaned up. He locks the door behind himself, eyeing up the bathtub. He can’t sleep without a bath, but he doubts he’ll be sleeping anyway and he doesn’t want to wash Peter’s scent off him. He’s already lost the clothes that were covered in him. When Peter comes back for him, Stiles is still going to smell like Daddy’s
good little boy. He’s going to prove himself.

He changes into the pyjamas which still aren’t soft enough. Everything feels so harsh and painful and wrong. He washes his face and brushes his teeth and then he steps out into the hallway, jumping when he sees his dad there waiting for him.

“I’m sorry,” Stilinski says. “I didn’t mean to startle you. I just wanted to make sure you were okay.”

“I’m not,” Stiles says, walking past him to his bedroom.

“I get that,” Stilinski says. “And that’s okay. It’s alright to feel like that.”

Stiles rolls his eyes, stepping into his room and turning to face him. “What do you want?” he asks tiredly.

Stilinski shifts on his feet. “I’ll be downstairs. Watching TV. Come join me if you want. Or just know that I’m there if you need me.”

“I don’t need you,” Stiles tells him, swinging the door closed in his face.

He can feel the rage simmering inside him. Fuck playing nice. His dad sent him off into the great unknown and now he’s been dragged back and Stilinski for some reason wants to keep him here against his will. This is what neither of them want. He guesses it’s bad PR for Stilinski to not act like the doting dad though. He’ll get bored soon. And Peter will be back for him before that.

Stiles squeezes his eyes shut and tries so hard to believe it. They’ll end up together. They have to. There’s literally no other option. He can’t breathe without Peter. The sobs tear through him and he grabs a pillow from his bed, hugging it to him. He cries, heartbroken and abandoned, curling up on his bed and letting the sobs take him over until it hurts. When he finally stills he feels guilty because this isn’t enough grief for what he’s lost. It’s just temporary though. It has to be. Peter will be back.

He hears his dad’s footsteps retreating down the hallway and realises he must have stood outside his door and listened to him fall apart. He’s grateful he didn’t invade his privacy but a tiny part of him wonders why he didn’t just come in and hold him. Maybe that would have made it all better.
Chapter 19

Stiles always sleeps in the middle of the bed, but Peter should be in the other half, holding him tight. The pillow in Stiles’ arms is no substitute and he has no idea what he’s supposed to do with all this space. It feels wrong. It feels sickening. There’s nothing to anchor him, to stop him spinning out of control. His heart is beating hard in his chest, jumping against his arm that’s pressed against it, making him hyperaware of just how fucked up his body is without Peter here. His anxiety is spiralling into panic and his eyes are damp again, his breaths shivery and rasping.

He shifts for the millionth time, trying to get comfortable, to find the magical position that will make it all stop, when his ankles rub against one another. His chest tightens. No cuff. Peter always puts his cuff on before he goes to sleep. He always locks him up all safe and sound. Now Stiles is untethered and anything could happen to him. It pushes him over into full blown panic attack.

He bolts up from the bed, swaying as he crosses the room, missing the door handle on his first try. He staggers across the landing to the bathroom, opening the cupboard and knocking things onto the floor as he tries to search through it. Everything is rushing in and out of focus but he finds what he’s looking for, an old support bandage he had to use after a lacrosse injury. He sinks down to the floor, tugging up his pyjama leg and securing the material snugly around his ankle. It’s not the same, but it’s enough. It lets him breathe. He tries not to think about all the ways in which it’s lacking, the main one being that Peter didn’t put it there.

He stays there on the ground, forehead resting on his knees, the world starting to level out. He feels small and lost and tired, so delicate that he might shatter, but when he lifts his head, the world around him is clear again. He kind of wishes it wasn’t. He has so many memories in this bathroom, of his mother patching up scrapes and his father teaching him how to fasten a tie. He remembers cutting himself with one of his dad’s razors when he didn’t even have anything to shave. He remembers jerking off for the first time in that bathtub before he even understood what it meant, just that it felt good. He remembers getting ready for the winter formal with Lydia and feeling so nervous he was sure he was going to throw up. He doesn’t want any of it now. He wants Peter. He’d give up every last piece of his past for that. Everything.

He wipes away a tear and gets to his feet, looking down at the mess he’s made, the contents of the cupboard spilled onto the floor. He really can’t make himself give a fuck. He walks away, crossing back over to his bedroom. He just has to get through tonight. This will be the worst of it. He’s going to be with Peter again. Peter will come back for him or Stiles will find him. There’s no way this will end without them together. It can’t. He has to hold onto that.

He can hear the TV downstairs and he wonders if his dad is waiting up in case Stiles comes down or if he’s fallen asleep on the couch, Stiles forgotten. He doesn’t care. With a shake of his head he retreats to his room, closing the door behind him. The pressure against his ankle calms him as he climbs back into bed, pressing himself into the pillow he left there, wrapping the blankets around him. He needs pressure. He needs comfort. For now, this all he’ll get. He makes the best of it.

He doesn’t really sleep but he dozes in between startling awake to find himself alone. He thinks about Peter in their bed, equally alone, and he wonders how he’s coping. He was always the strong one, the together one, the one who was in control. It was something Stiles admired about him, something he came to rely on. He didn’t look so together when Stiles watched him leaving the station tonight, hesitating at the car door. It was the only moment of uncertainty Stiles had ever seen from him. But he walked away. He left. Stiles’ stomach clenches and he pushes the thought away. He had to. Peter wasn’t the one who tore this apart. Neither was Stiles. He hopes that Peter
understands that.

He imagines what it must have been like for Peter to go back to that house alone, to see his office trashed, everything rifled through. Stiles wishes he could have been there to hold him, even if he couldn’t make it better. At least they could have comforted each other. They could have rebuilt together.

The smashed kitchen door, the half-cooked dinner going bad, so little respect, and Stiles is certain there’ll be no apologies given for the way the FBI crashed into their lives. Stiles can’t believe he wanted to be a part of that one day. They’re not the good guys. Shoot first and ask questions later. Stiles supposes they’re lucky they weren’t trigger happy.

Upstairs, the bathroom door kicked in, the lock lying broken on the floor by the empty, open cuff. Stiles digs his fingernails into the cushion, shaking with rage. Peter will be so disappointed in him. He didn’t have a choice. Peter must realise that he didn’t have a choice. Neither of them did. It must break Peter’s heart to find it there though. It breaks Stiles’. But they can get another lock. Peter can secure him again. It’s not the end. This is nothing that can’t be fixed. He tries so hard to believe that.

The room gets light as the sun comes up and Stiles rolls onto his back, staring at the ceiling. Peter would be getting out of bed now, going to take a shower, the soothing sound of running water making Stiles feel safe and surrounded. All of his senses were happy when he was with Peter. Now his bed is uncomfortable and the room feels too warm and he can hear cars and people and the outside world that he longed for when he was locked up in Peter’s bedroom. Maybe he brought this on himself.

He rolls onto his side, drawing his legs up and touching the support bandage on his ankle. Such a poor imitation. He needs to be more secure than that. He needs a symbol of ownership. That’s what it was, he realises now, that’s why he loved it so much. It meant that he was Peter’s, that he was claiming him against the rest of the world. The thought makes Stiles’ heart swell. Peter was never going to let anyone steal him away. Then Stiles let them break the lock.

He looks at his laptop. He doesn’t have anyone to rely on to get him things now but maybe he can still make this right. He can put the cuff back in place for Peter, can unbreak the link between them. Peter will have to appreciate the sentiment, right? He’s being a good boy. He’s going to be such a good boy until Peter comes back for him. He’ll lock himself up, he’ll follow the rules, and when Peter comes back, Stiles will give him the key and he can set him free and take him home and claim him all over again. Forever.

He gets out of bed, switching on his laptop and opening up the browser. He types in leather ankle cuff but he gets mostly women’s shoes and some soft looking things that would never hold. The one Peter bought for him was solid, good craftsmanship, expensive. He steadies himself and then adds the word bondage to his search. It doesn’t help as much as he thought it would. He clicks through the results but they still look like playthings, something a little bit edgy to mix in with the sex toys. Stiles doesn’t want something to play with though. He wants something real.

With a frustrated sigh he adds the word restraints to his search and there, a couple of results down, is what he wants. When he opens the website, he can tell that they take this seriously. Everything is beautifully made and it looks like it would hold secure, even if it was dragging a chain around all day. Stiles wishes he could do that, but it’s not realistic. He can still be Peter’s though. He can keep himself safe for him.

He picks out something that looks the most similar to what Peter chose for him, loving the thought of Peter putting so much care into his selection. Stiles wants Peter to be pleased when he sees it.
He has to be, right? He clicks on the black, leather cuff that comes with its own sturdy lock. He can even get it engraved. He stares at the customisation box. His instinct is to have them write Daddy’s on it, but if anyone sees it, the last thing he wants is to make trouble for Peter. It has to be something more personal, more private. Something they can’t take away.

He chews on his lip, fingers hovering over the keyboard. He types in the word yours but that’s so cliché and probably equally as incriminating. Peter didn’t take him though, they know that. Stiles hates that they still have the potential to make trouble for them. He’s glad that Nick and the men in the woods and anyone else who was behind his being taken are going to have to answer for what they’ve done, are going to be punished, but that doesn’t give anyone the right to take away his happy ending.

Peter bought him because he wanted him. He was never cruel, not like all the other hands that Stiles passed through in that time. Peter was strict but that’s only because Stiles needed it. He still needs it. They were family. He made Stiles feel complete in a way nothing else in his life ever has.

He remembers the day Peter taught him to dance, the way it had opened up something new inside Stiles, made him go to that place inside him that Peter had helped him discover. He wrote in his journal that night the words I belong. It was true. It’s true now, whether they’re together or not. Stiles belongs in that place, in that world, in Peter’s arms. He belongs to Peter.

He types them into the customisation box and hits add to cart. It’s expensive but he really doesn’t care. He’s been the one who made sure the household bills were paid since he was way too young for it, he knows his dad’s credit card number as well as he knows Scott’s phone number, it’s etched across his brain. He pays extra for next day delivery and confirms the order, feeling a little lighter. He’s going to get through this. Peter will be so proud.

He sits back in his chair, a hand absently falling to his stomach. He’s starving. Dinner was interrupted last night and now Peter’s not here to make breakfast for him. Stiles has to take responsibility though. He has to take care of himself while Peter can’t.

He gets to his feet, the smell of food cooking hitting him as he makes his way down the stairs. In the kitchen, his dad is at the stove, flipping pancakes. Stiles can’t remember the last time he did that. Maybe for Stiles’ birthday when he was eleven. They’re not a breakfast family. Stilinski isn’t a domestic dad.

“Hey,” Stilinski greets when he sees him. “How did you sleep?”

“Terrible,” Stiles says, going over to the fridge.

“I made pancakes,” Stilinski offers.

“No, thanks,” Stiles says, not looking at him. He grabs the carton of milk, taking the cereal from the counter. He cradles them in one arm as he grabs a bowl and spoon, heading out the door.

“Stiles?” Stilinski calls after him. Stiles doesn’t even hesitate before jogging back up the stairs.

He sits at his desk and eats two bowls of cereal, thinking back over every delicious breakfast Peter lovingly made him. He was so lucky. The thought puts a dull ache in his chest.

When he’s finished he gets to his feet, stretching his arms over his head. After breakfast is yoga. That’s his routine. He doesn’t have his DVD or his mat but he thinks he can make this work. He’s done it so many times it’s like clockwork. Going through the motions with prompts is different to doing it in a void though. He gets the first few moves down but then he starts to get lost and mixed
up. He knows the order doesn’t really matter so long as he gets the poses down, uses his body in the right way, but it doesn’t feel right and he slumps to the floor.

With a sigh he goes over to his laptop, opening up Youtube. He wishes he could remember the name of that stupid blonde woman but he never paid enough attention. He’s detail orientated, why didn’t he pay attention? He relied too heavily on Peter. He was a burden. Maybe that’s why he hasn’t come for him yet, he needs a little time off. Stiles is going to be more self-sufficient, he decides. He’s going to learn to self-sooth. He’s never going to be any trouble again.

He clicks through a few yoga tutorials, finding one that feels like it’s pitched about right. He gets on the floor and follows along, feeling that body awareness come back to him. He’s in his own skin, he has control of himself. It centres him. Nobody can take that away from him, no matter what else they strip away.

He's lying on the floor, breathing and cooling down, when there’s a knock at the door, a tentative rap of knuckles. Stiles opens his eyes, staring at the ceiling. He does not appreciate the intrusion.

“What?” he demands.

His dad cracks the door open, looking at him. He seems puzzled to find him on the floor. “You okay there, kiddo?”

Stiles sits up, still glaring. “I was doing yoga.”

“Yoga,” Stilinski says, coming into the room. “That’s new.”

“I’m new,” Stiles says, giving him a challenging look. “Did you want something?”

Stilinski nods slowly, coming to sit down in front of him. It feels too close and Stiles shifts back, pulling his knees up to guard himself.

“I know that you don’t want to talk to me,” Stilinski says. “I understand that and I respect it. But you need to talk to somebody. I made some calls and I managed to get you an appointment tomorrow with a lady who works with these kinds of cases when they come through the station.”

“These kinds of cases?” Stiles repeats.

Stilinski looks at him carefully. He clearly doesn’t want to make things worse but his walking on eggshells makes Stiles roll his eyes.

“Victims?” Stiles guesses.

“Survivors,” Stilinski says.

“Well that’s PC cop bullshit,” Stiles says, getting to his feet. “I wasn’t raped and he didn’t hurt me. I don’t need to talk to somebody about that.”

“There are things that you might not be ready to deal with,” Stilinski says, standing up with him. “She’s worked with a lot of people who have found themselves in similar situations to yours. I think talking to her would be good for you.”

“Whatever,” Stiles says, turning away. “Did you want anything else?”

“Even if you don’t want to talk, I’m still here,” Stilinski tells him. “For whatever you need.”

“I can do that,” Stilinski says in an understanding tone of voice that Stiles guesses he’s supposed to be grateful for. He grits his teeth waiting for him to actually leave. “Just don’t feel like you have to hide things from me. I’m not going to judge you for what you’ve been through. It doesn’t define you.”

The words feel cruel because he’s grown so much and now he feels like his dad’s trying to take that away from him. He looks up at Stilinski, setting his jaw. “Please get out of my room,” he says, his voice wavering, and he hates himself for that. He needs to be stronger.

Stilinski nods, his face falling. The hurt looks so genuine but he doesn’t deserve to feel sorry for himself. He did this. He only has himself to blame. Stiles isn’t going to be broken for his benefit and he’s not going to play nice so that Stilinski can do this to him all over again.

Stilinski gathers up the breakfast things from Stiles’ desk and then he leaves the room, Stiles swinging the door closed behind him. He was so calm, his yoga letting him pull back some control over himself, but now he just feels that conflict and rage churning up inside him again. Stilinski is only acting like the good guy because he doesn’t know that Stiles knows. He thinks he got away with it. If letting him believe that keeps Stiles safe then he’ll play dumb but he’s not going to let his guard down. Shame on him if he’s fooled twice.

He goes over to his laptop, ordering himself a yoga mat with Stilinski’s credit card. He asked if there was anything he needed. This is something. Stiles is going to get all the things that he needs to be Peter’s good little boy. He’s going to follow his rules. And then he’s going to be patient. Peter likes patience. It’s important. Stiles isn’t going to let him down. He’s not going to give him any excuse to leave him here.

Stiles is used to being on his own in the mornings so he tells himself the next few hours shouldn’t be too hard. If he were home with Peter he would do some studying, play some of his video game, read his comics, listen to some music. He stares at the screen of his laptop. He can find out anything he wants about being a Companion now, he literally has all the information in the world at his fingertips. He wonders if that’s cheating though. Peter gave him the book he thought would be most useful to him, would help him in the ways that he needed helping. Stiles trusts him.

He types in the name of the book and his eyes go wide. Academic texts are fucking expensive. Is this what he has to look forward to at college? The thought catches him off guard. He’s not going to college. He’s going back to Peter. This is just a pitstop. It makes him feel nostalgic though, life after high school, going out into the world. He talked about it so much with Scott and Lydia since they started their senior year. They must both have accepted offers by now. Stiles wonders again whether his ever arrived. He wonders if his dad really threw them out knowing they wouldn’t be needed.

He closes the tab. He could buy it with his dad’s credit card, he has all the money he got for selling Stiles, the trial somehow didn’t find its way to his door. Stiles supposes you can hide anything if you’re on the inside. He remembers his dad promising to protect him after Donovan. His plan must have already been underway by then. Stiles was worthless to him if he was behind bars. No wonder Stilinski was so constantly exasperated by his antics. He needed Stiles to stay out of trouble long enough for all his planning to pay off.

With a sigh he gets to his feet, wandering over to the window. He misses his window seat. He misses the view. He pulls up the blinds, placing his forehead against cool glass, looking out at the houses of his little neighbourhood. It looks so safe, but dark secrets can hide anywhere. He wants to lean back against soft cushions and stare at swaying trees as far as the eye can see. It feels so claustrophobic being this close to so many other people. He feels like he can’t breathe.
He turns away, frustrated with himself. Video games. He can play a video game. He doesn’t have a PS4 or Skyrim but he could play something else for forty-five minutes, right? That’s within the spirit of the rules. He grabs his laptop and takes it over to his bed, lying down on his stomach, just like he did on Peter’s bed. Their bed.

He loads up one of his favourite games, getting easily lost in the familiarity of it. This is what he would play when he came home from school, when he should have been doing homework. He was never very good at doing what he was supposed to be doing, his mind always more interested in some alternative task. Side quests are his life.

His forty-five minutes are over just as he’s getting into the swing of it and his fingers twitch as he stares at the clock. He doesn’t have his study materials. He doesn’t have his comics. What else is he supposed to do? Is it really the worst thing in the world if he just keeps playing? Peter doesn’t have to know. Just the thought of lying to Peter makes him feel sick though. And Peter would know he was lying. He would probably know even if he couldn’t hear his heartbeat.

Stiles slams his laptop closed, ashamed of himself. He rolls onto his side, grabbing a pillow and holding it close. He wishes he had Wolfy here. Wolfy and Peter and all of his things. He can’t handle this. He can’t make it through the day on his own. This isn’t just a morning, nobody is coming for him, it’s never going to end. He lets out a sob, pushing his face into the pillow, angry at the fact that it doesn’t smell like Peter. He could never pick up on the scent anyway but at least he knew. Now he knows that it doesn’t and it never will and maybe he won’t either. He still hasn’t had a wash, Peter’s scent will still be clinging to him, but for how much longer? Stiles can’t bear the thought of never having it again.

His body is restless, vibrating with frustration, and he wants to move, wants to run, wants to pound his feet along roads and woods until he finds Peter again. He curses himself that he wasn’t paying attention last night when McCall took him out of there. When Peter took him home the first time, when he thought he was in danger, he’d tried so hard to follow his route, even though he’d failed. But he was going somewhere familiar with McCall, he should at least know which direction out of town would take him closer to Peter. He’s such a failure. Maybe he doesn’t deserve to get him back.

He gets to his feet, starting to pace. Every step feels weird without the chain. It all just spirals inside him until his mind is chaos and his heart is beating too fast in his chest. He can’t breathe. He just needs to get out of here. He needs to get out of his own skin. He needs to get out of this life.

He thinks again about running, not to anywhere, just getting all of his energy out. He was going stir crazy back home with Peter, cooped up inside every day. He can leave now. He can get fresh air whenever he wants. He’s not sure he’s safe out there though. If his dad is planning to get rid of him again, getting a second payment by selling him to another Foundry who aren’t currently under criminal investigation, he’s not going to have Stiles taken from his own house, that would look far too suspicious. Stilinski’s gotten away with this so far, he wouldn’t take that risk.

He could have Stiles watched though. He could have him snatched again like he did in the woods. Maybe this time he’d take the Foundry out of the equation, sell him to a private buyer, then he would be harder to track. They wouldn’t find him again. Stiles considers asking him to just sell him back to Peter. Peter has the money and Stiles would be safe. He doesn’t want to go to someone else. No one could love him like Peter does. No one else could ever give him what he needs. They’re made for each other. Stiles would murder any other master in their sleep and he’d sell his dad out in a heartbeat.

He sighs, stilling in the middle of his room. He needs to calm down, needs to keep his wits about
him. He felt so good after his yoga, before his dad invaded his sanctuary with his bad energy and bullshit. But Stiles isn’t going to focus on that. He sits down on the floor instead, legs crossed, head over heart, heart over pelvis. Alignment. It eases something in him already. He breathes, concentrating on the in and out, the minute movements of his posture as his chest expands and relaxes. Before long it’s like there’s nothing else in the world that exists, like he’s connected to the air around him and the ground beneath him, a part of something bigger. Peter gave this feeling to him, a cure for restlessness, a source of mindfulness.

“Thank you, Daddy,” Stiles whispers as he exhales. He breathes in again, filling his lungs, curving his spine, before he lets it out smoothly. “Thank you, Daddy.”

He stays there like that until his hunger takes over, demanding to be heard. Stiles hates that his body’s so weak. He starts to become aware of the world around him, the birds outside, a car driving past, the brightness of the sun through his eyelids, the heat of the room. He sags, opening his eyes and blinking in the light. He looks towards the window. From this angle all he can see is sky. It’s peaceful.

With a sigh he gets up, stretching his body. He opens the door and listens for a moment but there’s no clue where his dad is. He heads downstairs, through the living room, the TV off. He goes into the empty kitchen, opening the fridge and looking at the contents. It’s pathetic. His dad hasn’t been taking care of himself but why should that surprise Stiles? It’s up to him if he wants to send himself to the grave early and waste all the money he literally sold his son for. Stiles wonders if he’d get the money if he died. He doesn’t think they’d legally be linked anymore though. They’d be nothing to each other.

“Are you hungry?”

Stiles jumps and spins around, glaring at his dad. “Can you not sneak around?”

“Sorry,” Stilinski says, holding up his hands. “I guess you’re a little jumpy.”

“Oh you’re a little creepy,” Stiles counters, turning back to the fridge. “Why is there no food?”

“I haven’t kept much in lately,” Stilinski admits. “We can go grocery shopping if you want.”

Stiles stares at the empty shelves. Peter usually takes care of this. The idea of picking out his own food sounds overwhelming but it’s not like his dad has ever been good at stepping up. He’s going to have to take care of it himself. He closes the fridge, turning to face him.

“Fine,” he agrees. He walks through to the hall, grabbing an old pair of his sneakers from the closet.

“Don’t you want to get dressed first?” Stilinski prompts.

Stiles looks down at himself. Oh, right. Clothes. He sighs, dropping the sneakers on the floor before trudging back up the stairs. He can’t stand his jeans but he guesses sweats wouldn’t be too bad. He considers his underwear. He hasn’t worn any in such a long time, Peter never wanted him to, but it doesn’t feel right to go to the store without them. Do social constructs really outweigh Peter’s rules? Is he being a good boy if he knowingly goes against his wishes? His sweatpants aren’t as soft as the pants that Peter dressed him in every day though. He’d understand.

He doesn’t say anything as he comes back down the stairs, stepping outside and standing by the car, waiting for his dad. When Stilinski unlocks it with the key fob, Stiles climbs in, pulling on his seatbelt and then leaning against the door as though he can escape in the tiny space. He doesn’t
want small talk and he certainly doesn’t want the big talk that’s looming over them. He just wants to get some food and hole himself up until Peter comes for him or he figures out a way out.

Stilinski drives, navigating the way out of the neighbourhood, streets that Stiles feels like he’s driven every day of his life. It’s comforting even though he doesn’t want it to be. He’s not staying here. He can’t. He’s outgrown it and he can never really go back.

“So,” Stilinski says, once they’re downtown. “What happened in the bathroom last night?”

Stiles frowns, his mind taking a moment to catch up on the fact that he spilled almost the entire contents of the cupboard all over the floor. He hadn’t even realised it had been cleaned up.

“I was looking for something.”

“Did you find it?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles rubs his ankles together in the footwell, flexing the joint so that he can feel the support bandage snug against his skin. “Yeah.”

Stilinski nods. “The psychiatrist, Carrie, she can prescribe anything you might need. It will probably help settle you down.”

Stiles glares at him. “You mean sedate me? Make me an easy target?”

Stilinski frowns at that. “Something for anxiety or depression or… whatever you’re feeling.”

“I’m feeling mostly betrayed,” Stiles says. “And hungry.”

“We can stop for food,” Stilinski offers, happily glossing over the betrayal.

“Let’s just get this over with,” Stiles says.

“I thought we could stop in the phone store too,” Stilinski says. “Get you a new cell. It’s important that you can get in touch with people. I want you to be able to talk to your friends, and to contact me when I go back to work.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. He’s used to not having it now, but he’d like to be able to get in touch with Scott whenever he needed him. He feels like he needs him a lot. He wishes he knew what Peter’s number was. There’s nothing that couldn’t solve, at least until he was back in his arms again.

The store isn’t too busy at this time of day, but the muzak and the bright lights and all the branding still assault Stiles’ senses. He leans on the cart, not quite able to process everything. His eyes flit around, panic that already feels too familiar settling in his chest.

“Let me know if you need to leave,” Stilinski says gently.

Stiles grits his teeth. He can do this. It’s just grocery shopping. He’s not going to let something like that beat him. He throws things into the cart, trying to put some kind of reason behind it, pick up things that Peter might make for him, but he can’t cook like Peter. He’s not even supposed to cook at all. He’ll starve to death if he doesn’t though.

By the time they’re done, Stiles has a headache and an overbearing amount of anxiety. His legs feel shaky, so unused to the walking back and forth, and he wants to just fold to the floor and cry. He feels so weak. He wants to lean against his dad, wants to let him put his arm around him because some instinctive thing tells him that he would, that he’d look after him, but that’s not the truth.
None of this is the truth. It’s not safe for him here and he needs to get out.

When they pull up to the phone store, Stiles is tempted to ask if he can wait in the car but he doesn’t want to make himself an easy target. He follows Stilinski inside and listens to him tell the guy behind the desk that his son has lost his cell phone and he needs to add a new handset to his plan. The way he says it makes it sound like Stiles was careless instead of tackled in the woods, drugged, and bundled into a van. A wave of nausea hits him and he steps away, looking at the shiny wall of handsets.

He wonders which one Peter would buy for him. The most expensive one in the shop probably. He has the newest iPhone so Stiles walks over to them, touching the screens, tracing the shapes. This is what Peter would buy him and he’d give it to him with such love and his number would already be programmed in so that he’d only ever be a button away. Stiles sighs, a smile playing over his lips.

“I’m afraid I can’t afford one of those,” Stilinski says, coming up beside him, invading his peace once again.

He’s holding up a boxed, midrange model instead. Stiles stares at it. He could afford the iPhone but not without giving away his secret stash of money. Still, he takes the phone and he feels touched by it. Maybe it’s just a tracking device but it’s also something Stiles needs to keep him sane. He can’t help being grateful. That’s probably his captor’s ploy.

“Thank you,” he says earnestly.

Stilinski smiles at him, the strain leaving his face. “Let’s get home and you can set it up.”

When they get back to the house, Stiles makes himself a sandwich and a salad, grabbing some fruit as well, mindful of his food groups. Peter’s meals were always delicious, but they were nutritious and balanced too. Stiles wants to follow his good example. He wants to be the better person that Peter taught him to be. He wants to prove that he was paying attention.

He leaves his dad with the groceries and heads up to his room with his lunch and the new phone. He saves Scott and Lydia’s numbers into the memory and sends them texts to let them know they can contact him here. He adds his dad’s number as well, mostly out of habit. He doesn’t know Liam’s or Mason’s or anybody else’s. He’ll get them from Scott later. Or maybe he’ll see them for himself. The thought is jarring. A world outside of his tiny bubble of waiting for Peter feels like such a hypothetical.

Scott texts him all through what Stiles knows is his biology class because he knows Scott’s schedule as well as he knows his own. He should tell him to concentrate and text him after school but he’s selfish and he needs his friend to ground him. It feels so normal to trade messages with Scott, to hear about his day, and the guilt presses down on him a little too late. He can still see the fury and hurt in Peter’s eyes when Stiles had tried to text him. He’s breaking a rule. Even after the corner time, after the argument, did Peter explicitly forbid it though? No, but he expressed his disappointment that Stiles couldn’t read between the lines. And now he’s fucking it up all over again.

This isn’t Stiles’ fault though. None of this is Stiles’ fault. He’s doing what he can with the hand he’s been dealt, just like he did in the basement, just like he did in the Foundry. He took his comfort where he could. Just like he did when Peter first bought him, he thinks, the thought pressing down on his chest. But Stiles didn’t know Peter then. He was cautious. Cautious is smart. Peter proved himself. Now it’s Stiles’ turn. He can’t give up Scott though, not when he’s right here in front of him. Would Peter really begrudge him that, given the circumstances. He’d want Stiles to be cared for. Scott cares. Scott is going to get him through this so that he can make it back to Peter
Later that afternoon, Lydia texts to ask if he’s up for visitors, that she has something for him. Stiles definitely isn’t going to turn down her company and he’s intrigued. When she arrives, his dad escorts her to his room as though she might get lost coming up the stairs. Or like he’s the warren facilitating visiting hours.

She’s wearing a pretty dress and heels, her hair up in a cute style, a stack of folders in her arms, and she looks so much like quintessential Lydia that Stiles nearly buckles under his love for her. He’s missed her so much. He grins, feeling something ease in him.

“Hey,” she says softly, but it’s not that victim voice McCall and Stilinski used. It’s genuine and warm and understanding. Stiles remembers why he fell in love with her the second time, the time that was real.

Stilinski walks through the room like he’s trying to ruin their moment, collecting up Stiles’ plates from lunch. “Do you guys want anything? Sodas? A snack?”

Stiles stares at him incredulously. Who the fuck does he think he is? He’s never had hospitality in his life.

“I’m good, thanks, Mr Stilinski,” Lydia responds politely.

Stilinski nods, heading for the door. “I’ll be downstairs.”

Stiles rolls his eyes. “I know.”

Lydia crosses the room towards him, offering out the folders. “Extra credit assignments.”

Stiles takes them because she doesn’t really give him a choice and he knows better than to argue with Lydia Martin. Still, he stares at them. “You brought me homework?”

She sits down beside him on the bed. “I went to all of your teachers today and I asked them what you needed to do to still be able to graduate on time.” She nods down at the folders. “This is it.”

Stiles is suddenly touched. “You did that for me?”

“I know it looks like a lot, but I can help you,” she says. “And if you don’t do it now it’s going to be summer school or maybe even repeating a year and we can’t leave you behind.”

Stiles nods. “Nobody gets left behind.”

Lydia smiles at him. “That’s the plan.”

Stiles hugs the folders to his chest. “It’s a good plan.”

He feels bad that he can’t follow through on it, but he doesn’t have to tell her that right now. They can exist in this moment where maybe it’s true, where they have a future together. He’s going with Peter, he knows that in his heart, but this is like a second chance to not leave things so jagged and broken. They’re going to see him be happy. He’s going to enjoy them while he can.

Besides, if he doesn’t have his study materials, he can work on this instead. Discipline for the mind. A way to spend his mornings. Peter would be proud.

He puts the folders aside, looking at them fondly. “I can’t believe you brought me homework,” he says, looking up at Lydia. “Whatever happened to chocolate?”
“Well,” she says, slipping her purse off her shoulder and reaching inside. “I also brought this.”

She pulls out a packet of Reese’s peanut butter cups, holding them out to him, and Stiles is instantly transported back to the ice rink, his pathetic attempts at flirting. He was right though, they really were the perfect combination, even if it wasn’t in the way that he expected.

“Do you want to split them?” he asks.

“Yes, I want to split them,” she says in a tone of voice that suggests he really should know better.

He smiles at her, feeling so cozy and loved. It’s different than with Peter but he can’t put his finger on why. There’s just as much love, just as much trust, but Lydia does something different for him. They’ve fought side by side and the reminder of that makes him feel strong where he would have let himself be weak before. He can’t work out if that’s a good thing or not.

He moves back on the bed so that he can rest against the headboard, Lydia coming to join him. He takes out one of the peanut butter cups and hands the packet to Lydia so she can take the other. They eat in silence, Stiles savouring the sweetness. Peter didn’t give him treats often. It feels so natural though, the candy, sitting here on his bed with Lydia, like something slotting into place, and he tries not to think about that too hard. He can like parts of his old life without betraying Peter. He can do that.

He remembers his journal, the letter he wrote to Lydia, and he wishes he had it now. He wishes he could give it to her. She deserves it.

“I’m sorry if you ever felt like I treated you like some object or a prize to be won,” he says. She looks up at him, eyebrows knitting together. “I mean, not felt like, I did. And I’m sorry. Because you’re more than that.”

“I didn’t want to be for a long time,” she says. “And you were a huge ego boost. You and just about every other guy. I knew what I was doing.”

Stiles shakes his head. He doesn’t want to be let off the hook. “I was a bad friend. I’m ashamed of the way I used to act around you.”

“Stiles,” she says, putting a hand on his arm. He stills, looking at her, really looking. “It doesn’t matter who we were. It only matters who we are.”

Stiles nods his head, tearing up. He knows who he is now, Peter taught him. That means he doesn’t get to keep this for much longer. This moment is temporary, transient, and he wants to savour it. He doesn’t think that makes him a bad person.

“I’m just glad that you’re back,” Lydia says, pulling her hand away. “While everyone else was out tracking, I was trying hypnosis and automatic writing. I even tried a Ouija board,” she admits, her expression embarrassed but amused at herself. “It didn’t get me anywhere and I felt so guilty because I was sure I should have been able to find you.”

“I wasn’t in danger,” Stiles says, thinking of being in Peter’s arms. “You’d only be able to find me if I was going to die.”

“Maybe,” she agrees before giving a sigh. “Derek even came back to help when Scott got in touch with him.”

Stiles looks at her. “Derek’s back?”
Lydia nods. “I don’t know how long he’ll stay now that you’re safe. But the whole pack was here for you. Nobody gets left behind.”

Stiles smiles at her, reaching out to take hold of her hand. He was the one who made that rule. He tries not to feel guilty that he’s also going to be the one who breaks it.

After Lydia leaves, Stiles lies back on his bed, facing an evening alone. The time between lunch and dinner is for he and Peter, it’s theirs. He doesn’t think he can handle being on his own. It’s only then that the realisation hits. Tonight is supposed to be date night. The sudden loss takes Stiles out like a freight train. Date night is special. They dress up, make an effort for each other, put their relationship front and centre ahead of all the noise. No work for Peter, no training for Stiles, no obligations outside of each other.

Stiles curls up on the bed, hugging his pillow to himself. He wonders what Peter would have had in store for them tonight. He would probably have cooked something new. He liked to show off when it counted and they were definitely nowhere near the end of his repertoire. Over dinner there would be conversation, getting to know each other stuff, as though they didn’t know each other as intimately as two people could. Stiles liked it though, the chance to share with Peter. He never wanted space between them. Now he has nothing but. He pushes the thought away.

After dinner they’d watch a movie, snuggled together on Peter’s amazing couch. They still have the rest of the original Star Wars trilogy to work through and Peter didn’t even care that he talked all the way through it. Scott never watched that movie for him. No one ever got his references. But Peter showed an interest. He cared enough to want to share it with Stiles.

But after the end credits rolled was the part that he was really looking forward to. He curls up on himself at the thought of Peter kissing him, touching him. He knows Stiles’ body so much better than he learnt it himself and he had a lot of practice.

He wonders what Peter had planned for them tonight. He always has a plan and he hinted this was a good one. Stiles hopes it involves lots of making out on the couch. There was really nothing better than being kissed breathless while Peter weighed him down, hands wandering, caressing. Or maybe pinning Stiles’ wrists above his head. He loves feeling Peter’s power.

His body responds now, his dick getting hard, and he feels ashamed. This is a compliment though, isn’t it? It’s an endorsement of what they share. He craves every part of Peter, he’s allowed to crave this. He can’t touch though. That’s rule number one.

He lets go of the pillow, rolling onto his back and placing his hands flat on the bed either side of him. It soothes him, following a rule, doing the right thing, being a good boy. It makes him feel closer to Peter. They’re still connected. He closes his eyes and he breathes and he feels aware of his body, every muscle and bone and pulse of blood. It calms under his attention and he feels so proud because Peter would be proud too.

He remembers their first date, the way Peter had gone to get ready away from him so he could indulge in the big reveal. It had the desired effect. He came calling for him like it was a real date, but to them it was as real as it got. They didn’t need witnesses to validate what they had. When he gets home, Stiles doesn’t intend to ever leave their house again, except maybe if Peter is holding his hand.

He imagines Peter coming to the house tonight, knocking on his childhood door to take him home for date night, just like they planned. Maybe he’d bring flowers. He’d definitely wear a suit. Grand gestures are kind of his thing.
Stiles feels a giddiness bubbling up inside him. He sits up, looking down at himself. Sweatpants and an old T-shirt. Not good enough. If Peter come calling for him he’ll be looking pristine, perfect. Stiles can’t look like this. That is not an option. When Peter comes for him, Stiles is going to make him glad he put the effort in. He’s going to be worth it.

He gets to his feet, opening up his closet door. His heart instantly sinks. Nothing in here is going to impress Peter. Off the rack. Not tailored. Probably not even in the right size, he has no idea what he’s doing with clothes shopping. He starts moving through the hangers, looking for anything formal, but it’s all plaid and graphic tees. He’s not going to dress like a nerd in front of Peter. He has standards and there’s no way Stiles can meet them. Not with this wardrobe.

With a sigh, Stiles pulls out the best shirt he owns. It’s the one he wore to the dance with Lydia. He frowns at it. Too many memories. Everything within touching distance is laced with so much history he feels like he might drown in it though. Stiles needs out. It’s suffocating him.

He replaces the shirt and pulls out another one, his second best shirt, one with nothing so momentous tied to it. He puts it on and stands in front of the mirror. It’s ill-fitting and the material feels cheap. Peter probably wouldn’t use this as a rag to change the oil in his Mercedes. He wants to sink to the floor in shame, his legs weak and his head swimming, but he forces himself to stand tall. He’s trying. He’s doing the best he can. Peter has to appreciate the effort.

He puts on some slacks, tucks in his shirt, fusses with it until he can’t stand looking at it anymore. He shakes his head. He feels so unimpressive. He wants the glow that comes from dressing in clothes that Peter gave him. Hopefully, when they get home, Peter will strip these clothes straight off him. He’ll run him a bath, put the special drops in, wash the outside world from Stiles’ skin. He’ll dress him carefully in his clothes and he’ll feed him and love him and hold him tight. Stiles just needs to be patient. He can do that. A little discomfort in the meantime is nothing.

He sits on the edge of his bed, smoothing his hands over his thighs, pushing creases out of the fabric. He feels nervous now, fidgety. He taps his fingers, already aware of his breaths are getting shallower. The problem is that there’s no end point, nothing to focus on. Yes, Peter is coming, but tonight? What time? When is this going to be over?

He bites down on his lip, hands curling into fists. Peter will be able to smell the acrid anxiety sticking to him on top of everything else. It’s not the welcome he deserves. Stiles doesn’t want anything but happiness and love. He’s sure it will be inescapable once Peter is truly at that door, but he doesn’t want these undertones clinging to his cheap clothes, ruining the mood.

Stiles falls back on the bed, putting his hands behind his head. He’s wrinkling his clothes but he doesn’t care. He’s going to make himself delectable. He closes his eyes, mentally conjuring Peter in front of him. His handsome face. His smirk. The warmth that always seems to radiate from him. He loves it when Peter towers over him, when he touches his face tenderly, when he strokes his hair. He loves the lingering kisses that come with greetings and farewells, the more passionate ones that lead to more. He loves the way that Peter touches him like he’s his because there’s nothing truer in the world.

His dick stirs again, interested but not straining, stuck on the subtleties. He shifts his hips on the bed and he can still feel everything that Peter did to him just over twenty-four hours ago. That already feels like another lifetime but the thought tightens his chest like he’s being crushed alive. Another twenty-four hours and it will be over again. It has to be. The twinges in his body, the burn of the muscles in his abdomen, his insides sensitive and used up in a way that’s unfamiliar but already wonderful. He wants more of it. He wants Peter to fuck him until he can’t even see. His balls are probably still empty but Stiles feels sure that Peter could get something out of them. This
body belongs to him after all.

Stiles floats in that mindset, warm and dreamy. It’s not fireflies, nowhere near, but it’s something. It’s being out of his own head, his depressing surroundings left behind. He runs Peter through his mind over and over, never letting himself settle too long on one thought, always chasing another, beautiful visuals and sensory memories that feel like they might just sustain him.

A knock on his door jerks him out of it and he leans up on his elbows, heart pounding. “Yeah?”

His dad opens the door and Stiles sighs, sagging. Stilinski looks at him, eyeing his outfit.

“Are you going somewhere?”

“No,” Stiles says guardedly.

Stilinski nods slowly, eyes still scanning over him. “Okay.” He meets Stiles’ gaze. “I just wondered what you felt like for dinner. What are you looking forward to the most?”

“Nothing,” Stiles says, falling back on the bed and staring at the ceiling.

“Want me to choose?” Stilinski asks.


He can feel Stilinski’s eyes burning into him, judging him. “Why don’t I cook the fish? I’ll bring it up here if you don’t want to go downstairs.”

Stiles lifts his head to glare at him. “I don’t want anything. I’m not hungry. Please just leave me alone.”

Stilinski steps further into the room, which is the exact opposite of what Stiles needs. His entire body tenses. He doesn’t want this man anywhere near him.

“Stiles, I know I can’t make this better.”

Stiles sits up, drawing his knees up to his chest. “No. You can’t.”

Stilinski gives a resigned nod. He’s already given up on Stiles. Again. “You don’t need to feel ashamed about what happened to you. And I know you don’t want to talk to me about it, but that doesn’t mean you have to shut me out. I understand if you need some space…”

“I need space,” Stiles says, because if those are the magical words that will make him leave, he’ll say them. “I need you to go away.”

Stilinski’s shoulders sag and he looks down at the ground. It’s the perfect picture of defeat but he’s winning. He got his money and then he got to play the hero and Stiles can’t even find the strength to hold him accountable. You don’t need to feel ashamed that your own father doesn’t want you. Stiles does though. He feels wretched and alone and like the most worthless thing in the world.

A tear falls down his face and he wipes it away before Stilinski can see. Not that he’s even paying attention. Not that he ever did.

“I’ll be downstairs,” Stilinski says, slinking towards the door.

Stiles is shaking as the door clicks closed, his good mood completely ruined. Peter can’t find him like this. He’d understand though. He’d be on his side, no questions asked. He’d hold him, cradle
him in his lap, call him his baby boy and make everything better. Stiles shudders, tears falling in earnest. He needs his Daddy.

He gets to his feet, trying to throw his energy into something other than a panic attack. He paces, wiggling his fingers and flexing his wrists. This is only temporary. It’s like a bad dream. Stiles has had his fair share of those but he always woke up. Always. Even when it took him a few attempts. This isn’t going to beat him. He’s not giving up, not falling apart, until he’s back in Peter’s arms.

He spends the evening alternating between throwing himself down on the bed and pacing around his room like a caged animal. He puts on some music to try and ease the tension, or at least distract himself, the melodies washing over him. He tries to conjure Peter again but he fails. He can’t feel him. His body still bears his evidence but not in a way that anyone could see. It’s not enough. He’s coated in his scent but how long can that last? It’s probably fading already.

When it gets past midnight, Stiles has to admit that he’s not coming. Not tonight. That’s not the same as never though.

He gets undressed, puts his pyjamas on, touching the support bandage on his ankle as he climbs into bed. Tomorrow, the real thing should be here. That will anchor him. It will claim him for Peter afresh.

He climbs into bed, hugging his pillow to him and closing his eyes. He’s exhausted, his body heavy and uncooperative, his eyes burning, but his mind won’t stop spinning. He can’t shut it up. Peter had a way of making it stop.

He tries to quiet it himself, tries breathing exercises and happy thoughts. The frustration crawls over his skin like a physical sensation. Jerking off would help, he knows that, like a reset button to his system that delivers him to oblivion. But he’s not allowed and he’s not breaking the rules, no matter how wretched he feels. He’s never going to give Peter an excuse to not want him.

He throws the covers back, kicking them off his legs with an irritated huff. This isn’t going to work. He needs some peace. He needs a sanctuary. He knows just the place.

He goes over to his desk, opening the drawer and retrieving his spare keys before grabbing a hoodie, pulling it on and shoving his phone into the pouch. He opens his door cautiously but all the lights are out and he can’t hear anything. He makes his way down the stairs, the night air giving him a chill as he as he lets himself outside. He climbs into his jeep, the act of shutting the door against the world making him feel better already. It’s so familiar and comforting. It gives him power. He can go anywhere, he’s not trapped in one place against his will. He could go to Peter if he knew where he was. Instead, he has somewhere else calling for him.

His eyes are bleary and his mind a reeling mess, but he could get here in his sleep. He pulls up outside Scott’s house and kills the engine, looking up at the dark windows. That’s okay. He’s always welcome here. He hops out of the jeep, swinging the keys around his finger as he approaches the door. He counts them instinctively, mentally checking off all the places in his arsenal.

His fingers find Scott’s key as he stands in front of the door and he lets himself in, cautious at first, listening for signs of life. He closes the door softly behind himself and then he’s hit full force with nostalgia. He’s been here through so many hard times when he was in need of comfort, but almost every happy memory seems to be tied up in this place too. Duality. That’s life. Right now, he needs someone who can be strong for him. He needs a friend.

He climbs the stairs, hand trailing the banister, letting himself into Scott’s room. He’s fast asleep.
Of course he is. Stiles is the only one awake and creeping around at this time of night. It feels strangely fitting, like maybe he’s the monster. He steps up to the bed.

“Scott?” he says gently. So much for werewolf senses. He rolls his eyes. “Scott!”

“Wha’?” Scott responds, half-sitting up as he blinks at him. So much for werewolf reflexes. He furrows his brow. “Stiles?”

“Hey,” Stiles says awkwardly, feeling foolish now that he’s stood here.

Scott looks around like he’s checking that this is just as weird as it first seems. He focuses back on Stiles. “Are you okay? What’s going on?”

Stiles shrugs. “I couldn’t sleep.” He looks down, playing with his hands. “Do you think I could sleep here?”

“Oh,” Scott says, sitting up more fully. “Yeah.” He starts to get to his feet. “You take the bed. I can sleep in the chair.”

“Don’t,” Stiles says. Scott pauses, looking at him. “I’m not used to having a bed to myself.”

Scott nods but he doesn’t quite meet Stiles’ eyes. He’s thinking the same dirty things that his dad thought, that McCall thought. Rape kits and evidence bags run through his mind. What did they do to Peter? What did they do to their house?

Stiles fights back a shudder and focuses. “I’m not going to cuddle you or anything. I just want someone to be there. I don’t want to be on my own.”

“That’s cool,” Scott says, settling back into the bed, and he sounds like he really, truly means it. Stiles couldn’t ask for more acceptance than that. “And you can cuddle me if you want.”

“I’m gonna pass,” Stiles says, toeing off his sneakers. He strips his hoodie, dropping it down on the floor before climbing under the covers.

As they settle into silence, Stiles is aware of all those little intimacies of sharing a space with someone. He can feel warmth form Scott’s body, can hear his even breaths. He can feel every shift he makes against the mattress, making the blankets tug against Stiles. Just knowing that someone has his back, literally, eases some of the tension inside him. Knowing that it’s someone he would literally trust with his life makes the rest of it start to shatter.

“Scott?”

“Yeah?”

“You’re my Alpha, right?”

There’s a pause, a loaded one. “I guess so.”


Scott hums in response, clearly surrendering back to sleep already. Stiles is willing to let him go. It’s not a betrayal to Peter, is it? Just a fact. Peter wouldn’t give him the bite. And Peter didn’t come for him. Not yet. He takes a deep breath, trying not to let the panic rise. He’s okay. He’s safe. He repeats the words over and over until they stop having any meaning.

There are so many memories tied into this room but they don’t hurt him like the ones in his own
house do, haunted by the ghost of more than his mother. Regret, anger, neglect. It all sits heavy in the air. He and Scott have had their share of fights in this room, but it never stuck. Scott wouldn’t sell him out. He spent every day looking for him when legally he wasn’t even missing, just sold. But Scott didn’t give up. He called in reinforcements. He found the basement. In his version of the narrative he’s the hero, whether he’d admit to it or not. Stiles knows the truth, but he’s willing to let him have it.

“Scott?”

“Yeah?”

“Can you hear my heartbeat?”

“Yeah.”

“Is it slowing down?”

There’s a beat as Scott listens, compares. “Yeah,” he says softly.

Stiles smiles, feeling lighter at the confirmation. “Will you listen to it for me?” he asks. “Keep track? I know I can feel it, but I trust you with this.”

“I’ll listen,” Scott assures him.

“Thank you,” Stiles says, letting his eyes slip closed, feeling like sleep might actually find him.
Stiles wakes to the sound of the shower, a comforting blanket of white noise that’s so familiar. He knows instantly that it’s not right though because that’s not what woke him up. From the floor he can hear his cell phone ringing in his hoodie pocket. Scott is currently in the shower and Lydia would have no reason to call him this early so, by process of elimination, it must be his dad. Stiles grabs the pillow, pulling it over his head. He can’t deal with that man right now.

The phone eventually stops but so does the shower. Stiles can’t pretend he’s anywhere else anymore. He’s can’t lie here and imagine he’s snuggled against Peter’s pillow, that it’s Peter’s wet body under that spray, door wide open, all that flesh right there if Stiles craned his head just right. It felt like an invitation but in reality it was more of a tease. Stiles wasn’t allowed to touch, wasn’t allowed to take, not unless it was offered to him. Daddy knew best.

Almost immediately, his phone starts ringing again. Stiles groans, digging his fingers into the pillow. He should have left the stupid thing behind. When it starts ringing for the third time, Scott emerges from the bathroom.

“I think that’s yours.”

“I know,” Stiles responds, throwing the pillow off him.

Scott comes around the side of the bed, retrieving Stiles’ phone from his hoodie. “It’s your dad,” he says, holding it out.

Stiles screws his face up. “No.”

Scott frowns, still holding the phone out. It goes silent in his hand. A moment later, his own rings on the nightstand. He walks across the room to grab it. “And now he’s calling me.” He connects the call before Stiles can protest. “Hi, Sheriff. Yeah, he’s here.”

Stiles shakes his head and fixes him with a death glare. If he tries to hand that phone to him right now, he’s rescinding all best friend privileges.

“He’s asleep,” Scott says, still looking at Stiles. “He was having a rough night so he came over. I’m sure he meant to leave you a note.”

Stiles shakes his head and fixes him with a death glare. If he tries to hand that phone to him right now, he’s rescinding all best friend privileges.

“He’s asleep,” Scott says, still looking at Stiles. “He was having a rough night so he came over. I’m sure he meant to leave you a note.”

Stiles rolls his eyes. Of course his dad is being a pedantic nag. He’ll probably try and ground him next.

“He’s fine,” Scott says.

Stiles can tell from his tone that he wants to say more, but not in front of Stiles. He sighs. He can’t stand Scott treating him like a victim too but clearly he’s thinking it.

“Yeah,” Scott says. “I know. Okay, I’ll tell him. Speak to you later.” He hangs up and then turns his attention to Stiles. “You just left in the middle of the night and didn’t tell him where you were going?”

Stiles huffs impatiently. “Why would I tell him?”

“Maybe because you were missing for months and he woke up this morning and found you gone again,” Scott says.
“Great, so you’re on his side?” Stiles asks.

Scott looks at him carefully. “I wasn’t aware there were sides.”

Stiles grabs the pillow he discarded earlier, hugging it to his chest. He doesn’t want to fight with Scott. That’s the last thing he wants. He feels like the world might crumble under him.

“How did your dad want to know he’s at the Station this morning,” Scott tells him. “He had to check on some things.”

Stiles nods. “Okay,” he says meekly. He can be a good boy. He’s not going to rock the boat. Not with someone who can count on to look after him.

Scott considers him for a moment. “Do you want me to stay? I don’t have to go to school. We can hang out. It’d be good to catch up properly.”

“No,” Stiles says. “You should go. We’ll touch base later.”

“Okay,” Scott agrees. “Hey, can I give you some friendly advice?”

“Sure,” Stiles responds.

“You could really use a shower,” Scott says. “Even a non-werewolf would agree.”

Stiles averts his eyes in shame. The implication is that he’s filthy and used up. He can’t shower though, he can’t wash the last remnants of Peter off him, not when he’s still shown no signs of coming back. His eyes fill with tears and he blinks them angrily away. This is only temporary. Scott’s right though, he’s pretty ripe. He sighs. He needs his clothes back, they still have Peter’s scent, tucked away safe in sealed evidence bags. They can see him through this. If Peter was cleared, they have no reason to hold on to them. He sits up, grabbing his hoodie.

“You can stay as long as you want,” Scott assures him.

“I have something I need to do,” Stiles says, pulling on his sneakers.

“Stay for breakfast first?” Scott asks.

Stiles pauses. He’s starving and Scott is offering. Scott is taking care of him. Stiles wants to let him.

It’s nothing like breakfast with Peter but it’s enough to calm him down, let him focus on what he needs to achieve today. They eat cereal and toast and Scott takes care of the conversation, talking about school and an assignment he has due in today.

“Lydia brought me extra credit assignments,” Stiles says. “So I can graduate on time.”

Scott nods. “She knows how to get things done.”

Stiles pokes at the remnants of his Frosted Flakes, feeling like he’s floating between two lives. He’d learnt to stop wanting. Peter is enough for him, he provides for him in every sense of the word. Suddenly there are possibilities in front of him though. Maybe that’s why Peter hasn’t come back for him yet. This is a test to see if he can resist temptation and follow the rules. So Stiles shouldn’t ask, he’s just torturing himself. He’s made his choice. That doesn’t mean he can’t take an interest in his friends’ lives though, can’t support them. That’s all this is.

“I guess you and Lydia know what colleges you’re going to now,” he says.
“Lydia’s going to MIT,” Scott says. “As a junior.”

Stiles raises his eyebrows. “I’m impressed but not really surprised.”

“Yeah,” Scott agrees. “I accepted a place at North Carolina.”


His eyes are filling up though, a hollow feeling opening inside him, because they applied there together. Stiles is supposed to be going with him. He shakes his head, blinking the tears away. That was before.

“Did you get in?” Scott asks.

Stiles shrugs. “Kind of too late to accept now anyway.”

“You should talk to admissions,” Scott says. “You have a pretty unique case.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I have other priorities right now.”

Scott nods. “Well, if you change your mind, I’ll help any way you need me to.”

Stiles looks up at him, overwhelmed by his kindness and understanding. “Thank you.” It almost makes him want to change his mind. It’s not the path his life is destined to take though. Not anymore. “I’m going to head out. Thanks for breakfast. And letting me stay last night.”

“Any time,” Scott assures him. “I mean that.”

Stiles smiles. He doesn’t doubt it. “I’ll see you later.”

As he climbs into his jeep he looks down at himself. Slept in pyjamas and a rumpled hoodie. He should really go home and get changed, but he doesn’t care about making a good impression. There’s only one person’s opinion he cares about and that’s why he smells this way. It’s also why he needs to get those clothes back. Now.

He steps into the Station, looking through the glass window into his dad’s empty office. He looks around, stepping up to Parrish’s desk. “Is my dad around?”

“He’s just going over some paperwork for a case,” Parrish says. “You can wait in his office if you want.”

“Thanks,” Stiles says, grateful and kind of touched that Parrish didn’t even look twice at his state of dress.

He goes into his dad’s office, so loaded with memories, but he hates them all. He hates them because they creep below his skin like warmth and he won’t let them fool him. Every one of them was a lie. It was all counting down to that moment in the woods and Stiles can’t even trust his own experiences anymore. He walks over to his dad’s desk, hand trailing across it. He used to sit behind it to do his homework on slow nights. He wanted to be just like his dad. The thought makes his stomach turn now.

He’s about to drop down into the visitor’s chair when a folder on the desk catches his eye. It has his name on it. It must be about the investigation. He pulls it towards himself, wondering if Stilinski brought it in here so he can remove anything potentially incriminating. Stiles lifts the cover, the pages falling open on Peter’s arrest report.
Stiles stares at it, feeling like his soul is about to jump out of his body. He reaches out, touching the mugshot. He looks so lost and demoralised. He’s still strong though, he has grace. He’s still perfect. Stiles kind of wants to steal it. Beside the photo is all of Peter’s private information. Including his address. Stiles nearly drops his phone on the floor as he rushes to snap a photograph. Screw the clothes, he doesn’t need them if he can just go straight back to Peter. He doesn’t need anything.

He looks down at his phone screen, the information safely locked away, and that’s when he notices the name. **Peter Hale.** He looks down at the file in front of him as though the photo has somehow distorted it, but it’s right there in black and white. Peter is a Hale. It’s not the most unique name in the world, but how many Hales happen to also come from powerful werewolf families? It can’t be a coincidence.

He flips the file closed as the door opens, looking up to see his dad. Stiles steps towards the still open door. “I have to go.”

“You just got here,” Stilinski says. “What’s going on?”

“Nothing,” Stiles dismisses, moving past him. “I just have to go.”

“You have your appointment this afternoon,” Stilinski reminds him. “We need to leave by two.”

“Sure, whatever,” Stiles says.

“Please be there,” Stilinski says, a note of desperation in his voice that’s painfully familiar. That’s shitty parenting, Stiles tells himself. He’s not going to feel sorry for him.

“I’ll see you later,” Stiles says, heading for the exit.

“Some packages came this morning,” Stilinski adds. “Did you order something?”

Stiles stops, spinning around. “They came?”

“I put them in your room,” Stilinski tells him.

Stiles feels the corners of his mouth lifting up into a smile of anticipation. He can breathe a little easier once he has that cuff on. He can feel like he belongs.

He goes out to his jeep, hopping in and basking in the feeling of shutting everything else out. He looks down at his phone, zooming in on Peter’s address. He has no idea where that is but he could put it into his phone and let it guide him there. He looks down at himself. He needs the cuff first. And there’s no way he can present himself like this.

He’s not even fully aware of the decision until he’s parked on the street below Derek’s loft. He taps his fingers on the steering wheel, peering up at the building. He’s hesitating because he knows that this is wrong. He has Peter’s address, he should go straight to him, he has no excuse to be here. Clinging to his past, even at the pretence of doing something for Peter, is the reason Peter hasn’t come back for him. Peter doesn’t know what he’s doing though. Nothing Stiles has done since McCall and his team burst into Peter’s house has been witnessed by Peter because Peter walked away.

He slams his hand against the steering wheel. It’s so unfair. They’ve been torn apart and Stiles has to work this out all on his own. Does Peter trust him? Does he want him? Stiles set himself up for this, he touched Peter’s phone, he made him believe that he wanted something outside of what they had. He made him believe that he wanted out. Nothing could be further from the truth. He has to
prove himself though. He can’t leave Peter with any doubts of his intentions when he lands on his doorstep. He has to be Daddy’s good little boy.

He climbs the stairs, each one strengthening his resolve. He needs to prepare himself for Peter. It’s like a cleansing ritual of everything he’s been tainted by and he has to start here. He has to.

The door is open when he gets to the landing and he peers inside, seeing Derek’s silhouette against the sun that streams in the huge windows. He has his back to Stiles, leaning over the table, and Stiles is struck by the beauty of the moment. He doesn’t want to shatter it like he knows he’s about to. After that, he thinks everything changes.

“Hey,” he says reluctantly.

Derek turns. “Stiles.” He moves closer, taking him in, the same look of wonder on his face that everyone has when they see him in the flesh, like he’s some kind of mythical being. They didn’t think he was coming back. He wasn’t supposed to. Yet here he is.

“Lydia said you responded when Scott sent out the bat signal,” Stiles says, walking down the steps into the loft.

Derek gives him an amused smile. “Something like that.”

Stiles nods, sliding his hands into the pouch of his hoodie, turning his phone around in his hands. “Sorry you had to come away from your… vacation? I don’t really know what you were doing down there.”

“Reconnecting,” Derek says.

“Funny you should say that actually,” Stiles says, shifting on his feet. The words are harder to push out than he thought. “I need your family crest.”

Derek’s eyebrows bunch together. “My what?”

“The family crest,” Stiles says, gesturing at his chest where he used to wear it.

“You mean the triskele?” Derek asks.

“Not that,” Stiles dismisses. “With the tree and the wolf and the fire.”

Derek stares at him. “Stiles, I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Peter gave it to me,” Stiles says desperately. “But they took it off me at the Station, they took all my things into evidence, and I need it back.”

“Peter?” Derek asks and Stiles can see the exact moment it dawns on him. He goes very still, his face falling. He looks scared. “My uncle had you? That’s where you were all this time?”

“I guess so,” Stiles says. “I didn’t know he was a Hale. But he gave me your family crest.”

Derek shakes his head. “Stiles, that’s not my family crest.”

“He gave it to me,” Stiles insists.

“Whatever he gave you, that was nothing to do with my family,” Derek says. “Peter was thrown out. He’s a sad little Omega. He’s not family anymore.”
Stiles feels a spark of indignation fuelling a fire in him. “Peter is a powerful Alpha.”

Derek actually laughs at that. “Is that what he told you?” He shakes his head in disbelief, moving back over to the table. “He’s not an Alpha, Stiles. He can’t be an Alpha. My mom made sure of that.”

Stiles falters. “What are you talking about?”

Derek turns around, looking at him with soft eyes. “I’m sorry that you ended up with him. He’s a monster. Whatever he did to you…”

“Why does everyone think he did something to me?” Stiles demands. “He’s a good man. You’re wrong.”

Derek leans back against the table, crossing his arms over his chest. “He murdered my sister.”

Stiles feels the bottom drop out of his world all over again. The room sways around him. He tries to take a deep breath but it shudders out of him. “What?”

“He murdered my sister,” Derek repeats. “In cold blood for his own selfish gains.”

Stiles shakes his head. He tries to swallow but his mouth has gone dry. “I don’t think we’re talking about the same person.”

“I bet we are,” Derek says. “He’s charming, right? And handsome. Blue eyes. Excessive use of pet names to depersonalise a situation.”

Stiles looks down. That could still be so many people. It’s not though. He knows it’s not. It’s Peter.

“He’s not a good man, whatever he told you,” Derek says. “He’s psychotic.”

Stiles feels tears spilling over, the panic pressing down on him like the air is too heavy. Not his Peter. That’s not who he is. He would never hurt anyone, certainly not family. Family was everything to Peter. Stiles was everything to Peter. But maybe that was just because there was no one else left.

He looks up at Derek, wiping at the tear tracks on his face. “What happened?” He doesn’t want to know but he has to know. He has to find a way to understand it, make peace with it. Then he and Peter can move on together.

“I was fourteen,” Derek says. “My sister, Laura, she was eighteen. She was going away to college at the end of the summer. She was in her bedroom, at her desk, her back to the door. She had her headphones on and she was writing a list of things she wanted to take to her dorm room. Peter, he’d been gone for a while, I don’t know where, he used to take off sometimes. He came to the house and he went into my sister’s bedroom and he ripped her throat out before she even realised he was there.”

Stiles looks down at the ground. He’s shaking. It doesn’t make any sense. Peter’s not a violent man. He only got angry once with Stiles, when he touched his phone, but he held his temper. He never lashed out, despite how he presented himself at the start. Stiles can’t imagine him losing control. It was his one defining feature.

“By the time I got home they’d moved her body but I went into her room and there was blood everywhere,” Derek says. There’s a faraway look in his eyes like he’s reliving it. “It was sprayed up the walls and soaked into her rug. That rug was the first thing on her list of things for her dorm
room and he killed her on it. He watched her bleed out just so that he could take her Alpha spark.”

Stiles clutches his hands together, able to picture it all too easily, the scene young Derek would have walked into. He’s seen so much since Scott got the bite. Too much. Peter protected him from all that. He was never, ever the cause.

“He left once he had what he wanted but my mom tracked him down,” Derek says. “She performed a ritual on him. She took his Alpha spark and she made sure he’d never be able to get it back again. He could kill every Alpha in the world, he’d still be an Omega. He’ll always be an Omega because no pack will take him in.” He looks up at Stiles, meeting his eyes. “That’s who Peter is.”

“It’s who he was,” Stiles says, remembering Lydia’s words. *It doesn’t matter who we were. It only matters who we are.* Stiles knows who Peter is and he knows who he is. Neither of their hands are clean but that doesn’t make them monsters. Not anymore. “Sorry to bother you,” he says, backing away towards the door. “You should go reconnect. Go back to South America. I’m glad that you came but… you should go.”

“Stiles,” Derek implores. “I know how he gets to people. He used to be my hero. Look what he did to me. Cut him out before you start finding bodies.”

Stiles bumps into the steps behind him, stumbling to find his footing. “Thanks for your help,” he says. Derek opens his mouth to speak again but Stiles just shakes his head, giving him a pleading look. He turns, bounding up the steps and escaping to the landing. He runs down the stairs, barely keeping his balance, not stopping until he’s safe in his jeep again.

The tears come, hopeless sobs, bent over the steering wheel. Why has Derek never told that story before if it had such an impact on him? Stiles wants to believe that it’s because it’s not true, because for some reason he wants to play games with Stiles, but he knows how hard it is to talk about the things that really damage you. Being fourteen and coming home to a bloodbath, even as a werewolf, has to mess with your head. And not long after that he lost everything, everyone. But Derek never wanted pity. It makes sense that he kept the story to himself, to family. Stiles is family now though and this is what he gets for it.

But if Stiles is going to believe the story then he has to rearrange some things about Peter in his head. He killed someone. A teenage girl. His own niece. Stiles shakes his head. It doesn’t make sense. Bare facts are meaningless. There’s so much more at work here but Stiles can’t just go to Peter and ask. He’s not supposed to know this. He didn’t ask though. He didn’t go looking for gossip and secrets. Derek volunteered it. Peter would understand that, wouldn’t he? But Stiles shouldn’t have been here. Stiles should already be on his way home now but he’s sat outside Derek’s loft, sobbing, and he knows his next stop isn’t going to be with Peter. He thinks he’s known that all along.

He drives back to his dad’s house, his childhood home, where no one ever died, not within these walls, but tragedies still happened. Sometimes it doesn’t matter why. He climbs out of his jeep, unlocking the door and heading upstairs. His packages are waiting for him on his bed.

He tackles the smaller box first. It’s plain cardboard, no indication of what’s inside or where it’s from. Discreet packaging, as promised. He rips it open and finds his cuff carefully packaged inside. The leather isn’t as soft as the cuff Peter bought him, but that one was lovingly worn in by constant wear. It must have started out stiff like this. It felt so restrictive when he first put it on that he wasn’t paying attention to how comfortable it actually was. He can wear this one in too though. He’s never taking it off until Peter is there to do it for him.

He lifts his leg up onto the bed, removing the support bandage. It’s a relief to take it off. It never
felt right. This will be better. He’ll be able to think more clearly. He’ll be able to make sense of this mess that Derek has left him with.

He wraps the cuff around his ankle, fastening it snugly in place. It doesn’t feel as good as when Peter does it but it still feels good. It feels safe. His eyes fill with tears again, acceptance and loneliness mixing together. Will this be enough for Peter to want him back? He doesn’t have anything else to offer.

He reaches into the box, taking out the padlock. He rubs his thumb over the engraved words. *I belong*. It’s a reassurance to himself and a promise to Peter. They’re the end to each other’s stories. Does it really matter what came before?

He locks the cuff in place, giving it a tug. Secure. Just like Peter used to make him. Stiles lets his leg drop back down, swinging it over the side of the bed as he plays with the keys. He has his cuff. He has Peter’s address. He should get back in his jeep and go but he wants his clothes. He wants the crest. He needs it because it’s his whole identity. It’s a sign to Peter that he never turned his back on him, that he wouldn’t let him down. He can’t turn up without it.

He puts the keys down on his nightstand, trying not to think about the fact that he’s already let Peter down by putting those clothes into an evidence bag and handing them over. He should have pushed for the warrant, should have made them force him, but he gave up too easily. He listened to his dad. It was an instinct, one he was powerless to fight. He’s going to figure this out though. He always figures it out. Peter is going to be so proud of him. Maybe that’s what he’s waiting for, for Stiles to come back to Daddy with all the pieces of the puzzle. Nothing can break them apart after that.

Stiles has a puzzle piece that wasn’t for him now though and he doesn’t know what to do with it. He can’t help but wonder if Peter was ever going to give this to him. Would Stiles have accepted it if he did? Can he accept it now?

He can’t deal with this, not in the midst of everything else. He needs his Daddy, he can’t even function without him, and now he feels further away from him than ever. Who is this man who would kill his own niece? It’s not his Daddy. It’s not. Not the way Derek told it at least. There must be more to it. His skin itches at the need to confront Peter but that’s not what a good boy would do. He’s on shaky enough ground already. He has to choose his next move very carefully if he doesn’t want it to all crumble down around him. It’s like a game of chess. He never managed to win one of those though.

He reaches for the other box, opening it up and taking out his yoga mat. This is what he needs right now. It’s how Daddy taught him to calm down. He’s so beyond it all now though, he doesn’t think some stretching and breathing is going to fix it. He doesn’t want body awareness and mindfulness. He wants to literally stop existing.

He remembers that feeling in the days after his mom died when his dad spent more time with a bottle of whiskey than he did with him. Everything hurt so much that Stiles literally couldn’t comprehend it and the only clear thought in his head was that it needed to *stop*.

He didn’t work out how to do it then and he has no idea now. Scott was what got him through it before. Having a best friend by his side, someone to love him and distract him and show him that life was still going on so he should probably join in. Scott is at school now though, he’s doing important things that don’t involve Stiles. There’s no role models to guide him back to his normal now. He’s officially an outlier in his own life and he’s not even sure if Peter is everything he thought he was. If Derek is telling the truth… Stiles shuts the thought down. People make mistakes. Stiles has made his fair share. He’s in no position to judge.
Peter is the only person who can help him, the only person who understands him and what he needs and who he is. He stripped Stiles down to his bare bones and built him back up again, held his hand and guided him through and taught him what he was capable of. He was still teaching him but now he’s left him alone. He didn’t come back. Peter is the only person who can help him and he left him here all alone.

He’s not sure that Peter can help him understand Peter though. He’s not sure he’s willing to. That’s the part that hurts the most. Peter has his little book of Stiles and all Stiles has is abandonment and a horror story. It doesn’t feel fair. It’s never been fair.

He throws himself back on his bed. This line of thinking isn’t going to get him anywhere. Does he really believe that Peter doesn’t love him? No. Is he going to give up on everything they had because of a second hand story? No. He needs to get ahold of himself. Peter would be so disappointed in him if he could see him right now. The thought makes Stiles’ skin crawl, makes him feel hollow and empty and undeserving. He needs to do better.

There’s a final question hovering in his mind though. Is he going to confront Peter with this when he sees him? No. He’ll carry this burden alone. He’ll make his peace with it. He’ll let it swallow him whole before he lets it complicate things with Peter.

His dad comes upstairs as soon as he gets home, knocking on Stiles’ still open door. Stiles doesn’t respond.

“Hey, kiddo,” Stilinski says, stepping into the room despite no indication that Stiles is okay with it. Consent isn’t high on his list of priorities. “I’m glad you’re here.”

“Where else would I be?” Stiles asks.

“I wish I knew,” Stilinski says. He sighs, moving closer to the bed. “The next time you can’t sleep and you leave the house in the middle of the night, can you let me know? Just send me a text so I know you’re not…”

He cuts himself off and Stiles looks at him for the first time. He’s choked up and it makes Stiles’ own throat tighten in response.

“The whole time you were missing, I kept expecting to get a call that you were…” He voices cracks and he pauses, licking his lips. “I was so scared of getting a report that they’d found your body. The Sheriff’s Department never seems to find much else. And I felt so helpless. When I got up this morning and you weren’t here…”

Stiles stares at him. He looks like he’s going to cry, like he’s actually going to break down in tears. There’s no audience here. Does that make it real? But his dad knew exactly what happened to him.

Stilinski shakes his head. “You’re fine. I know you’re fine. Can you just text next time?”

“Sure,” Stiles says, still staring at him.

Stilinski nods, taking a breath. He looks down, at the open packages. “Yoga mat.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says.

“Is this something you learnt at the Foundry?” Stilinski asks.

“Peter taught me,” Stiles says.
Stilinski raises his eyebrows. “Peter does yoga?”

“No,” Stiles says. He frowns. “I don’t know,” he admits. “He never did it with me.” Peter never murdered anyone with him though and apparently that’s a thing that happened. Was he going to teach Stiles about that too? The thought makes him feel sick. “He bought me a DVD.”

“And you like it?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles looks at him warily. Is he going to make him a profile of desirable traits so he can sell him to the highest bidder? Stiles is worth more than his dad will ever know but Stiles isn’t going to help him out.

“Why aren’t you working this afternoon?”

“I wanted to take you to your first appointment,” Stilinski says.

“I don’t want to go,” Stiles says, but his voice is small and weak.

“I think it will be good for you,” Stilinski says. “You can’t keep all these things in your head.”

Stiles nods. That much is true. He doesn’t think he can hand them over to some stranger though.

“Why don’t you get ready?” Stilinski suggests. “I think you’ll feel better after a shower.”

Stiles looks at him, feeling dangerously fragile. “I can’t take a shower.”

“Okay,” Stilinski says carefully. He moves the empty box off the bed, sitting down beside him. “If you’re trying to preserve evidence, it’s probably already too late, it wouldn’t stand up in court with so many opportunities for cross contamination. We have the clothes though. We can still make a case once you’re ready to tell us what happened to you.”

“You still think you could prosecute Peter?” Stiles asks. “Even though he bought me legally?”

“The sale was legal,” Stilinski says. “Only you can tell us what illegal things he might have done after that. It’s murky, I know. Companions can’t consent and if he truly believed that you were a Companion… I’m going to be honest, with a good enough lawyer, and it seems like he could afford one, he might be able to walk away from this on a technicality. But that’s no reason not to try. I know it’s a scary thought to have to go through all that with no guarantees, but you deserve to be able to fight for this and I will be right beside you the whole way.”

Stiles feels a swell of empowerment before the implications of what Stilinski is saying sink in. He wants to take Peter away from him. He wants to punish him. Is he worried that if he doesn’t fight hard enough, his involvement in this might somehow come out? Peter isn’t the bad guy here. Stiles won’t let him go down for this. He won’t let them be split apart.

He sits up, pulling his knees up and hugging them to his chest. “I don’t want to prosecute. He did nothing wrong.”

Stilinski sags. He had the perfect plan last time but Stiles won’t let him get away with it again. He’s going to be smarter. He’s going to protect what’s his. If he goes back to Peter now, he could be fuelling the fire for the investigation against Peter. Stiles isn’t going to give that to him.

Stilinski looks around. “What was in the other box?”

Stiles bites his lip, touching the cuff through the material of his pyjamas. “Nothing.”
Stilinski gives him a look. “If someone’s sending you empty boxes, I’d complain.” He lifts his hand to rest it on Stiles’ shoulder but then changes his mind at the last moment, getting to his feet instead. “You going to get ready to go?”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees.

“Thank you,” Stilinski says earnestly. “And we can talk about this any time you want. I’m sure you know the statute of limitations for every crime in California.”

“Pretty much,” Stiles agrees.

Stilinski gives him a fond smile. “You put me to shame.”

“I’m a constant source of irritation,” Stiles shrugs.

“You’re the reason I keep going, kiddo,” Stilinski says.

Stiles hugs his knees tighter, tears filling his eyes. He wants to believe that so badly. He wants to believe it more than he wants to keep safe. It’s a balance he’s scared he can’t untip.

Stilinski closes the door behind himself and Stiles gets to his feet, going over to his chest of drawers. He pulls out underwear because people wear underwear, even if it feels wrong to him now. It’s like a chastity belt and it reminds him that Peter won’t be touching him any time soon. He grits his teeth. He needs to get through this, one step at a time. Tiptoe. That’s what Daddy taught him.

Stiles grabs a pair of jeans and then turns them upside down, considering the ankle. They’re not wide enough to fit the cuff inside. He sighs, dropping them to the floor and pulling out another pair. Not wide enough. He can feel the tension rising in his body, tears pricking at his eyes. He feels so pathetic and useless. All he has to do is put on a pair of pants, that’s it, and he can’t even manage that. But Peter always gave him his pants. Lately he’d put them on for him after his bath. There’s so many things Stiles can’t remember how to do. He doesn’t want to.

He digs in his drawer and finds a pair of sweatpants. Stretchy, slouchy, they’ll do. He can’t be expected to dress up for a psychiatrist’s appointment. He’s apparently damaged after all, he might as well look the part. He considers his unwashed hair, the way that he smells. He definitely looks the part. He’s suddenly embarrassed, ashamed, and he hates himself for it. It’s Peter’s scent, his touch. Stiles isn’t going to wash it down the drain. He can’t.

He picks out one of his favourite graphic T-shirts, a connection to some deep down truth about himself, and adds a zip up hoodie. It looks like a casual, comfortable outfit. He looks like a kid going through a rough spot. It’s an understatement but he can work with it.

As he readies himself to go downstairs, he finds that he can’t move his feet. He wonders if he’s playing into Stilinski’s hands by going to this appointment, if Stilinski is trying to undermine him, make him into an unreliable narrator of his own story. If Stiles’ mental stability is brought into question then anything he says, like accusing his own father, the Sheriff who has been tirelessly searching for his missing son, of being the one who really put him in that position in the first place, will be taken with a grain of salt. He’s been through a lot. He’s not stable. It messed with his head.

Maybe they’re right, maybe it did. But Stilinski is telling him what he needs to do, is guiding him through it. He told him to get ready and then he’ll drive him to his appointment, he’ll check him in, send him inside, wait for him there and then drive him home. It’s easy. Stiles doesn’t have to think. No one else is giving him any instructions right now, Peter left him with nothing, not even a single
word. Stiles doesn’t know how he can even get through the next five minutes on his own so he’ll take whatever guidance he can get. Any port in a storm. Stiles feels like he’s lost at sea all over again.

He goes downstairs and his dad looks at his outfit but he doesn’t say anything. He grabs his car keys and gives him a careful smile, opening the front door and gesturing for Stiles to go first.

They don’t talk in the car. Stiles plays with the radio for something to do, his anxiety building the closer they get. He feels numb as he walks into the psychiatrist’s office and he’s still not sure why he’s even here. Because somebody told him to. Because he doesn’t have a mind of his own. Because he’s a shell of a person and maybe someone does need to put him back inside his body.

His dad takes the lead, just like Stiles knew he would, so he wanders over to the waiting area, sitting down and letting the soothing music wash over him. He looks down at his hands, counting his fingers, because none of this feels real. He wishes he could wake up, he wishes it were that simple, but he has ten fingers, he can read, the laws of physics apply. There’s no way out of this.

When his name is called, it makes it all the more real. He gets to his feet, lightheaded as he walks towards the kind looking lady in the office doorway. She invites him inside, offers him a seat, and Stiles looks around, trying to take it all in. It looks nothing like a medical facility. Stiles had to have some counselling after his mom died but it was a stark room at the hospital, nothing like this. He could be in someone’s house right now, plush couches and personal touches in the décor, but there’s a box of tissues on the table between them and the psychiatrist balances a notepad on her knee as she sits down opposite him. It reminds Stiles of Peter, of his little book of Stiles. He can’t breathe.

“It’s Stiles, right?” she asks. “Is that what you like to be called?”

Stiles shrugs. “I guess. It doesn’t matter.”

“My name is Carrie,” she offers. “You don’t have to be nervous, we’re just going to have a chat, talk through whatever brought you here today.”

“My dad brought me here,” Stiles says. Carrie nods as though he’s said something deep and meaningful. Stiles shifts in his seat. “What’s your specialism?”

“I have a background in trauma and PTSD, but I work with a lot of different clients,” Carrie says. “Don’t feel like you need to put yourself into a box.”

“That’s your job, right?” Stiles says.

“I can offer a diagnosis if one is relevant, but sometimes a rough patch is simply a rough patch and there are other ways to work through it.”

Stiles looks down, playing with his hands. His whole life has felt like a rough patch. “My dad’s the Beacon County Sheriff,” he says. “He said they refer people to you. What kinds of people?”

“As I said, I work with a variety of clients,” Carrie says.


“I’ve worked with people who’ve experienced all of those things,” Carrie says. “But I don’t think you’re asking about my credentials. You want to know what category your dad is putting you into.”
Stiles hangs his head. Of course she sees right through him. It just makes him want to be there even less.

“How other people see us can impact on how we see ourselves, especially people who are close to us, people who influence us,” Carrie says. “It can be difficult to separate ourselves from that.”


Carrie doesn’t say anything and the thoughts keep churning in Stiles’ head. All of them, Scott, Lydia, they must be thinking these things, these dark things, morbid curiosity crying out for all the disturbing details of his ordeal. But he was with Peter. He was happy. Nobody understands. In the basement though, that’s more like what they imagined. The memory catches on something inside him like a physical snag, jarring him.

“I was kidnapped,” he admits, the words sounding distant even to himself. “But that was before.”

“That must have been scary,” Carrie says.

“Yeah,” Stiles says distractedly, chewing on his thumb and trying so desperately not to go back there. It makes the panic start up in his chest, the thought of hands grabbing him, his body slammed to the floor, the needle going into his neck. “I just…” He cuts himself off, realising he’s shaking. Waking up in the van, the desperation to get out, the terror of not knowing where he was going. The basement, the lack of communication or instruction. They never threatened him because they knew they didn’t have to. The silence, the inattention, it made him feel like nothing.

“When things happen that are outside our control it can make us feel powerless,” Carrie says. “We question what we could have done and when the answer is nothing, it can feel impossible to move on because we can’t resolve it. Recovery is often more about acceptance than winning.”

Stiles shakes his head. “It’s over. It’s done. That’s not even what I’m upset about.”

Carrie considers him for a moment. “I have something I’d like you to try. Get yourself a journal and write down everything that happened to you, everything that you remember. It doesn’t have to make sense, it doesn’t have to sound good, just get it out. Put it on the page. Take it out of your head. Write it as many times as you need to in as many different ways as you need to. And then, whenever you have thoughts about it, write those down too. Whenever you remember something or whenever you have an intrusive thought, put it in the journal. Whenever you think something bad about the people who hurt you or the people who didn’t save you, no matter how irrational it is, no matter how out of character those thoughts are for you, put them down. Give them validity. You’re allowed to think ugly things about what happened to you. You’re allowed to get angry. You’re allowed to feel sorry for yourself. You don’t have to be strong and push it all aside and get on with your life. You’re allowed some time to come to terms with it. Then you can start to put it into perspective and you can start to rebuild.”

Stiles snorts a laugh, wrapping his arms around himself. She makes it sound so simple. “If you’ve given me my homework, does that mean I can go?”

Carrie looks up from her notebook. “What are you upset about?”

Stiles shrinks back. “What?”

“You said the kidnapping isn’t what you’re upset about,” Carrie points out. “What else is on your mind?”
Stiles looks away, scanning the ornaments on the shelf. Did she pick these because she likes them or because she thinks they’re calming? He stares at a bird and it makes him feel anxious, sitting there on its fake branch. He wants it to fly away. He chews on his lip, leg jiggling up and down. The next five minutes. Get through the next five minutes. Then the five minutes after that.

He closes his eyes, willing away the tears. He needs Peter. He needs him so badly that it’s all consuming. He can’t do it on his own. He needs help. He opens his eyes, looking at Carrie.

“How does the psychiatrist-patient privilege work?” he asks.

“I will not disclose anything you say to me under any circumstances unless I believe you are an immediate danger to yourself or somebody else,” Carrie says. “I do not record my sessions beyond the notes I make for your file. I will never share anything that you tell me. This is a safe space.”

Stiles licks his lips. “What if I disclose a crime?” he asks. “Not something I did. Someone else. They didn’t really do anything wrong but there’s a criminal investigation and they’re looking for evidence and they’ll twist anything I say.”

“I would never go to the authorities with anything you told me unless it was an immediate threat to your own or somebody else’s life,” Carries assures him. “If I received a court order, however, I would be forced to honour it.”

Stiles sags back in his seat. “Right.” He rubs at his eyes, trying to stop the tears before they shed. “I love him so much,” he says, his voice cracking on the words. “He didn’t do anything wrong. He’s not coming back because he’s scared of them.” That has to be the reason. It has to be.

“That must feel very isolating,” Carrie says.

Stiles appreciates the fact that she doesn’t try to reassure or challenge him, just acknowledges how he feels, accepts it. “I love my friends,” Stiles says. “But I want to go back. I need to go back.”

“What do you miss?” Carrie asks.

Stiles closes his eyes, takes a deep breath. He misses waking up in Peter’s arms. He misses gentle touches and looks filled with tenderness and affection. He misses meals cooked for him, presented with such pride and care. He misses his window seat and the view and the feeling of contentedness and belonging. He misses his training, Peter’s instructions, the tasks that he set for him that gave him purpose. He misses the way Peter could bend Stiles’ body to his will, could have more control over it than Stiles ever had. He misses the limits that Peter helped him explore, the way the pleasure was so much more intense and consuming because of it. He misses being on his knees, misses Peter’s cock in his mouth, misses making him feel so good that he came down his throat. He misses fireflies, being held in Daddy’s lap, being looked after and never rushed to pull himself together. He misses bath time, the intimacy and vulnerability that it brought out.

Everything that Peter did to him, he did because Stiles was his. It was about owning him in the truest sense of the word, mind, body and soul. But through every touch, every look, Stiles could tell it went both ways. Peter was his.

He feels the hollowness inside him grow. Past tense. It slams him in the chest, the sickening waves of a panic attack determined to consume him. This is temporary, he tells himself, trying to remember how to breathe. It’s a test. Or it’s a necessity. Or his dad has already done something to Peter to stop him coming back. Stiles leans forward, burying his face in his hands. Peter wouldn’t be threatened by Stilinski. He’d rip his throat out before he let him take his baby away.
Bile rises in Stiles’ throat as Derek’s story comes back to him. That’s not his Peter. But if he believes that Peter would kill for him, and some sick part of him does, likes it in fact, then he has to believe there are other circumstances in which he’d use his claws to take a life.

He gets to his feet, all tears and snot and rushing blood.

“Stiles?”

He doesn’t respond, arms flying out to guide him as he stumbles his way through the room, just needing to be out. He crashes through the door to the waiting room, knowing he needs to keep going, needs to find air, but he just crumbles down to his knees. His dad is in front of him before he’s even processed what’s happening, hands on Stiles’ arms, holding him tight. It feels nice. Grounding.


Stiles tries but his throat closes up around him, making a desperate choking sound. He feels like he’s going to pass out.

“This is a panic attack,” Stilinski says calmly. “We’ve been through this. It’s not going to kill you. You just need to breathe.”

And, yeah, all those times after his mom died, when little Stiles was losing his mind with the guilt and the grief, his dad was always there when he was gasping on the floor. Sometimes his breath smelt of whiskey, but he was there.


Stiles nods because he believes him. He tries to compose himself, pulling in air through his nose, feeling his lungs expanding, taking away the grey at the edges of his vision. He lets it out in a shuddery whimper.

“That’s it,” his dad praises. “In through the nose, out through the mouth. Do it with me.”

Stiles watches, breathing along with his dad, his own breaths shaky and weak but it’s enough to get him through until he starts to even out. Once he’s breathing on his own he looks down, finding his hand gripped tightly to his dad’s. He can’t remember the last time his dad was this patient with him, the last time he was his main priority. But maybe Stiles has just never let himself be this vulnerable with him. Maybe he hasn’t earned it.

“Dad,” he says, looking up at him.

“It’s alright, son,” Stilinski says.

Stiles feels his walls crumbling. This is what he needs. Someone to take care of him. Someone to guide him and keep him safe. “Daddy,” he says, but it’s like the words turn to ash in his mouth and he chokes on it. He pushes himself back, sneering at Stilinski in disgust. “No,” he says firmly.

Stilinski looks at him like he’s a wild animal, fingers practically itching to reach for his gun. “Stiles,” he says carefully, because he can tell Stiles is about to bolt again.

“I can’t,” Stiles says, getting to his feet and finally making his way outside.

He goes to his dad’s car on instinct, bracing himself on the hood as he tries not to let his legs fold under him. It feels better to be outside, to have air that moves around him in the breeze. He
remembers how that felt when Peter took him into the woods. It was so liberating. Stiles would give anything to be locked back up in that house with him though. He wants the last two days erased from his memory. He wants his Daddy back. He feels like Derek has taken him away more than McCall or Stilinski ever did.

His dad steps up beside him and Stiles moves before he can make contact, going around to the passenger door. Stilinski clicks the fob and Stiles climbs inside, pulling on his seatbelt. He needs to get out of here. He needs to get as far away from these murky thoughts as possible.

Stilinski climbs in beside him and starts up the car, pulling out of the parking spot. It’s not until they’re down the block that he speaks. “I don’t want you to be disheartened by what happened. That wasn’t a failure. You took a really important first step.”

Stiles wraps his arms around himself, leaning against the car door.


Stiles feels himself swell with pride, even as it makes his skin crawl. He’s so fucked up.

“How about we stop at the drive thru and grab some burgers for dinner,” Stilinski says.

Stiles shrugs. He still feels like he might throw up. He’s not in control of anything though, not even where he goes, so they end up at the fast food place and his dad orders for him. There’s a certain comfort in that. The food does smell good and Stiles opens up one of the bags on the way back to the house, grabbing a handful of curly fries.

They eat together on the couch, the TV acting as a distraction. It’s not as painful as it could be. It’s kind of like old times. Stiles can’t afford to be nostalgic for this life though. He gave it up. It’s not his fault he got dragged back into it. He’s scared he can’t ever get back what he had with Peter though, not now that it’s been sullied by so many people. He hates them all.

He goes up to his room as soon as he finishes eating, restless anxiety still making him fidget. He toes off his sneakers and pulls his socks off, shrugging his hoodie onto the bed. He unfurls his new yoga mat and places it in the middle of the floor, loading up a video on his laptop. He follows the routine, his body starting to ease the more it moves, relaxing into the flow. His breaths come deep and even as he centres himself and it feels like he’s in control again. He feels capable and settled in his own skin.

He lies on the mat once he’s finished, sated almost as though Peter were here to do it himself. He can imagine it so well, the way it feels to be cradled in Peter’s lap. It’s his favourite feeling in the world. Other thoughts start to creep in soon enough though. Dark woods. Hard ground rushing up to meet his face. A body crushing him into the earth. He’s supposed to write this down. It’s the same technique Peter gave him, keeping a journal, somewhere to make sense of his thoughts, get them out of his head. Maybe that means it’s worth something. He can’t handle being face to face with these thoughts right now though. He’s not ready to confront them.

He opens his eyes, sitting up and reaching over to close his laptop. His eyes catch on the files stacked up on his desk, the ones that Lydia brought him. He needs something to occupy his mind, to drown out all the noise. He gets to his feet, pulling out the desk chair. He should finish what he started. Nothing gives a sense of accomplishment like seeing something through. He’s so close to the end of high school. If Peter’s not coming for him yet, maybe Stiles should tick this off, just for the sake of completion. Then he can’t say he left anything unfinished. He can give Peter everything.
It’s easy to lose himself in the assignments. He stays hunched over the desk until it’s late and keeping his eyes open is starting to become a struggle. He feels accomplished and more competent than he has in a long time. He was good at this. He remembers now. Peter always said he was smart. Stiles can’t wait to show him how smart. Peter says education is overrated, college at least. It’s not in his plan for Stiles. Stiles trusts him though. He doesn’t need anything else. Not when he has Peter.

He leans back in his chair. Scott is going to North Carolina. Lydia is going to MIT. He can’t help wondering where he would have ended up in an alternate timeline where he took the road more travelled. He doesn’t want to. He would never turn his back on Peter and everything he offered. But if his life were different…

He gets to his feet, heading down the stairs. He can still hear the TV and he leans in the living room doorway, looking at his dad. “Why are you still up?” he asks. “Are you trying to catch me sneaking out?”

“I thought you forgot to leave a note,” Stilinski says pointedly. He clearly never bought that.

Stiles just shrugs, stepping into the room. He had planned to go to Scott’s again tonight but he’s kind of beat. With the cuff on, he should be able to sleep better by himself.

“Hey, did any letters come for me while I was gone?” he asks. “College letters?”

“Yeah,” Stilinski says, getting to his feet.

“You throw them out?” Stiles asks, preparing himself for the disappointment.

“Of course not,” Stilinski says, walking past him through to the hall. Stiles follows. “I kept them safe for you.”

He goes through to his office, opening up a drawer. Stiles looks around at the paperwork. There’s probably evidence in here of what he did. There must be some kind of paper trail, bank statements that show strange withdrawals or transfers, contracts for kidnappings or confirmations from the Foundry. If they had a warrant, they’d find it. Nobody is ever going to look though.

“Here you go,” Stilinski says, handing him a stack of envelopes.

Stiles searches through them, looking for one from North Carolina. It’s the only one he would have thought about accepting. He drops the rest down onto the desk, ripping into the envelope. Dear Mr. Stilinski… His heart is beating too fast in his chest, even though this isn’t real.

“I got in,” he says, looking up at his dad with wonder. Joy spreads over his chest as he grins. “I got in!”

“Congratulations,” Stilinski says and he’s grinning too. Stiles can practically feel the pride radiating off him.

Stiles looks down at the letter, reading it over and over. He would have gone with Scott. They would have gotten a dorm room together. They would have studied in the library and gone to great parties and terrible parties and done really dumb things and had the times of their lives. Would have. Stiles can feel the smile dropping from his face, reality settling in.

“What’s wrong?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles shakes his head. “I missed the acceptance window.”
“We can call admissions in the morning,” Stilinski says. “I’m sure they’d be willing to at least hear you out.”

“No,” Stiles dismisses. “It’s fine. I can’t go anyway. It doesn’t even matter.” He tosses the letter down onto the desk with all the others.

“Stiles, they’ll understand,” Stilinski says. “It was out of your control. There has to be something they can do.”

“Forget it,” Stiles says, telling himself he doesn’t care. He doesn’t. He’s going back to Peter. But then why isn’t he there yet?

“Stiles…”

“I’m going to bed,” Stiles says.

He goes through the motions of getting ready for bed but it’s all wrong without Peter there. He sits on the edge of the tub and he wants so badly to climb inside, to soak in soothing warm water, but then he’s lost the last little piece of Peter that he has left.

He feels so hopeless, so utterly bereft. It was easy when he was with Peter, he made all the decisions for him. Daddy always knew best. Now he’s faced with nothing but endless options and he has no idea what he’s supposed to do. Does Peter want him to wait, to trust him? Is he expecting him to use his initiative and make his own way home? He has the address but he’s still hesitant to go there. Not because of what Derek told him. He just doesn’t know what the rules are anymore. Peter isn’t here to tell him.

There’s a third option of course. Peter doesn’t want him anymore. He’s tainted now, linked to a criminal investigation. His training has been undone by the outside world crashing and it’s probably easier for Peter to just start again. Buy another Companion, someone who’s less trouble, someone who doesn’t waste the first couple of weeks fighting him. Someone who will be a good boy from the start. Who will never get corner time. Who knows what the fuck they’re doing and doesn’t have to be taught how to suck cock and take a couple of fingers up their ass.

Stiles slides down to the floor, hugging his knees to his chest. He refuses to believe he’s so disposable to Peter. He can’t be. He loves him. It wasn’t just the fact that he told Stiles, he showed him every day, he acted on it, he looked at him with nothing but adoration. Stiles is not some interchangeable Companion to him. But then why hasn’t he come to take back what’s his yet? After what Derek told him, maybe he has to face the fact that he doesn’t know who Peter is at all.

Stiles forces himself up, crossing the hall to his bedroom. He hugs his pillow tight, rubbing his foot against the cuff on his opposite ankle, and he cries himself to sleep but at least he sleeps.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much to HDHale for all your help getting the beginning of this chapter right, I really appreciate it, your help is invaluable.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Stiles wakes up early, staring at the light filtering through his blinds. He feels numb, disconnected from himself, and he can’t work out if it’s better or worse than the churning turmoil. It hurts less at least but it’s disconcerting. He’s always been far too connected to his emotions, overstimulated by everything around him. This void inside him makes him want to wretch.

He sits up, reaching down to play with the lock on his cuff. It’s supposed to make him closer to Peter, but he feels further away than ever. Waking up alone is such an empty, unfamiliar feeling. He closes his hand in a fist around the lock, feeling the corners dig into his palm. He wants the engraved words seared into his skin. A little voice tells him that Peter doesn’t deserve that though. Peter doesn’t deserve him. Not when he walked away. Stiles was right there within touching distance, all Peter had to do was turn around. He made a choice in that moment. He got into the car.

Stiles can feel that flighty sensation in his chest, the one that so often leads to a rush of panic that crushes him all too easily. He just wants to understand. How can someone who loves him hurt him that much? It’s not Peter’s fault though. It’s McCall’s, it’s Stilinski’s, it’s probably Derek’s. Peter was thrown out by his own family, his pack. Being so close to them again, being dragged back into a town that held so many bad memories, so much helplessness, it must have been traumatic for him. No wonder he wanted to put Beacon Hills back behind him as quickly as he could.

Stiles loosens his hold on the lock, rubbing his thumb over the words. I belong. He tries very hard to believe them.

He looks at the clock. Now is the time he would usually be getting up for school. He wonders if being in his old room has reverted his body clock to familiar rhythms. Peter’s alarm won’t go off for another forty minutes. He wonders if he’s still setting it. He wonders if he’s still getting up at all.

Stiles gets to his feet, starting to pace. He can’t stand the thought of Peter hurting as much as he does, feeling so hopeless and alone. Without Stiles, he has no one. He always told Stiles he was his family. Stiles thinks maybe he gets that now. He had no one else. Stiles doesn’t think he has anyone else either. He can’t trust his dad. He has friends, he’s always thought of Scott as a brother, but at the end of the day he has his own priorities. Everyone does. For Peter, Stiles was it, everything, his world. Stiles has never felt love like that.

He goes over to the desk, picking up his car keys. They signify an independence that he doesn’t want. Peter controlled everything. Peter drove Stiles to his house and he told him what room he could be in and what he was allowed to do while he waited for him and Stiles never went anywhere without his permission. Peter always came to collect him when it was time. Always. He drops the keys back down onto the desk. Peter will come.
He sags with a sigh. He has no idea what to do with himself, how he’s going to fill the time until Peter tells him it’s time to come home. He could sit in this room and wait, this is where Peter would come isn’t it, but he feels like he might go insane. If he had all his things maybe. If he had his comics and his study materials and his Wolfy. He has his yoga mat though. He has his extra credit assignments. He actually managed to get through a couple of them yesterday. He can’t fight the proud little smile that lifts up his lips. And he got into North Carolina. He wants to tell Scott. Even though it doesn’t matter, he reminds himself.

He picks up his history assignment, looking it over. He gets nothing for it if he doesn’t hand it in. That would be such a waste. And he’s so close, he only needs a few more credits. Peter will be back before graduation, he has to be, but they can send his diploma to his dad. Stiles will know he has it, that he’s earned it. No unfinished business. Tie up all the loose ends. Give everything to Peter.

The decisiveness makes him feel good. He goes over to his closet, pulling it open before he pauses, looking down at himself. There’s no way he can leave the house without taking a shower. The thought makes his chest clench. There’ll be nothing of Peter left. It will be like he never touched him at all. Even Peter wouldn’t want to smell him like this though, stale sweat and anxiety. He’d be repulsed.

Stiles pulls his lip between his teeth, eyes stinging. If he showers, he’ll wash away every last trace of Peter. If he showers, he’ll have to take off the cuff. He’s breaking so many promises already. But Peter would be ashamed of him looking, smelling, like this. He took such care in bathing him and now Stiles is letting himself go to ruin. It’s disrespectful. He’s not looking after what’s Peter’s.

He goes over to the nightstand, taking out the keys. He tries not to let the sensation drown him as he clicks the lock open. It’s going straight back on again. He still belongs. Peter will be the one who gets the honour of removing it for good.

As he steps under the warm shower, he feels such utter, deep down relief. He hasn’t had a shower since the Foundry and he could hardly enjoy those. He thinks of Peter’s shower, wonders if he’ll ever be able to try it out. He loves his bath time, the way that Peter pampers him, the warmth and the weightlessness that gets him ready for bed. Showers have always been his favourite thing though and Peter’s looks amazing. And big enough for two. He imagines being pressed up against the tiles by Peter’s body as hot water cascades over them and his dick is hard before he can even try and get himself under control.

It feels like it’s been so long since he got off. The last time was when Peter had him propped up on the pillows, fucking him open with his fingers until he was completely out of his mind, orgasm after orgasm forced from his body. He’d never felt anything so intense in his life. He didn’t know it was going to have to sustain him through a drought. He wonders how he can cry and still be this painfully hard at the same time.

It was only two days ago. Two long days without Peter’s touch. He’d gotten so used to the pleasure, the intimacy, enjoying each other’s bodies. He’s not allowed to touch himself though. That’s rule number one. He grits his teeth, turning the water to cold.

He gasps, instantly shivering. It’s painful against his heated flesh, but he doesn’t let himself move. He stays there until his cock shrivels, all ideas of getting off forgotten, and then he stays there a little bit longer. Punishment. He deserves it. Peter tells him when to get hard. Peter tells him when he’s allowed to come. This all belongs to Peter. If Stiles is going to put that cuff back on, he has to live up to it.

He shuts the water off, reaching for a towel to wrap around himself. They’re all worn and faded,
not like Peter’s fresh, fluffy towels. Everything is so much worse here. He dries himself off, going through to his bedroom and retrieving the cuff. His heart pounds as he buckles it back on, locking it into place. There. Now he’s Peter’s again. Now he belongs.

He manages to find some pants that accommodate the cuff without looking too bulky, leaving the rejects scattered on his floor. He gathers up his school things and then texts Scott and Lydia, asking them to meet him outside school. There’s no way he can handle walking into that building alone. He knows they’ll have his back though. They always do.

He heads downstairs, keys clutched in his hand like a weapon, but his dad still materialises before he can get out of the door. Stiles stops in his tracks, his whole body tensing. He just needs to leave. This place is a waking nightmare.

“You’re up early,” Stilinski comments. He eyes the backpack on his shoulder.

“I’m going to school,” Stiles says.

Stilinski changes his stance, looking more authoritarian. “Are you sure that’s a good idea?”

“I have assignments to hand in,” Stiles says. “Scott and Lydia will be with me. I think I can handle school.”

Stilinski nods but he doesn’t look convinced. “Do you want me to give you a ride?”

“I’m fine,” Stiles says, holding up his keys.

“If you need to leave early, let me know,” Stilinski says, his reluctance to let Stiles go clear. “And ask Scott to stay with you until I get there.”

Stiles rolls his eyes. “I’m not going to need you.”

“You have your phone?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles stills. His phone. More than likely a tracking device, a way for his dad not to lose him until the time is right. He needs it to be able to talk to his friends though. And it has all of Peter’s information on it. It’s his lifeline. He taps his pocket. “I’ve got it.”

“Good,” Stilinski says, giving a little nod. “I’m going to be at that Station today but call if you need anything.”

“I told you, I don’t need you,” Stiles says tightly, pushing past him to get out of the door.

He could do the drive to school on muscle memory alone. There’s comfort in something so familiar. He pulls into the parking lot and he can already see Scott and Lydia waiting outside for him. It feels so good that he can depend on them, that he never has to second guess them. It makes him feel bad that he’ll give them up in a heartbeat when the time comes. They can’t give him what Peter does. Nobody can. He’s going to enjoy this time he has with them though. He’s going to make the most of it.

He hops out of the jeep, heading across the parking lot towards them. Lydia gives him a smile, putting a hand on his arm. Scott looks a little more distracted. Stiles stares at the building behind them.

“How are you feeling?” Lydia asks.
“Mostly sick of people asking me that question,” Stiles responds. He turns to look at her. “I’m fine. I just…” He looks around before lowering his voice. “What do people know? About what happened to me?”

Lydia shakes her head. “I don’t think they know anything. That you were missing. They don’t know the details.”

Stiles takes a breath, staring the building down again. He can’t handle people staring at him with pity or disgust or whatever they think about what happened to him. He was happy. He’s not here to be judged for that. He knows how gossip spreads around school at the best of times though. Maybe he just needs to hope for a monster attack so they all forget about him.

“Derek called me last night,” Scott says, sounding a little reluctant. “Which never happens.”

Stiles looks at him, dread already filling his gut. If Derek has tried to turn Scott against him, against Peter, he’s going to need to source some wolfsbane. “What did he say?” he demands.

“No much,” Scott responds. “He just said he was worried about you, that I should watch out for you, make sure you’re okay.” He looks at Stiles. “What happened?”

Stiles waves his off. “He doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”

“Okay,” Scott says, but he doesn’t look convinced. “If you want to talk about anything…”

“Yeah, yeah, everyone’s there for me, I get it,” Stiles says. “We should really get to class.”

Scott gives him an amused look. “I never thought I’d hear you say that.”

Stiles turns back to the building and the reality of it gives him a creeping sense of foreboding. All those people. All those expectations. He didn’t want to be a part of the world again. He didn’t ask for this. He grips the straps of his backpack. He has assignments to hand in. He has a job to do. Finish what he started. Peter will be his reward. He hopes. These are milestones he set for himself though and Peter hasn’t made him any promises. He used to, but Stiles thinks they’re all broken now. Everything is so fucking broken now.

“Take a deep breath, sweetie,” Lydia says gently beside him.

Stiles nods. He can’t even remember how to breathe. How is he going to get through a whole school day? A deep breath does wonders though. Stiles remembers the time she kissed him to stop him having a panic attack. He wonders if she’d do it again. Probably. These people would do anything for him and Stiles is just wishing them away. The bell rings and his heart tightens in his chest.

“We can be a little late,” Lydia says.

Stiles shakes his head. He’s not walking into class late, everybody stopping and staring at him. He needs this to be as normal as possible. Comfort in familiarity. “Let’s just go.”

He heads for the doors and they fall in step beside him. As he pushes his way inside, Scott instinctively puts his hand on Stiles’ shoulder, giving it a squeeze, and it eases something deep inside Stiles. Scott has his back. Scott is his Alpha. He’ll guide him and take care of him and tell him what to do. Stiles looks at him, seeking.

“History,” Scott says. “Mr. Yukimura.”
Stiles nods and he lets himself be led. When they get to the classroom, Stiles swings his backpack around to his front, unzipping the pocket as he approaches the desk. Scott goes to sit down but Stiles can feel his gaze on him, keeping him safe. He pulls his assignment out, presenting it to Mr. Yukimura.

“Lydia gave me your assignment,” he says. “I know it’s not an A but I think it’s okay. Let me know if I need to do anything else to make up credit.”

Mr. Yukimura gives him a soft smile. He’s getting used to that look. It’s kind, not pitying. It all means the same thing in the end. “I’ll look it over tonight and let you know.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says, moving away to take his seat beside Scott.

Mr. Yukimura gets to his feet, directing them to open their textbooks. Stiles pulls his out of his bag, turning it to the correct page, and then stares at it. This is not what they were studying the last time he was in class. He starts to flick back through the book, trying to work out where he was.

“I think I missed some reading,” he tells Scott, the gap between their current subject and the page he was on widening.

“You’ll be fine,” Scott dismisses.

He puts his hand up, answering a question that Stiles doesn’t have the slightest clue about, and he feels so lost and alone. He feels stupid. He sinks down in his chair, trying to skim read the last couple of chapters but it just makes him lose track of what’s around him and he’s not taking anything in. When he was alone last night he felt like he knew what he was doing but now it’s obvious that he’s been left behind. He’s not even supposed to be here. It’s so cruel that he’s been dumped back into this world that he doesn’t belong to anymore.

If he were with Peter right now, they’d have finished breakfast and Peter would have taken him upstairs, would have locked the cuff into place. Stiles crosses his ankles over one another so that he can feel his own cuff beneath his pants. He still belongs to his Daddy, is still locked away for him. This is a promise. Peter said that Stiles would always be his, that he would show him the world. That’s what Stiles has to hold onto.

Everyone around him turns the page in their textbooks and Stiles looks up in a daze. He hasn’t heard a word that’s been said. He feels himself panic. He’s falling further behind all the time. This is all lost to him already though. It’s trivialities. Does he even need a high school diploma if Peter is going to take care of him for the rest of his life? Of course not. Peter would think it was adorable that he was trying but he’d also take him by the hand and lead him out of this classroom and tuck him up in that window seat with Wolfy and a new batch of comics and a lollipop. Stiles chews on his lip, feeling like an utter failure. Lollipops. He’s supposed to be working on strengthening his tongue. He’s supposed to get better at sucking for Daddy.

He almost slams his textbook closed and heads for the door before he remembers where he is. There are rules in the classroom. Stiles has gotten really good at rules. He always thought they were against his nature, but Peter taught him otherwise. Stiles is good at rules. He’s good at Peter’s rules. He got corner time twice though and both of them were related to his friends. Defending Lydia and disrespecting his Daddy. Trying to contact Scott. His love for them got him into trouble. He looks over at Scott now, making notes on material that is passing right over Stiles’ head, and they might as well be on different planets.

Maybe this is his real test. He has to make the choice. He can put on a cuff and he can do his yoga and buy a bag of lollipops. He can follow Peter’s rules and he can leave his body untouched for
Peter, can deny his desires until he’s given permission, can dole out his own punishments when he gets too close to failing. But can he turn his back on Scott and Lydia? Can he truly leave them behind and dedicate everything to Peter?

Scott looks over at him, giving him that same soft, encouraging smile he’s been blessing Stiles with since they were kids. Stiles used to fuck up a lot. He still does. Scott was always there with that smile though. Stiles has never felt deserving.

“I can help catch you up in free period,” Scott offers, leaning into the space between them.

Stiles feels an ache inside him because it’s already over. He missed Scott when he was gone, but what would he have if he stayed? Who is he to the pack? The human. The fallible one. The liability. To Peter he’s just Daddy’s little boy. He’s cherished. He’s important. Peter takes all the worries away, all of the things that twist his mind into knots. Stiles has always been indecisive, flighty, unreliable. Peter takes care of all that. He always takes care of everything.

Stiles realises something as he plays it all over in his mind. Peter didn’t leave him at the Sheriff’s Station. He left him locked in the bedroom. Stiles is the one who left. He has to go back. He has to prove that he’s sorry and there’s nothing in the world he wants more. Nothing.

He leans in closer to Scott. “I got into North Carolina.”

Scott beams at him, his eyes lighting up. “That’s amazing. We can go together.”

Stiles feels the ache inside him grow. It’s a temporary pain and it already hurts so much less than being without Peter. He nods his head. “It would have been fun.”

Scott frowns, that lost little puppy dog look. It makes tears prick at his eyes.

“Do you have something to add, Mr. Stilinski?” Mr. Yukimura asks.

Stiles looks up at him and he kind of loves him for singling him out, for not treating him like the broken boy who needs special treatment. It gives him the strength to close his textbook, scooping it into his arms.

“I have to go see the nurse,” he says.

Mr. Yukimura gives a nod, his expression serious, clearly worried he’s said the wrong thing. Stiles knew no one would dare argue with that, given the circumstances. He gathers up his things, getting to his feet.

“I’ll come with you,” Scott says.

Stiles looks down at him, touched by the gesture. Scott deserves more than being the last person to see him again. He deserves the truth. Stiles feels like that’s just between he and Peter though. All the other ties have to be cut. Scott will only try and tear them apart.

“How are you going to catch me up if you miss class too?” he asks.

It’s not a lie. If it’s not a lie then Scott can’t call him out. He reaches over, squeezing Scott’s shoulder like Scott squeezed his. It’s as close to goodbye as he dares to get.

He goes in the opposite direction to the nurse’s office, heading out of the building as he fishes his keys out of his pocket. He throws his bag down into the passenger seat as he climbs into the jeep, trying not to get sentimental about it. No one gets absolutely everything they want out of life and
he had to leave high school at some point. They’re all on the cusps of such big lives away from this town. Stiles thinks he deserves a head start.

He pulls up the photograph with Peter’s information and enters it into the GPS on his phone. Two and a half hours. That’s hardly anything. To think he was so close all those times he wanted to go home. All the trees and emptiness made it feel like he was at the edge of the world. That spell has been broken now, Beacon Hills will forever be a shadow in the background. But if he’s good, if he finishes his training by the summer, they can leave, travel the world, no one will ever find them.

He pulls out of the school parking lot, running the rules over in his head. Rule number one, he’s not allowed to touch his cock unless he’s cleaning it, using the bathroom or is given permission. Check. This morning proves how dedicated he is to that. Rule number two, the things in his toybox are his responsibility and he has to tidy them away whenever Daddy comes to get him. He thinks of the mess he left his bedroom in this morning. He hasn’t been taking care of his things like Peter taught him to. Part of him wants to turn around and go do it now, make sure he can face Peter with a clean conscience, but he can’t face going back to that place, can’t risk running into his dad. Those aren’t things Peter gave him anyway. They don’t count. They don’t mean anything to him.

He takes a breath, the GPS directing him to take a turn out of town. He remembers coming back in on this road when McCall drove him back to Beacon Hills. Now he gets to undo that damage. If Peter will let him, he gets to start over. He’ll do his training again if it will prove himself to Peter. It won’t take him as long this time, he won’t fight it and he knows how to be a good boy.

One of the most important things is to respect the schedule. Daddy needs to work and Stiles can’t disturb him. Daddy’s study is off limits, though Stiles never goes anywhere without him anyway. He never wants to. He wouldn’t touch Daddy’s things. He wouldn’t ever get in the way.

Stiles has to do his yoga every morning for mindfulness and flexibility. He’s tried to keep up with that. He hasn’t done it today but maybe Peter will let him do it when he gets there. He looks at the clock. It will still be morning, when Stiles is locked away upstairs with all of this things that Daddy bought him. He hopes Peter takes him straight up there, puts the cuff on.

He can take this one off, throw it in the trash. Stiles won’t need a placeholder anymore. He didn’t bring the keys though. He’s on the highway, Beacon Hills behind him, there’s no way he’s turning back now. Peter can break it. He could probably snap it right off with his bare hands. The thought gives Stiles a little thrill. Rip Stiles’ old life away, banish it. His Daddy is so strong, is everything he’ll ever need.

Once his yoga’s done, he’s allowed to play with anything from his toybox. He’s not really in the mood for studying, but he likes the idea of snuggling up with Wolfy and his comics. He likes the idea of snuggling up with Daddy even more, but that will probably have to wait. Daddy’s work comes first in the mornings, that’s always been the rule. Stiles needs to wait his turn.

He wonders what Peter will make them for lunch. It’s always something simple but delicious. He’s missed Peter’s food so much. He suddenly realises that he hasn’t eaten anything today. Maybe Daddy will let him have a snack. One of those cookies that he gets for a treat. No, probably vegetable sticks or some fruit. Something that’s good for him. Daddy always has his best interests at heart. Then Stiles can have one of his lollipops and work on those tongue muscles. Maybe Daddy will let him put them to work later on.

His cock stirs in his pants. He shifts his hips, fingers tightening on the steering wheel as he tries to push the thoughts away. He doesn’t get to choose when he touches Daddy, when he gets to touch or taste his cock. He doesn’t get to choose when Daddy touches him, when he kisses him, pushing him down onto the bed, weighing his body down with his own. He doesn’t get to choose when
Daddy licks into his mouth, making him whimper and moan as he lifts his arms above his head, pinning them to the bed as he thrusts against him. He doesn’t get to choose when Daddy undresses him, taking away all of the barriers, owning every inch of his body with his fingers and his mouth. He doesn’t get to choose when Daddy slicks up his fingers, pushing them inside his body. He doesn’t get to choose when he comes, if he comes. He doesn’t get to choose to wrap his lips around Daddy’s cock, to kneel for him, to open up his throat while Daddy fucks his face.

He takes a deep breath and holds it, trying to calm himself down. He’ll get all those nice things when he’s earned them. He can’t walk in there expecting Peter to just drop everything and answer his needy, hormone ridden body. Stiles is supposed to have more discipline than that. There’s no asking. Daddy just gives. That’s the rule of stage four. Stiles hopes they’re still there. He’ll go back and do it all again, he’ll prove himself if he has to, but he wants Peter to accept him back, to keep moving his training forward. He wants to finish it and be everything that Daddy could ever want. He wants to be perfect.

So long as he gets his cuff back on, so long as he gets his clothes back, his family crest, he’s going to be okay. It’s like he can feel them all against his body now. The cuff is real, snug around his ankle, even if it’s the wrong one. The clothes feel all wrong though. He wants the softness back, the tailored clothes that Peter had lovingly made just for him, the way they felt against his skin, like a constant caress, the feel of the raised embroidery under his fingers. That’s what makes him belong, not a padlock that tells him so. That’s what’s waiting for him at the end of this journey.

The momentum of the car gives him a sense of purpose, the wheels turning on the asphalt a soothing sensation. The jeep has never been a comfortable drive but he likes feeling like he’s connected to the road. He likes feeling the distance passing by beneath him like something tangible.

When he pulls off the highway and the roads start getting narrower, more remote, he can feel his heart beating in his chest. He doesn’t know if it’s excitement or apprehension. He wants to see his Daddy, wants to fall into his arms and be taken care of, wants to let Peter make everything better because he knows that he can. Stiles still isn’t sure what the rules are though because they never anticipated this. Separation was the furthest thing from either of their minds and Peter gave him no clues at the Sheriff’s Station of what came next. Maybe he doesn’t know. This is uncharted territory for both of them. Being together is the only thing that makes sense though. If nothing else, Stiles believes that.

He turns down the twisty road surrounded by trees that he knows leads straight to Peter’s house. Home. He can feel tears pricking at his eyes. Everything is going to be okay now. The drive seems to take longer than it ever has before and Stiles has an irrational fear that the house is gone, that there’s nothing left for him, but as he finally emerges from the tall trees he can see it there in front of him, just like it always was. Peter’s Mercedes is parked out front, shiny and perfect, and it soothes something in Stiles’ soul as he pulls his car up next to it. They’re from different worlds, that fact couldn’t be more obvious, but that doesn’t mean they don’t belong together. It doesn’t mean he can’t belong to Peter.

He picks up his phone, shutting off the GPS, and finds three text messages from Scott in various stages of worry.

Where are you?

Your jeep is gone from the parking lot.

Are you okay? Please call me.
Stiles sighs. He’s starting up the cycle all over again, making Scott feel responsible for him, drowning him in guilt. He should reply, let him know that he’s okay, that everything’s so good, but he’s not supposed to use a phone. He’s not supposed to contact the outside world, least of all Scott. It’s for the best. Good, honest, morally upstanding Scott could never understand what he shares with Peter. He’d call him a victim, claim that he was being held prisoner, when nothing could be further from the truth. He was kidnapped when he was taken from this place against his will. All he’s doing now is coming home.

He switches off the phone and tosses it onto the seat beside him, climbing out of the jeep. He won’t need it anymore. His heart hammers in his chest as he crosses the driveway. He’s never come in the front door, he realises, only out of it. When he first arrived here, Peter took him straight around to the back of the property to show him how remote it was. At the time it was a threat. Now it feels like a promise.

He approaches the door and Peter must know that he’s here by now. He must have heard the car pulling up. He must be able to hear Stiles’ sneakers crunching the loose stones beneath his feet. He can probably smell him. He doesn’t smell right though. He wants Peter to mark him with his scent from head to toe.

He steps up to the door taking a deep breath before he lifts up his hand. Daddy will be pleased to see him, right? Stiles is following the rules. He thinks he is. He can barely even work out which way is up. His head spins as he taps his knuckles on the door, feeling like he’s about to hyperventilate.

He listens carefully but all he can hear is the blood rushing in his ears. Daddy will be in his study now. He’ll be working. Maybe Stiles should have waited in the car until lunch time. Maybe Daddy will make him wait here. As he moves closer to the door, angling his ear to pick up any sound, he’s sure that someone’s there. He feels a lightness in his chest, waiting for the door to pull back and reveal his Daddy, but it never happens.

“Daddy?” Stiles asks.

Nothing. He gets the sense that he’s being watched though, that someone is there. Is Peter alone? Is that even him? Maybe he’s left this place now that it’s been tainted. He wouldn’t go without Stiles though, would he?

“Peter?” he asks.

There’s still no response and Stiles starts to feel fear creeping up his spine. Something doesn’t feel right. He takes half a step back, his eyes still focussed on the door.

“It’s Stiles,” he offers, but if it’s Peter then he already knows that. If it’s not, maybe that name will still mean something. It has to. He was a part of Peter’s life, he told all his friends, his colleagues, he must have told whoever this is. Maybe they can help Stiles get back to him.

“You need to leave.” The voice is rough but it’s undeniably Peter. Stiles’ heart flutters but the fear is still real and present. This feels wrong.

“What?” Stiles asks, his voice weak as he moves closer to the door again, practically pushes himself against it. It’s as close as he can get to Peter.

“You can’t be here, Stiles,” Peter says, his voice tight, an edge of cruelty to it. “Do you have any idea what it’s going to look like if somebody sees you here? I have a career. I have a reputation. I cannot get caught up in this mess.”
Stiles feels tears prickling at his eyes, his throat tightening as his stomach drops. He leans against the door. How can any of that mean more to Peter than getting his baby back?

“You were cleared,” he says. “And I told them all the truth. I told them you never hurt me. They’re not going to charge you with anything, they can’t.”

“Stiles, leave,” Peter says, banging his fist against the door. It reverberates through Stiles’ body, the tears starting to fall.

He closes his eyes, trying not to fall apart. His mind is racing but somehow blank at the same time, like rushing water. He’s not walking away. He’s not giving up on this when there’s literally nothing else in the world that he wants. He’s tried. Normal didn’t cut it. He wants his Daddy. He needs his Daddy.

“I didn’t do this,” he says, trying to keep his voice level. “I didn’t contact anyone when I had your phone, I promise. I didn’t tell anyone where I was. I didn’t know where I was. I didn’t want them to take me away.” His voice is raspy with tears and full of desperation. He’s so weak. Daddy can make it better though.

“I know,” Peter says, sounding resigned. “But I didn’t know that you were a missing person. I didn’t know you were going to bring the goddamn FBI to my door.”

Stiles frowns, opening his eyes and staring at the wood. “But I told you,” he says. “I told you I was kidnapped. You could hear my heart, you knew I wasn’t lying.”

“I knew that you believed it,” Peter says. “That’s not the same as a thing being true.”

Stiles nods his head, the pieces slotting into place. “Because it was my dad. They wouldn’t have ever come looking for me if it wasn’t for Scott. He’s the one who called the FBI. His dad works for them.”

He lifts his head, waiting, expecting Peter’s weary response, his dislike of Scott, Stiles’ Alpha, rearing its head again, and Stiles will take it. He’ll agree if it means that Peter will just talk to him, will accept what he’s saying. He doesn’t say a word though.

“Please open the door,” he says.

“I can’t let you in here, Stiles,” Peter says. “If they come and search here again, they’re not finding any trace of you.”

“My fingerprints are already all over your door,” Stiles says, pressing his hand purposefully against it. “And my dad’s probably tracking my phone. And my jeep.”

Peter doesn’t respond. Stiles grits his teeth, feeling the frustration settling under his skin, tightening every muscle. He’s saying all the wrong things. Why didn’t he practice this? He’s had two days to get his head together, to work out what he would say when Peter came for him, when they saw each other again, and now he’s fucking it all up. His breaths become shallow and erratic. He’s can’t have a panic attack now. Last time he did, Daddy came and made it better, even though he was working. Stiles isn’t going to be manipulative though. He’s going to be a good boy. That’s what will win Peter over.

“Daddy,” he says, trying to put his compliance into his voice. “I can’t stand not being with you. I’m miserable and nothing feels right and I don’t know who I am. I don’t care about anything. I just want to be with you. I just want to come home.” He gives a little sob, swiping the tears from his face. Crying is manipulative. He can’t make it stop though. Maybe he’s not good after all.
“Daddy, please let me come home.”

He waits, holding his breath, wanting to hear Peter’s response, but it doesn’t come. He’s shaking, leaving himself so vulnerable, and Peter is giving him nothing. Stiles can’t understand how anything can be more important than this, than him. Stiles is literally walking away from his whole life, he’s giving up his friends and his chance to go to college and any kind of future he might have, and Peter can’t even open the door. Is his career really that important? Surely he can find another job.

Peter has more to lose than Stiles does though. Peter, apparently, is a murderer. If the FBI look too closely at him, maybe they’ll find out about Laura, about what happened, or at least what Derek says happened. Peter could go to prison for the rest of his life. Stiles feels a hollowness in his gut. He couldn’t stand Peter being separated from him by bars and razor wire.

He wants to tell Peter that he understands his fears, that they can figure it out, but he’s not supposed to know. Peter didn’t tell him, didn’t give this to him, and if he knows that Stiles was snooping around into his past, that he was friends with the family that turned their backs on him, he’ll be nothing but the enemy. He needs Peter to trust him right now. He needs him to let him in. Maybe later he can tell the truth. He wonders if Peter ever plans to tell him himself.

“We can leave,” he says. “I don’t have a passport but I can get one. We can just go away somewhere that no one will think to look for us. One of those countries you said you’d take me to. Anywhere.”

“I’m not allowed to leave the state,” Peter says tightly and it sounds like an accusation.

“That’s not legally binding,” Stiles tells him. “Unless they have a court order. But they don’t have anything on you to get a court order. They’ve got nothing, I know they haven’t.”

Peter makes a soft noise on the other side of the door. “So smart,” he says quietly.

Stiles smiles, feeling himself calm. He’s on familiar footing with this. It feels so good to be sure of something. “I know about this stuff. They can’t stop you leaving. Just tell your lawyer before you go. You have a lawyer, right? Always have a lawyer if you’re being investigated, even if you know you’re innocent.”

“I have a lawyer,” Peter responds. “I also have a job. I’m not going anywhere.”

Stiles chews on his lip. He knows that Peter’s job is important to him, he dedicates half of his day to it, he still goes in every week, but does it really mean more to him than Stiles does? If they’re going to live they need money though. Peter has inheritance, Stiles remembers him mentioning it, but he doesn’t know how much. Is it enough for them to live off or is he counting on those monthly pay checks to bridge the gap? They have to be practical about this. It’s not a fantasy, it’s an exit strategy.

“You only have office hours until the summer,” Stiles says. “Maybe we can wait until the summer.” The thought makes him desperately unhappy but it’s better than nothing.

“Stiles, you need to leave,” Peter says.

“We can figure it out,” Stiles says.

“Go!” Peter insists, banging against the door.

“No,” Stiles responds, banging back. It’s petulant and he instantly regrets it. He shies away. “Peter,
we can figure this out. I know you’re scared. I’m scared. We can be together though. They can’t stop us.”

He waits but Peter doesn’t say anything. Maybe he’s thinking it over. Maybe he likes Stiles being assertive and proactive and using his brain. Is this feisty? If he’s in trouble he wishes that Peter would just get it over with, give him his punishment so that they could move on. Discipline is about correction though, not punishment. He’s supposed to learn his lesson so that he doesn’t do the same wrong thing again. He can’t think about what he’s done if Peter won’t tell him though. He can’t be a good boy if he doesn’t know how.

“Daddy,” he says, his voice cracking. “Please talk to me.” He listens, leaning in, and he thinks he’s going to be denied again when Peter finally starts talking.

“This is private property,” he says. “If you don’t leave, I’m going to call the police.”

Stiles sags, his entire spirit slipping. “No, you’re not,” he says, but his voice is numb. “You don’t want them to know I’m here.”

“Not your dad or the FBI,” Peter says. “The local police department. The ones who I donate several homemade pies to for their annual fundraising bake sale.”

Of course Peter has everything planned out, a contingency plan to come out on top, but it doesn’t involve keeping Stiles. He wants to save himself, not what they have. Stiles shrugs. “Call them then,” he says, sinking to the floor. “But I’m going to sit here. I’m not going anywhere. I don’t have anywhere else to go.”

“Go home,” Peter says.

Stiles’ jaw twitches, trying to fight back the tears. “I am.”

He slumps against the door, waiting for Peter to respond, to argue with him just so that Stiles can have something to fight against. He can’t save this if it’s already dead in the water. He doesn’t believe that though. Peter’s just scared. He doesn’t love Stiles any less. He can’t. What they had can’t be flicked off like a switch. They were so utterly entwined; mind, body and soul. Stiles sniffles, wiping at the tears that spill over.

Maybe this is a test. Stiles has to prove his dedication. He’ll stay here all night if he has to. He’ll stay here as long as it takes. Peter hasn’t left, he would have heard him if he walked away, so he’s waiting. He’s waiting for Stiles to prove himself, prove that he’s truly choosing Peter. Stiles won’t leave him with any doubts.

It’s hot where he’s sat on the porch, the sun shining directly on him. He closes his eyes, making everything go red, leaning his head against the door. He hears Peter shift and he thinks he’s really going to walk away but then he listens as he sits down at the other side of the door. He’s waiting with him. He’s not going to leave him all alone. That fact heartens Stiles. They’re always in it together.

Stiles takes slow, deep breaths, trying to level out his heartrate, trying to show Peter that he trusts him, that he’s patient and calm, that he’s worthy. He pulls his legs up, reaching down to trace the cuff. His fingers catch on the lock and he rubs his thumb over the words. *I belong.* He’s not going anywhere.

“I bought a yoga mat,” he says. “So I could keep doing my yoga like you wanted. I really like it. I’m glad you taught me.” He waits but Peter doesn’t say anything. “I haven’t done it yet today,”
Stiles admits. “But I will. If there’s time. I like the way it makes me feel.”

He grips the lock in his hand, feeling it ground him. Peter still doesn’t speak. He’s listening though. Stiles can tell that he’s listening. He can feel it.

“I had to take a shower this morning,” he says. “So I know I don’t smell right. I’m sorry. I tried not to but I was going…” He cuts himself off. He doesn’t want to tell Peter about going to school. It feels like a betrayal that he would choose anything over Peter. “I smelt really bad. So I had to.”

He lets go of the lock, turning himself more towards the door in the same way he used to snuggle into Peter. He gives a little huff. No past tense. Peter is right here with him.

“Can I take the drops with me?” he asks. “Your scent. Then I won’t lose it. I didn’t want to wash it away.” He shifts against the hard porch. “And can I take some of my clothes? The soft ones with the family crest. I lost the others. They took them off me. They have them in evidence lock up somewhere but don’t worry, there was nothing on them. Nothing they can use against us.”

He thinks of the lube and Stiles’ come that would show up if they decided to send them to the lab. They’re probably still at the Sheriff’s Station though. Peter isn’t a real suspect. Stiles isn’t going to worry him over nothing.

“If we have to wait until the summer then I want to have them with me,” Stiles says. “Please? I’m sorry I let them take them but I didn’t have a choice. They were going to get a warrant.”

Peter still doesn’t respond. Stiles sighs, opening his eyes. Is he saying all the wrong things? Maybe he’s coming at this from the wrong direction. It’s not a case of wiling away the time until Peter lets him in. He’s left him here for a reason. Discipline. Corner time. Another set of rules to follow. Stiles knows them better than he’d like.

“Ohkay,” he says softly, shifting onto his knees.

Don’t talk. Don’t move. Think about what you’ve done. Eighteen minutes, one for every year. Stiles can do that. He can sit here and think about his mistakes for that long. There’s plenty of them. He bows his head, taking a breath, hoping Peter knows it’s time to begin.

Stiles thinks back to that night, laid out on the bed, thinking about date night with Daddy. The noise downstairs, the FBI crashing in. Stiles slammed the door closed. He thought about his own safety above Peter’s. But he was chained to a bed, he couldn’t go anywhere. He couldn’t run for the stairs and overpower whoever was down there. He couldn’t do that even if he wasn’t chained. But he slammed the door. He shut Peter out. Maybe he should have waited in the doorway. What good would that have done though?

He remembers how scared he was when he didn’t understand what was going on. He thought it was someone there to hurt them, rob them, take their dignity away. It was so much worse than that. It was the knights in shining armour ripping him away from his Daddy.

Stiles thinks back to being in the bathroom. The men with guns shouting in his face. He couldn’t have done anything differently. But McCall. The bolt cutters. He shifted away as far as the tight space would allow him, but he never physically tried to stop McCall. He never used the word no. He could have kicked and fought, could have told him that he didn’t give him permission to break the lock. He’s not sure it would have made a difference, but he didn’t even try. He just sat there meekly talking about the key while he let himself get taken away.

He wasn’t under arrest, not like Peter was when they took him away. He was being rescued. Does
that mean he ever had an option to not be rescued? If he explained to them that he consented to what was happening. If he explained that this was his home and they had no right to remove him. He could have stayed there locked up for Peter when he came home. He had no way to know if Peter was coming home though. All he wanted to do was be close to him. If Peter was gone, he had to go too. He still can’t work out if that was the right decision or not. He wishes that Peter would tell him.

When they got back to Beacon Hills, Stiles should have given a proper statement to clear Peter’s name. He told them he never hurt him, was never inappropriate with him, but that wasn’t enough. Maybe if Stiles had told them that he and Peter were in love, that they shared something special, then Peter wouldn’t still be under investigation and they would have let Stiles go home with him. He’s forsaken Peter by telling half a truth. He should have given a statement about all the ways that Peter loved him.

He wonders how that statement would go. Peter provides for him. He cooks all of his meals from scratch and always with love. He pets him and calls him beautiful and never lets him forget how special he is. He buys him presents, expensive and personal and full of enrichment opportunities. He let him choose what he wanted to learn about and gave him the resources to teach himself. He trains him so that he’ll be a better person, so that he’ll have control over himself, so that he’ll understand his full capabilities, even if pushing past those limits can be tough. Daddy makes it worth it. He dresses Stiles in the softest clothes and gives him something that Stiles realises now is maybe just for him. The family crest doesn’t belong to the Hales. It’s for the two of them. They’re building something new and Peter chose Stiles to be a part of that.

He takes care of all Stiles’ needs, he calms him and he shows him pleasures he could only imagine. He bathes him and he wraps him up in bed and he loves him every second that they’re awake, holding him close to make sure he never forgets in their sleep. Stiles couldn’t ask for anything more. That’s what he should have told them. Peter even lets him go outside now if he’s a good boy. Stiles is going to be a good boy every day for the rest of his life.

He tilts his head, looking at his watch. Eighteen minutes has come and gone. Sometimes it’s longer than eighteen though. Last time he got thirty-six. Is what he did now worse than touching Peter’s phone? It’s surely at least as bad. That means he has another thirteen minutes to go. That’s over halfway. Not too bad.

The sun is beating against his back and he can feel the sweat beading on his body, the heat searing the back of his neck. He reaches around and pulls his collar up to protect it before cringing. He’s not supposed to move. Can Peter tell. He’ll be able to hear every subtle movement, of course he can tell. That means the clock has been reset. Thirty-six minutes.

He feels dizzy, his mouth dry and sour tasting. The fact that he’s had nothing to eat or drink all day is definitely catching up with him. But it’s nearly lunch time, maybe Daddy will make him something like he used to. Stiles hopes it’s something quick. One of his toasted sandwiches maybe. They were always crispy and delicious with the perfect balance of fillings. Stiles didn’t think there was an art to a sandwich, but Peter proved to him that there is. His mouth starts to water at the thought.

He imagines Peter opening the door, telling him he’s a good boy, taking him by the hand and leading him through to the kitchen. He’d sit him on a stool at the island and give him a glass of water and let him watch while he made his lunch. Stiles loved watching him in the kitchen. He wants to do that more often. He wants to be allowed to admire everything Peter does.

He hears a sound on the other side of the door, Peter getting to his feet, and he feels his heart swell.
He’s going to see his Daddy. He’s going to be back in his arms. He stays there with his head bowed, knowing he can’t move until he has permission. He wants to let Daddy see him like this. He wants to make him proud.

He listens, his heart light in his chest, but the door doesn’t open. The footsteps move away, across the wooden floor, and Stiles thinks maybe he’s getting lunch ready now. Stiles won’t get to watch him but that’s okay. He’ll be more than happy if something delicious is put in front of him and Peter is by his side. The footsteps don’t go to the kitchen though, Stiles can tell because he hears a door close firmly into its frame. The only door is to Peter’s study.

Stiles wants to believe that he’s going back to finish his work, just like he usually would at this time. They’re following their routines. He knows it’s not true though. He knows that Peter has left him here. If he wanted him to wait he would tell him. He would be clear. Stiles never had to guess what he wanted. The only instruction he’s been given is to leave.

Even as the tears cloud his eyes again, Stiles decides to wait another thirty-six minutes. Start the clock again. Just in case. He puts his hand in his lap so he can see his watch. Ready, steady, go.

He lasts less than fifteen minutes before he feels like the heat and the dehydration are going to make him pass out. He tries to shift across the porch to find some shade, Peter would understand, but he knows he’s going to have to abandon it. He gets to his feet, numb below the knee, stumbling around to the side of the house so that he can sit in its shadow. He pulls off his shirt and rests against his knees, concentrating on breathing in and out. The uncomfortable sensation of the blood returning to his lower legs, like needles being pricked into his skin, is a welcome distraction. By the time he can feel his toes again, he’s come around.

He gets tentatively to his feet, mouth still parched but not feeling like he’s going to collapse. He walks around to where Peter’s study is, but the blinds are pulled shut. Stiles puts a hand on the window, listening for tapping keys or turning pages or whatever it is Peter does in there. Stiles has no idea. He was never allowed to ask.

“Peter?” he says. He doesn’t know if that’s the right word or not. It doesn’t feel like Peter wants to be Daddy anymore. “Can I have a glass of water?”

There’s no response. Stiles leans forward, pressing his forehead against the cool glass. It’s bliss. He enjoys it for a moment, trying not to think about anything else. The inevitable is creeping up on him though. He rights himself, looking at the sweaty smear he’s left behind. He wonders what the FBI would make of it if they came back.

“I have to go then.” He says it like an apology but to Peter it’s probably a blessing. Stiles’ body is breaking down on him so much that the hurt of rejection barely registers. He guesses he should be used to it by now. “I love you;” he says. “I love you so much. I’m going to come back when it’s a better time.”

He waits for a few moments, but he doesn’t get anything in return. He presses his lips together, emotions rushing through him, anger, betrayal, heartbreak, but the love still shines through. He’s not sure if that means it’s real or he’s just an idiot.

He grabs his shirt from the floor, going back to his jeep. He winds down the windows and then turns his key in the ignition. Once he starts moving, the air will blow around him, cooling him down, making him feel better. It’s that promise alone that makes him turn around in Peter’s driveway and leave it behind. He just needs to breathe.

He stops at the first fast food place he sees in a small town, pulling into the drive thru. He orders
two sodas and a full meal with sides, sitting in the parking lot to eat. He gulps down half of the soda in one go and then presses the cool container to his head, feeling the condensation drip down him. He starts on the food, filling his stomach with grease and fat. It makes him feel sick, swilling around with the soda, but he doesn’t stop. He needs something to sustain him. He feels empty inside. He finishes every bite along with both sodas, throwing away his trash and then going inside to pee.

As he washes his hands in the sink, he catches his reflection in the mirror. The fluorescent overhead lights aren’t kind but that’s not the only thing that’s wrong with him. He has dark circles under his eyes that are red and puffy even though he’s stopped crying. He can still feel that sensation at the back of his throat though like it might take him over again any second. Why would Peter want this? He doesn’t, Stiles reminds himself. He doesn’t want it at all.

He goes back to his jeep, heading towards the highway back to Beacon Hills. What other choice does he have. He puts on the radio, listens to every lyric, every word that the DJs say, because he doesn’t want to hear his own thoughts. He doesn’t want to let them form. He listens so intently that the words echo in his head and he goes into a kind of trance, the road rumbling by beneath him, and by the time he’s in Beacon Hills it’s almost like he never left.

He thinks about going back to his old house, his old room, his father looming over him. He can’t face it. He can’t handle being alone. Just like going to school, muscle memory takes him to Scott’s house. He swings his keyring around on his fingers, finding the right key that will grant him access. This feels more like coming home than going to his dad’s house. He’ll be safe here. Scott will look after him. It won’t be enough, it can never be enough, but maybe it can get him through the night.

He lets himself in, swinging the door shut behind him. He takes a step towards the stairs when Melissa comes out of the kitchen.

“Stiles,” she says.

There’s something in her tone that gives away a worry that he feels like he should be aware of. He looks down at the key in his hand.

“Oh,” he says, the connections in his brain slow to come. “I should have knocked.”

“No,” she dismisses. “It’s good to see you.”

Stiles nods. He wants to hug her, fall into her, she feels safe. Instead, he looks up the stairs. “Is Scott here?”

“He just got back,” Melissa agrees.

Stiles feels like that should mean something to him but it doesn’t. He moves forward. “Thanks.”

He takes the stairs two at a time and as he rounds the corner to Scott’s room, he’s already coming to meet him. He looks Stiles up and down, sagging with relief as he grabs him by the shoulders, clinging like he wants to make sure he’s real.

“I’ve been looking for you.”

Stiles frowns. “Why?”

“You just took off,” Scott says, loosening his grip. “And you haven’t answered any of my texts or calls.”
Stiles feels the guilt pressing down on him. Peter’s driveway, turning off his phone. He made a choice. It was the wrong choice. He looks up at Scott and it all comes tumbling down. Everything is very, very bad.

“I left it in the jeep,” he says. “I turned it off. I’m sorry. I wasn’t thinking very clearly.”

“It’s okay,” Scott says, but Stiles knows he’s only treating him like this because he’s fragile, not because he deserves it. He was a dick. He wants to be called out. Or maybe he just wants someone to hate him as much as he hates himself. He doesn’t feel deserving of love right now.

“I’m sorry,” he says again, going past Scott into his bedroom. Scott follows after him as Stiles throws himself onto Scott’s bed, Scott closing the door behind them. Stiles lies there, miserable and lost, and he doesn’t know what comes next. Everything is huge and scary and stark. He feels too little for this world, too raw. There’s no one to protect him.

“No one’s mad at you,” Scott says. “We were just worried.”

Stiles nods, blinking back the tears that are trying to form. He looks up at Scott. “I was going to leave you.”

“You did leave me,” Scott says.

Stiles stares at him. He’s so dumb and innocent. Stiles loves him but not enough. Not in the right way. This can’t sustain him. “I was going to leave you for good,” he says. The tears finally come and he folds in on himself. “I went to be with Peter. I love him, Scott. I can’t stand not being with him.”

Scott climbs onto the bed with him, putting a hand on his arm. “Peter? That’s the guy?”

_The guy._ It sounds like such an insult.

“He’s everything,” Stiles says. It feels a little better to say it out loud. “And now your dad and my dad want to prosecute him and he didn’t do anything wrong.”

“I get it,” Scott says. “It’s normal to bond with your captor when you’re put in that situation.”

Stiles grits his teeth, yanking his arm away. He can feel his gaze go cold. “You don’t get it. That’s not what it is.”

Scott looks at him carefully like he’s considering him.

“He didn’t kidnap me,” Stiles insists. “He found me in that place and he saved me. He got me out and he looked after he and we were happy. We were really happy. I didn’t want to come home.”

“It must have been good to have someone be kind to you,” Scott says.

He’s using that tone of voice, the empathy before he drops how he really feels. I understand you, but you’ve done a bad thing. I understand you, but you’re wrong. It reminds Stiles of standing in the rain, Scott trying to understand what happened with Donovan. He did try. He was fuelled by misinformation though and Stiles never pulled it together enough to tell him the truth. He still remembers the way Scott looked at him, like he’d let him down in the worst way possible. He still remembers the way he flinched. He thought Stiles was a monster. He was, once upon a time.

He looks up at Scott. They’re on different sides of the truth again and Stiles still doesn’t know how to fix it. He doesn’t think words are powerful enough. He and Peter are in love. How can he
possibly prove that when Peter won’t even talk to him?

“Please don’t go back there,” Scott says. “Come with me to North Carolina. Me and Lydia, we can help you get enough credits. We can talk to Ms. Martin, I bet she’d give you your diploma anyway. I’m sure she would. You deserve it. You deserve a fresh start.” He puts his hand back on Stiles’ arm and Stiles doesn’t stop him. “No one would know us there. We don’t have to be the True Alpha and his Boy Wonder, we don’t have to take all our baggage.”

Stiles feels something ease in his chest. He smiles. “I’ve been reading a lot of comics. But yeah, I don’t want to be Batman or Robin. Not anymore.”

“Then let’s just be Scott and Stiles,” Scott says.

Stiles nods. It’s not a promise, he can’t make those, not if they involve being without Peter. It sounds so nice though, so simple and straightforward. He envies people who get to make those kinds of choices without ever second guessing them.

Scott tilts his head towards the door and Stiles can tell that he’s listening to something.

“What?” Stiles asks.

Scott looks at him. “Your dad’s here.”

Stiles sighs, all the heaviness returning to his body. He’s not going with him. He’s not. “What’s he saying?”

Scott listens for another moment. “Nothing.”

Stiles gives him a look. “Scott. What’s he saying?”

Scott just looks at him, those big puppy dog eyes. Stiles gives a huff, getting to his feet. He eases the door open and steps into the hall, making his way to the top of the stairs. He leans against the wall out of sight, listening.

“I just wish he’d let me help him,” Stilinski says. “He won’t talk to me at all. He just shuts down.”

“He’s a tough kid but he’s been through a lot,” Melissa says. “It’s a normal response to trauma. He feels helpless over what happened to him and he doesn’t want to let himself be that weak again. He’s pushing you away because you make him want to let his guard down and he’s not ready for that yet. He still feels like he needs those walls to keep him safe. Just be there. He’ll appreciate it in the long run.”

“I’ve had training on this, Melissa, I’m doing all the right things,” Stilinski says. “I’m giving him space, I’m letting him come to me, I’m not making him talk about it. I’m there. I think he’d really rather I wasn’t. I just don’t understand where this hostility is coming from.”

“It’s coming from love,” Melissa says.

Stiles grits his teeth. It’s coming from hate. She has no idea. And yet somehow, hearing his dad say those words with such sincerity, it strips something away from Stiles. It makes him feel guilty, even though he’s the victim. Bonding with his captor. He’s not going home with this man.

He hears Stilinski sigh heavily, can imagine the shift in his stance, the exhaustion showing through, making him human despite the uniform. It always made Stiles feel so heavy to see him like that. It made him want to lighten the burden. He was a kid though. That was never his
“I hate that man for what he’s done to my son,” Stilinski says. His voice is cold, unfamiliar, sending a chill down Stiles’ spine. “My bright, brilliant, full of life son. He’s a shell of himself. It’s like he’s not even there,” Stiles curls his hands into fists. “I want to go to his house,” Stilinski says, something far away in his voice, like he’s playing it out in his head. “I want to kill him, Melissa. I want to take my gun and shoot him through the head for what he’s done. Whatever sick things he’s inflicted on him that Stiles doesn’t even dare tell me about. I want to kill him.”

Stiles feels like he’s been punched in the gut. He opens his mouth but no sound comes out. His vision blurs with tears. He’s got it so wrong. Peter is the one who saved him. If Stilinski wanted to kill those bastards who kept him in the basement or Nick from the Foundry or any of those other people involved in taking him and who knows how many other kids, then Stiles would understand. But Stilinski doesn’t want to kill those people, Stiles remembers. Stilinski is the one who handed Stiles to them. He doesn’t get to play the fucking victim now.

Stiles goes back to Scott’s room, closing the door behind him. Scott is sitting on the bed, watching him with so much pity. But pity means he gets it, right? He gets that Peter’s not the bad guy and Stiles’ father is trying to destroy something he loves. Or he agrees with Stilinski and feels sorry for poor, delusional Stiles. He can’t deal with this right now.

He climbs onto the bed, turning his back on Scott as he lies down, closing his eyes. His breaths are wet and shaky. He doesn’t know what he wants because he doesn’t think he has any options left. Peter doesn’t want him. Stilinski wants to hurt Peter and probably Stiles too, or at the very least take them both out of the picture. Scott, well-meaning Scott, thinks he’s confused. Just like that night that he picked him up from Sinema when Mason and Corey called him to play dad to a drunken Stiles who’d humiliated himself with a total stranger. That night is fuzzy, but Stiles remembers the way Scott looked at him, like he didn’t understand, like it was just the alcohol, like Stiles made no sense to him. Stiles remembers every time Scott’s looked at him like that. He never loved him any less, he just never really knew him. Stiles curls in on himself, letting out a sob.

“How does it hurt?” Scott asks.

“Not in a way you can take,” Stiles responds.

“I can try,” Scott says.

He lies down behind Stiles, reaching over his body to wrap his fingers around Stiles’ forearm. There’s nothing to take, not physically, but it still eases something inside Stiles. He shifts back, leaning his weight against Scott, feeling his warmth seeping into him. It’s nothing like being held by Peter but he still knows he’s surrounded by love. Unconditional love. He wants so desperately for it to be enough.

Chapter End Notes

During Steter Week I received two amazing pieces of art for this fic! They are stunning and capture it perfectly. alien_from_outerspace made this wonderful animation and hd_hale drew this beautiful artwork. Please go check them out and give them love <3
Stiles lies in bed while he watches Scott get ready for school. Peter always got up before him, went for his shower, got dressed, all while Stiles would stay snuggled up in their bed. It’s not that dissimilar. Scott’s not going to go make breakfast for him and then come to collect him so they can go eat together though. Scott isn’t going to lock him up all safe and sound while he goes to school. Stiles could still wait though. He could stay here and practice being a good boy while he waits for his Alpha to come home. Scott doesn’t have it in him to be that guiding force that Stiles needs though and Stiles could never feel that way about him. Family means something else between them.

“I don’t mind staying home,” Scott says for the millionth time.

Stiles shakes his head, hugging the blankets to his chest. “I’m used to stretches of time on my own.”

Scott turns to face him fully. “Well, you don’t have to be alone,” he says earnestly. “You’ve still got me.”

Stiles smiles. He recognises those words. They were given to his by his father and he passed them on to Scott. Of course Scott wants to give them back, repay him in kind. He remembers standing over his mother’s fresh grave, hating his father for making him leave. He didn’t want him then and he doesn’t want him now. He has to admit that he wants Scott though. That fact makes him feel like a traitor.

He wishes his mom were here now, she’d know what to do. She always knew what to do. Or maybe his problems were just smaller when he was ten.

Scott comes over, sitting down on the edge of the bed, and Stiles can tell this is going to be a conversation. He’s not sure he’s up for it.

“I know you said he looked after you,” Scott says. “That you were happy.”

“He’s a good man,” Stiles says.

He tells himself it’s Scott he’s trying to convince but a little voice in the back of his head tells him that a good man wouldn’t have turned him away yesterday, wouldn’t have left him out on that porch, wouldn’t have walked away.

Scott nods, looking thoughtful. “And he bought you from the Foundry?”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I don’t know what would have happened if I’d been left in that place, Scott.” He chews on his lip, remembering the helplessness, the constant fear of what was coming next, what more they could possibly take away from him. “They treated me like I was just a commodity. They literally used the word merchandise.”

“I’m sorry,” Scott says. “But that’s kind of the point. He bought you. He thought it was acceptable to trade in humans. That’s who he is.”

“No,” Stiles protests. “He doesn’t have anyone else. He doesn’t have a family or a pack. I was his
“That’s not how family works, Stiles,” Scott says. “You can’t just buy someone.”

“You’re making it sound bad,” Stiles says.

“I’m just stating the facts,” Scott says calmly. “You remember how we thought about people who bought Companions, right? When we learnt about it in school, we thought they were pathetic and disgusting and so far removed from our world.”

“Peter’s not like that,” Stiles insists, feeling that hysterical edge creeping into his voice. “I don’t understand why you’re attacking him. He loves me.”

“He bought a human,” Scott says plainly. “He made the decision to go to the Foundry and pick out a person to own. That’s not normal behaviour.”

“It’s not illegal,” Stiles says defensively.

“It’s not,” Scott agrees. “But it’s not the actions of a healthy, balanced person who can form meaningful relationships.”

“You don’t know him,” Stiles says. “You don’t know what we had. And I don’t remember asking your opinion.”

“You’re right, you didn’t,” Scott agrees, getting to his feet. “But just think about it. He always stood to gain a lot more than you.” He grabs his backpack, sliding his textbooks inside before turning back to Stiles. “Are you sure you don’t want me to stay?”

Stiles shakes his head. As much as he wants to hide away from the world and stay in the safe haven that is Scott’s bedroom all day, waiting for his Alpha to return, he has so many things to work out. This isn’t over with Peter and they both know it. He’s not giving up on his Daddy. In the meantime, he needs to surround himself with all the good things that he can.

“I’m going to go see my dad,” he says.

“That’s a good idea,” Scott says. “You should talk to him.”

“Yeah,” Stiles responds vaguely. “I’ll see you later.”

“Go turn your damn phone on,” Scott tells him, swinging his backpack onto his shoulder. “And answer my texts.”

“I will,” Stiles agrees.

“Okay,” Scott says, giving him one last look like he might not see him again. It makes a heaviness settle in Stiles’ chest. Scott gives him a little smile, closing the door behind himself.

Stiles closes his eyes for a moment, reveling in the warmth of Scott’s bed. It would be so easy to just stay here. He doesn’t really have the desire to do anything but be in Peter’s arms. He’d rather rot than choose another option. But it’s going to take work. There’s obstacles between them and Stiles is going to need all of his best problem-solving skills. He can do this. He’s the one who always figures it out.

He pushes the blankets back, swinging his feet down onto the floor. He kept his pants on last night so that Scott wouldn’t see his cuff. He wouldn’t get it. That would probably be something healthy,
balanced people don’t do as well. The keys are still in his nightstand which means he can’t have a
shower, not until he gets home. He has something important to do before he gets there though.

He puts on his socks and sneakers before grabbing his car keys, heading downstairs. His phone is
still sat on the seat of his jeep along with his plaid shirt. He reaches for it, turning it on and
watching it light up. As soon as it loads, it starts vibrating in his hand. So many messages. So
many missed calls. They’re not just from Scott but his dad too.

Stiles frowns as he gets rid of the notifications. He couldn’t even look Stilinski in the eye when he
came up to Scott’s room to talk to him last night. All he could hear were the echoes of his
admission to Melissa. He wants to kill Peter. Nothing has ever made him feel more sick and afraid.
But Peter wouldn’t go down easy. He wouldn’t lose that fight. That doesn’t change the fact that
Stiles is currently at the mercy of a would-be murderer.

He sends a text to Scott, telling him that his phone is on and he’ll keep it with him. Scott responds
immediately with a thank you and a plea to talk to him next time he feels like he has to run away.
Stiles is touched but Scott really doesn’t get it. He’s not running away. He’s going home. It’s the
most natural thing in the world.

He puts his keys in the ignition, driving to the Sheriff’s Station. His dad is the last person he wants
to see but he needs something from him. Sacrifices are going to have to be made. He’s lining up his
pieces to finally win the game. He tries not to be disheartened by the fact that he never has. Peter
always got checkmate before him. That doesn’t mean Stiles is going to accept his rejection. This is
just check. There’s still a divine move left, he’s sure of it. In fact, he feels like maybe Peter is
counting on him finding it.

He jumps out of his jeep, heading into the Station. His dad is sat behind his desk, looking over a
file. Stiles doesn’t let himself break pace, doesn’t let himself think about it, he just walks inside,
closing the door behind him.

Stilinski looks up, giving him a smile. “Hey, kiddo,” he greets, like he didn’t have a casual
conversation about executing the love of Stiles’ life last night. “How are you feeling? Did you
sleep okay?”

“Yeah, fine,” Stiles says distractedly.

His eyes catch on the board behind Stilinski, photographs pinned with labels and notes, strings
making connections between them. It’s the kind of thing Stiles usually lives for, but the pictures
make him go cold. Nick’s mugshot. Stiles’ room at the Foundry. The basement. He takes a step
closer, even as he can feel himself start to shake. It’s likes somebody pulled his nightmares out of
his head and pinned them up for everybody to pull apart and judge.

“What do you want me to go over the investigation with you?” Stilinski asks. “We’ve made a few
arrests and we’re building a strong case.”

There’s a copy of Stiles’ intake paperwork, the one Nick told him he faked. It has Stiles’ real name
on it though, his date of birth, his height and weight. Nick must have gotten the information from
his driver’s license, Stiles hasn’t seen it since he ended up in the basement. There’s other things on
there though, a health check that he knows he never had, the results of a suitability questionnaire
about the role of a Companion he’s never seen in his life and his initials where he knows he never
put them. And then there’s his status.

He looks down at Stilinski. “They put me down as a self-surrender?”
“Yeah,” Stilinski agrees.

Stiles snorts a laugh. “Did you have to pay extra for that?”

Stilinski frowns, opening his mouth to say something, but Stiles looks away. Peter is on the board too. Stiles walks over to his photograph, the mugshot from his arrest. There’s a photograph of the house as well, beautiful and proud in the clearing, built with such love for the area it stood in. There’s a photograph of Peter’s bedroom, the bed, the modified frame where the chain is connected. There’s a photograph of the cuff lying abandoned on the bathroom floor, the broken lock beside it. Stiles blinks away tears, reaching up to touch it. This is how Peter would have found it when he came home after being interrogated. He must have felt so betrayed. Stiles has let him down. No wonder he’s so mad.

“I shouldn’t have this up in here,” Stilinski says, getting to his feet and trying to place himself between Stiles and the board. Stiles isn’t going to be moved. “I’m sorry, this was obviously going to be traumatic for you to see it laid out like this, I didn’t mean to blindside you. I can tell you as much or as little about the investigation as…”

“I need my clothes back,” Stiles says, cutting him off.

“Your clothes?” Stilinski asks. “Which ones?”

“The ones I was wearing when McCall brought me here,” Stiles says. “The ones he took off me.”

“They’re in evidence,” Stilinski says.

“But Peter’s not a suspect,” Stiles says. “You put him on your board but he was cleared and seeing as he gave me those clothes, they’re not relevant to your case anymore. I want them back.”

“Stiles, he is still under investigation,” Stilinski says. “Until we’ve been through all of the court cases and appeals and I’m happy that everyone who was involved in this case is brought to justice, those clothes are staying where they are.”

“Are you even in charge of this case?” Stiles asks. Stilinski’s face darkens. Inferiority complex. “It’s FBI jurisdiction, right? McCall took over the case. McCall found me. He got the solve. If anything I bet he’s just letting you do legwork to make you feel useful. Am I getting close?”

“I don’t care whose jurisdiction it is, I am not letting evidence go until there’s convictions,” Stilinski says firmly.

“So you have the clothes here,” Stiles says. “That means McCall didn’t take them. That means they’re not a part of his investigation. Give them back to me.”

“Stiles, I am not going to jeopardise this over a pair of pyjamas,” Stilinski says. “You deserve justice. I am going to do everything in my power to get it for you whether I’m the lead on this case or not.”

“It’s not even your decision to make,” Stiles says.

“As you pointed out, they’re in my evidence lockup,” Stilinski says. “Why do you even want them?”

“They’re mine,” Stiles says, practically growling the words. “Peter gave them me. I want them back. I need them back.”
Stilinski’s face changes, pity and sorrow drenching his features, and Stiles has to look away.

“You know what, I’ll get them myself,” Stiles says, stalking out of the room.

“Parrish,” Stilinski calls out from behind him. “Stop him.”

Parrish stands up from his desk, approaching Stiles but looking entirely too cautious about it. He throws a questioning look at Stilinski.

“He’s trying to break into the evidence room,” Stilinski says. “Stop him.”

“But it’s Stiles,” Parrish says, looking lost.

Stiles can imagine the withering look he gets in return from his father, as though Stiles is worth respecting. Whatever it is it makes Parrish move forward faster, meeting Stiles at the door.

“I’m sure you know you can’t go in there,” he says apologetically.

Stiles looks at him. “Well, I don’t have a cloned keycard on me, but I could probably smash my way in.” He looks down at Parrish’ belt. “Or I could just take yours.”

“I’d have to stop you doing that,” Parrish says in that same tone of voice, like he’s a timid waiter who’s run out of today’s special. That’s not who he is though. He’s an authority figure. He’s a hell hound. He enforces the rules and he could pick Stiles right up if he’s disobeys, grab him and lift him and force him to do his bidding. Just like Peter during that first bath time. Stiles likes following rules.

“Oh,” he says, his eyes lighting up. “Stop me.”

Parrish shifts on his feet. “Excuse me?”

“You’re going to have to stop me,” Stiles says.

He reaches forward, going for Parrish’s keycard, but Parrish has strong reactions. He grabs his wrist, stopping him in his tracks, and it makes Stiles’ whole body go warm. It makes him feel like he could float. He smiles, nodding his head, pushing into the touch.

“Alright, that’s enough,” Stilinski says, stepping forward.

Parrish pulls his hand back like he’s gotten a shock. Stiles instantly feels the heaviness return, like gravity is dragging him down. It’s so stark and awful.

“Parrish, go take a break,” Stilinski says, his voice full of irritation like he didn’t just set this up. Stiles wraps his arms around himself, glaring at Stilinski. “Stiles,” he says softly. “I don’t know…”

“No,” Stiles says harshly. “You don’t know.”

Stilinski reaches out, putting a hand on his shoulder, but Stiles flinches violently back.

“Don’t touch me,” he says, tears in his eyes. “I don’t want you to touch me.”

“Okay,” Stilinski says, making a show of keeping his hands where Stiles can see them as he takes a step back, giving him some space. “It’s alright,” he says soothingly as Stiles starts to shiver. “I get it.”

“You don’t get it,” Stiles says. “I wish you’d all stop saying that, none of you get it.” He wipes at
his tears, sniffing. “Mom would have done though,” he says, watching as Stilinski starts to crumble. “She understood love. This would never have happened if mom was here.”

“I miss her too,” Stilinski says.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I’m sorry I wasn’t enough.”

He heads for the door before Stilinski can say anything else, refusing to look back. He climbs into his jeep, slamming the door and jamming his key into the ignition. He sets off without really knowing where he’s going because he feels like all the places he wants to be don’t exist anymore. Back in the bedroom he shared with Peter. Back in his mother’s arms. Places he can’t revisit because they’ve been stolen from him, tainted, turned against him. But his mom has always been there. There’s a certain level of comfort in going to her, even if she can’t talk back now.

It’s a weekday morning so the cemetery is quiet. Stiles follows the path that he’s walked more times than he can count, passing by familiar headstones until he reaches his mother’s grave. He sits down in front of it with a heavy sigh, already feeling like she has him.

“Hey, mom,” he says. “So, I met this guy.”

He smiles because he can imagine her reaction, the warmth and the joy and the genuine interest. She always cared as much about his macaroni artwork as she did his school report card or his professed love for Lydia Martin. She just lit up when he shared anything with her.

“I think you’d really like him,” Stiles says. “He looks after me. He loves me so much and he treats me like I’m the most precious thing in the world. He respects me and he guides me so gently and he’s taught me so much about myself. I like who I am when I’m with him.”

He leans forward, tugging at a weed that’s started to grow. His dad clearly hasn’t been coming here and taking care of it. Stiles should have brought some flowers. He’ll do it next time, make sure the place looks nice. It’s what she deserves.

“Hey, you remember that vacation we went on?” he asks, tearing the weed into pieces between his fingers. “That cabin in Virginia. The first night, there were so many fireflies, and dad came up to get me out of bed. He carried me outside and you were stood there on the lawn and they were everywhere, flickering like little bits of magic. It was just the three of us in a world of our own. It felt unreal but in the greatest way possible.”

He smiles, dropping the shredded weed to the floor.

“That’s how Peter makes me feel. He can take me to that place. He wraps me up in warmth and safety and love and he does these things to my body and I see fireflies. I can feel them. It’s like I’m flying.”

A tear rolls down his face and he catches it with his fingertips. He misses that feeling so much. Everything is cold and stark without it.

“I don’t know what to do, mom,” he says. “Everyone thinks he’s a bad person. They’re judging him because he was lonely. They don’t understand. I know you would. But I don’t know what you’d tell me to do.”

He sighs, lifting his head up to look around. There’s an old lady at the other side of the cemetery leaning over a grave. Stiles guesses it’s her husband but maybe that’s just the romantic in him. ‘Til death do us part, and maybe even after that. He turns back to his mom.
“I went to see him yesterday,” he admits. “I don’t know how to live without him. I don’t know who I am. He gave me purpose and he gave me an identity. I was his. Now, I’m just… I don’t know what I am.” He shakes his head. “He doesn’t want me though. Or he wouldn’t let me in. He can’t, I guess. It’s really complicated. Mom, I don’t know what to do.”

He wraps his arms around himself, hugging himself like she would hold him. Or like Peter would. He sniffles, feeling so lost and alone. Who’s supposed to guide him now? His mother was so strong, so passionate, she had a great sense of humour. All of his good qualities he got from her.

“I think I’m supposed to wait,” Stiles says. “Wait until things have calmed down. Wait for him to come get me. He didn’t say that though. He didn’t say anything. He made it sound like I was a pain in the ass. Like dad does. All the time.” He shakes his head. “Mom, I can’t wait. I can’t.”

Then go get him.

He can hear the words as clearly as if she were speaking them to him right now. She’d always tell him to follow his heart.

“I’m not sure he wants me,” Stiles admits, his voice breaking.

Mischief, she’d say, holding his face in her hands. You have to fight for what you believe in. Don’t let it slip through your fingers.

He nods, feeling buoyed by the words. Sometimes you have to make things happen. He has to prove that he’s serious, that he wasn’t being impulsive, that there’s nothing he wants more than Peter. He won’t be dissuaded. He belongs with Peter. He’ll do whatever it takes to convince him.

“Thanks, mom,” he says, getting to his feet. “I’m going to make you proud.”

He blows a kiss towards her headstone and makes his way back to the car. He has to make a stop before he goes to see Peter. He knows his dad is at the Station so he can go to the house without worrying about running into him. He pulls up in the driveway, letting himself in and taking the steps two at a time. He retrieves the keys from his nightstand, clutching them in his hand as he feels his heart swell. He’s going to do it right this time. He’s going to hand himself over to Peter properly.

Stiles is halfway through the drive when he realises he hasn’t had breakfast. He’s not going to make the same mistakes he made last time, so he pulls off the highway into a diner, ordering pancakes and a soda, as well as some water. His body isn’t going to let him down this time. He’s going to be prepared. It’s discipline. Daddy taught him all about it.

He uses the bathroom before he gets back on the road again, catching his reflection in the mirror. He slept last night, despite how upset he was, Scott’s even breaths calming him. He feels almost guilty about that fact, but it means he’s be calmer for Daddy, smarter for Daddy, and the dark circles aren’t quite as pronounced. He’ll make a much better impression. Peter will want him. He has to believe that fact or he won’t get through the next hour of his journey.

He’s driving up the winding road through the woods when his phone chimes in his pocket. He sighs. If it’s his dad then he doesn’t want to know but he promised Scott he wouldn’t leave him hanging. He pulls over, checking his phone. Scott.

Your dad wants to know if you’re with me. Tell me you haven’t gone AWOL again.

Stiles squeezes his eyes shut, bending forward to rest his head on the steering wheel. He doesn’t need this right now. He feels like Beacon Hills has its claws in him and it’s not going to let him go.
There’s no such thing as a clean break. He can explain it to Scott once he and Peter have worked out all the details. He hopes Peter will let him have that much. He tries not to think about touching Peter’s phone, corner time. This is different. They’ve both come face to face with the ties that have to be cut.

*I’m fine. I went for a drive.*

It’s not a lie. He sends the text, shoving his phone back into his pocket. He drives on, his stomach flipping over as the road opens up into the clearing, the house standing in front of him. He kills the engine, looking over at the porch. He remembers how awful it felt to be sat there, no input from Daddy. He can feel himself shying away. That’s not going to win anyone’s heart though.

He takes a deep breath, forcing himself from the car. He walks across the driveway, sneakers crunching in the dirt, and steps up onto the porch. He listens for any sounds. Peter will already know he’s there. He doesn’t even bother knocking.

“Daddy?”

Nothing. Stiles stands tall, doesn’t let his spirit fall.

“I know this situation is far from ideal,” he offers.

“I told you not to come back,” Peter says, his voice strained.

“No you didn’t,” Stiles responds. “You told me to leave. I told you I was coming back.”

“This isn’t a game, Stiles,” Peter says, his irritation clear.

“I know,” Stiles says, leaning against the door. “That’s one of the first things you told me.”

He remembers sitting on that soft leather couch, Peter writing in his little book of Stiles. He hated those interrogation sessions, they made him feel so humiliated, but he knows why they were so important now. They freed him of his inhibitions and let Peter know exactly how to take care of him. They made them closer than ever.

“I gave you everything,” Stiles says. “And it was worth it. Everything you told me was right. I’m sorry I didn’t always listen the first time. I won’t ever doubt you again, I promise. I swear.”

“Okay,” Peter says. Stiles feels his heart swell. “Listen to this. I want you to leave and I don’t want you to come back. I don’t want to see you here again.”

Stiles immediately wants to fire back with *I don’t believe you* but good boys don’t argue and he doesn’t want to undermine everything he’s just said. He has to trust. It feels like a test, a chance to prove himself, but Peter was always straightforward with him before, was always explicitly clear in his expectations. Why now, of all times, would he not be sincere?

But if he takes Peter’s words at face value then there’s no way for him to win. Peter has always been so much more than he deserved. Stiles simply isn’t worth the hassle anymore. The costs outweigh the benefits.

Even if that’s true, Stiles isn’t here to give up. He’s here to fight. He promised his mom and the last eight years have been spent trying not to let her down. He stands a little taller, facing down the door.

“I’m wearing a cuff,” he says. “I bought it and I locked it around my ankle because I belong to you.
I want to feel it all the time because I’m yours.” He reaches into his pocket, taking out the keys and playing with them between his fingers. “I want to give you the key. I want you to be the one who takes it off because I won’t need it anymore when I’m with you, when we’re together. I won’t need a reminder. You’ll make me feel it. You’ll keep me safe.”

He waits but there’s no response. He starts to worry that buying the cuff was the wrong choice, that it wasn’t his place to shackle himself. That’s Peter’s job. Peter wasn’t there to do it though, he couldn’t be, and so Stiles used the cuff as a symbol of his devotion, of Peter’s ownership. And he needed it, that constant, comforting pressure that reminded him that he’s Peter’s.

Replacing their rituals with his own cheap imitations feels like an insult now though. He remembers the photograph on his dad’s office wall, the broken lock on the bathroom floor where so many intimate, ground-breaking moments between them took place.

“I’m sorry I let them break the cuff,” he says. “I was scared and I didn’t know what was happening. But I should have stopped him. I should have kicked him the face. I should have waited for you, I know that and I’m sorry. I should never have let myself get taken away.”

He leans into the door, listening, waiting, but there’s nothing, no response. He presses his forehead against the wood, squeezing his eyes shut as his chest tightens. He has no idea if he’s getting through, if he’s saying the right things, if he’s making any difference at all.

“Can you just talk to me, please?” he asks. “Tell me what you need me to say or do. Tell me off. Punish me. Teach me. I just want to know how we fix this. I’m trying here, Daddy. I’m really trying. I’ll do anything. I will. I’ll do whatever it takes.”

He can feel the anxiety crawling over his flesh like a physical thing. His heart is beating so quickly in his chest, on the edge of panic, because he’s giving everything and he’s getting nothing in return. Nothing. Peter can hear it, Stiles knows. He just doesn’t seem to care.

“Please,” Stiles whispers against the wood. “You’re killing me.”

“Stiles,” Peter says, his voice strained in a way that makes Stiles hold his breath, some instinctive fear lighting up inside him. “I have said everything I am going to say to you.”

Stiles listens to his footsteps crossing the room, sharp sounds against the wooden floor, and then his study door slams shut behind him. Stiles feel all the air go out of him as he sinks to the ground. He tries to take a breath but it turns into a choked sob and then he’s just crying on the porch, huddling against the door that’s keeping him from everything he wants. It’s not the door though. He could break down the door or he could smash a window. He could get inside that house if he put his mind to it. That doesn’t mean he gets Peter. He’s simply not wanted here. He wasn’t good enough. He doesn’t get his happy ever after.

He sobs, abandoned and unashamed. He lets all of his despair and his fury and his hopelessness out, but it doesn’t help. Nothing is going to help.

His throat feels raw as the crying finally subsides through sheer exhaustion if nothing else, tears staining his face. His breaths are shallow, uneven, rattling through him. He’s numb and too sensitive all at once, his skin feeling like the lightest touch will shatter him, but inside it’s like he’s filled with static. He feels so utterly certain that he can’t live like this but what other choice does he have? He could just lie down here and die he supposes. He could just waste away on Peter’s porch and maybe Peter would let him. Then he’d throw him out with the rest of the trash.

Stiles winces, easing his hand open from the fist he’s made around the keys. He was gripping them
so tightly they’ve cut into his palm. He stares at them, feeling so empty and alone. He brought them here as a gift, as a promise. He brought them here because he wanted Peter to know how serious he was, how he was waiting for him, keeping himself just for Peter. He was being realistic, he’s learnt his lesson, he knows they can’t have everything they want right now. Never is something he can’t comprehend though. He swallows, wiping at his face. Never is something he’s not going to accept.

He bites down on his lip, lifting the keys up to eye level and trying to get his short nail inside the coiled ring of metal that holds them together. It takes him a few attempts, his hands shaking, but he finally manages to separate one of the keys. He smiles at it triumphantly, feeling a little glimmer of hope.

“I’m leaving you one of the keys,” he says. “I know you can hear me so just listen, okay? I’ll go but I’m leaving one of the keys out here on the porch for you. I’m keeping the lock on. I belong to you.”

He stands up, holding the key between his fingers and looking at it. He has to follow Daddy’s instructions. He has to prove that he can. He leans down, placing the key neatly in front of the door. It feels like such a momentous gesture and as he straightens up he expects something to happen, the door to open, everything to slot into place. It doesn’t of course. It changes nothing.

Stiles shakes his head. “I’m yours,” he says quietly. “Even if you don’t want me.”

He chews on his lip, looking down at the key. He’s made his offering. He’s put everything he has on the table. He doesn’t get to choose how Peter reacts to it. He has no choice but to step back and let this play out.

“Do you know how to find me?” he asks, looking up at the door. “You could probably find me anywhere, but my address is written on the first page of my journal in my toybox. I don’t mind you looking. I know you said you wouldn’t, but I don’t mind. I want you to. Please.”

He takes a step back and already he feels like the tether between them is starting to fray. He can’t do this. He knows it’s wrong not to trust, he promised Daddy that he would, but Peter is giving him nothing to trust in. He’s giving him nothing.

“Daddy,” he says, voice so lost and afraid. “I’m going to go. I’m going to do what you told me to. I promise you I am being such a good boy but I need you to say something. I need you to tell me that you heard me. That you understand.”

He waits, waits for the study door to open, for footsteps, for Peter’s voice through the door. He’s realistic, he’s not hoping for more than that anymore. All he gets is silence.

He steps back up to the door. “Please, I can’t do this,” he says, his throat so tight he can barely breathe. “Daddy, I need you. Just tell me you hear me.”

He could live with an acknowledgement. He could walk away with the promise that Peter has understood what Stiles is offering. He thinks he’d even be okay with being yelled at and outright rejected right now because at least it would open up a conversation. At least it would give him a direction to go in. This churning uncertainty, wondering if it’s hopeless to hold on, it makes him feel like there’s a sucking wound in his chest.

The house is silent. Peter is silent. Stiles curls his hand into a fist, wanting to smash it against the door, but that wouldn’t get him anywhere. It probably wouldn’t even get Peter’s attention. The damage is done. Stiles has no more fight left.
“Well, I’m leaving the key,” he says, almost defiantly. “I’ll be waiting for you, Daddy. I love you.”

The words hurt him because if they don’t mean anything to Peter then they may as well be ash on his tongue. What happens to love that’s not accepted? He should know, he’s thrown out plenty of it over the years. It’s never felt as bad as this.

He goes back to his jeep, everything dulling to a tunnel vision, his legs shaky beneath him. He doesn’t stop. He slips the other key, his own copy, back into his pocket, starting up his jeep. The world still looks weird, off kilter, as he starts to drive, but he can’t stay here. He’s not sure what his other options are.

He drives in a daze for half an hour through small towns when he hears his phone chime in his pocket. He doesn’t want to answer it but he also really doesn’t want to be alone. And he made a promise to Scott. He intends to keep his promises, even if they’re meaningless to everyone else.

He pulls over, retrieving his phone from his pocket.

_Do you want to meet up for lunch?_

Stiles looks at the clock. He’s still two hours away but even if he could get there in time, he doesn’t think he’d want to. Scott isn’t what he wants right now, he can’t give him what he needs. Scott will be sweet and he’ll be supportive and Stiles’ mood will probably go completely over his head. Stiles doesn’t want to be comforted. He can’t have fireflies and he can’t sit on Daddy’s knee and be gently rocked while Daddy strokes his hair. He doesn’t think he deserves it. He just wants someone to take it all away. He wants the security of not having to think or feel. He wants to be controlled.

He looks down at his phone with a sigh. _I’ve already eaten. I’ll catch up with you later._

A little white lie. What’s the harm in that. He puts his phone away and pulls back onto the road, heading for the highway.

The inside of his brain still feels like a bad TV reception and he wishes that somebody had the remote, could tune it back in for him. Or maybe turn it to pure static. White noise. Comforting oblivion. Someone who would be strong and firm. Someone who would be strict and capable. Someone he could trust with his life.

By the time he gets back to Beacon Hills, he knows who that person is. He parks up on the side of the street, looking up at Chris Argent’s building. He takes a deep breath but he’s not even nervous, not like he’s sure he should be. This should be tearing him apart inside. Instead it just feels like a sick inevitability. Daddy isn’t there for him. Stiles needs something before he unravels completely. Maybe he already has.

He takes the elevator up, staring at his misty reflection in the door. It feels like an accurate representation of himself. He’s not even sure he’s real anymore. The shadow of himself slides back as he reaches the right floor and he steps out, walking up to Chris’ door. He doesn’t let himself think or question, he just knocks. Planning has gotten him nowhere. Time to put someone else in charge.

Chris opens the door, raising his eyebrows a fraction. “Stiles,” he says in that same tone of voice that everyone says his name now, as though he’s a miracle but not necessarily one that they wanted.

“Hey,” Stiles responds. “Can I come in?”
“Sure,” Chris says, only the tiniest hint of wariness in his voice.

He leads Stiles through to his study, the place of plans and guns. It feels strangely apt, even if it’s a miscommunication. Chris thinks this is about something supernatural, about needing his backup. Stiles can work with that.

“What can I help you with?” Chris asks.

Stiles looks up at him. “Allison told us about her training once,” he says. “How you tied her to a chair.”

Something passes over Chris’ face, sharp and dark. “Are you asking a question?”

Stiles nods, trying not to let himself back down. “Will you tie me up?”

Chris frowns. “Why would I do that?”

“Because I need to feel like I’m under control,” Stiles says. He can see the doubt on Chris’ face so he just keeps talking. He can’t let him get out a refusal, he has no options left. “You can do whatever you want to me,” he says. “Anything. I’ll be good.”

“Stiles, where is this coming from?” Chris asks him carefully.

“Please,” Stiles says desperately. He has to offer more though. All he’s doing is demanding and that’s now how this works. That’s never how it works. His eyes scan down Chris’ body. “I’ve gotten pretty good at sucking cock,” he says.

“Stiles,” Chris warns.

Stiles drops down to his knees. He thinks it should hurt, his knees connecting with the hardwood floor, but he can’t even feel it. He can’t feel anything. He looks up at Chris through his eyelashes.

“I know how to deepthroat,” he says. “ Mostly. And you can fuck my face, I can take it. I’ll be good for you. I’ll swallow.”

“Stiles, you need to stand up,” Chris says firmly. It’s a tone of voice that speaks to that part inside Stiles that needs calming. He wants more of it.

“You can pull my hair,” he says. “Please. You can do whatever you want. I’ll be so good for you.”

There’s tears in his eyes, the words catching in his throat. Chris crouches down in front of him.

“It’s okay,” Chris says softly. “You’re already good.”

Stiles frowns at him, the words making no sense. They’re not what he needs and he doesn’t understand them. He puts his wrists together, offering them up to Chris. “Please. Make me.”

Chris shifts back, careful to never let them touch. “Absolutely not,” he says firmly.

“I need it,” Stiles says, hysteria cracking his voice. “Please. I need you to just make me. I need to be under control.”

“I know,” Chris says, sliding his phone out of his pocket. “I’m going to call your dad.”

Stiles snaps out of it. “No,” he says desperately. “Why would you do that?”
“Because you’re not okay, Stiles,” Chris says. “And I can’t help you with that.”

Stiles sits back on his feet, his heart racing. “I don’t need my dad. Don’t call him. I don’t want him here.”

“Scott then,” Chris says.

“He’s at school, don’t,” Stiles begs. “It’s fine. I’ll just leave.”

“I don’t think you should be on your own,” Chris says.

“I’m always on my own,” Stiles responds, getting to his feet. He turns back to look at Chris. “Please don’t tell.”

Chris looks like he’s building himself up for something, but it isn’t the answer Stiles wants. He closes his eyes, taking a deep breath.

“I’m sorry,” he says, leaving before Chris can say anything to ruin him. Stiles gave him that power. Just like he gave it to Peter. He should have learnt his lesson. Everything is smashed into pieces too tiny to ever put back together.

When he starts up the jeep, he doesn’t know where he’s going. Scott and Lydia will still be at school for another hour and he can’t face going there. If he called they’d come and meet him in a heartbeat, he’s so sure of that fact, but he doesn’t feel like he deserves it. He has shame clinging to him and all he wants to do is wash it away.

He takes the turning for home, knowing he has no other option. At least his dad will still be at work. He goes upstairs and take the key from his pocket, lifting his leg up onto the bed just like he always used to do for Peter, but now he has to take the cuff off all by himself. Because Peter didn’t want him. He has the key now though. He has everything he needs to come and claim Stiles for himself. He feels a tiny little swell, but it’s instantly drowned out by the disgrace he’s brought on himself. After what he’s just done, he’s not sure he deserves Daddy. He’s not good. He’s very, very bad. He’s fucking everything up.

He leaves the cuff on his bed, just like he would with Peter, but now there’s no one to bathe him. He considers filling the bath up, maybe putting some bubbles in, but he can’t do this on his own. He doesn’t deserve tenderness. He needs to be cleansed, not stew in his own acrid desperation. He feels low and unhuman and like he deserves all the misery he’s brought on himself.

He strips off, stepping under the warm shower and letting it wash over him, wishing it would just wash him right down the drain. He doesn’t want to have to get through the next ten minutes and then the ten minutes after that, a never-ending cycle that he can’t ever stop. He can’t even comprehend the magnitude of what he’s facing; a life without Peter, his Daddy, his Alpha, his anchor. It hurts more than he can bear but it’s not sunk in yet, he knows that. It can only get worse from here.

He doesn’t understand where he went so wrong, why he’s getting punished like this. He deserves chastisement now, he deserves for Daddy to turn his back, to be disgusted by him. His body belongs to Daddy and he offered it to somebody else. He wanted it to be taken. He lets out a sob. If Peter had shown even the slightest indication that he still wanted this, then Stiles would never have done that. Never. He can’t take it back though. He’ll have to confess. And then Daddy really will turn him away and he’ll probably give him the key back as well.

The key. Stiles takes a breath before tipping his head back to let the water fall over his face,
drowning him. Peter didn’t refuse the key. He didn’t tell Stiles no or force him to take it back. He has it now. That has to mean something. He told Stiles he didn’t want to see him there again, but he never said he didn’t want to see him. Stiles tips his head forward, letting the water tickle the back of his neck, sending a shiver through him. Daddy has the key. Daddy will come for him.

He reaches for the washcloth, trying not to let the knife-edge of hope slice him in half. Nothing happened with Chris. Maybe Stiles always knew that it wouldn’t. He wanted it though. Intentions are so much more damning than deeds. In that moment, Stiles would have done anything, down on his knees in that study. Part of him still would and he hates himself for it. He’s so starved of that guiding hand though, the sureness and strictness with which Peter used to treat him. It didn’t leave any room for uncertainty. It didn’t let him get caught up in his own thoughts. Stiles just needed to check out for a little while. He couldn’t think of a better way than that.

Daddy taught him better though. He gave him yoga for mindfulness. He gave him timers and deadlines to teach him patience and discipline. He gave him Wolfy for comfort. He gave him study materials to focus him mind on. He gave him comics to entertain and distract the worst of the anxious thoughts away. Mind, body and soul, that’s what Daddy gave him. Self-soothing. Stiles needs to use what he’s learnt.

He scrubs at his body, wanting to erase his actions, but they cling to him. Only when his skin is pink and raw does Stiles feel worthy to step out of the shower. Chris never even touched him but Stiles still feels like he’s all over him. It’s probably a little bit Lady MacBeth but he’s sure Peter will be able to tell. No secrets though, Stiles reminds himself, turning off the shower. He has to give Peter everything and then he has to hope that Peter will absolve him.

He dries himself off and goes back through to his bedroom, locking the cuff back in place before he puts anything else on. He grabs some pyjamas, pulling them on, but they don’t feel soft enough. Nothing will ever feel soft enough.

All he wants to do is fall into bed and cry again but that’s not going to get him anywhere. He has to use what Daddy has taught him. He unrolls his yoga mat and pulls up a tutorial on his laptop. It doesn’t take long for him to get into the flow of it, the calm, encouraging instructions making him feel so wonderfully under control. He feels his body bend to his own will, feels himself centred within it. It’s somehow peaceful and empowering at once.

He lies on his mat when he finishes, concentrating on breathing in and out, but without the distraction of the video to follow he can feel his thoughts start to creep in again. Thinking is the last thing he wants. He sits up, rolling his mat to put it away. Always tidy up after yourself. That’s a rule. He doesn’t have a toybox but he puts the mat in the bottom of his closet. He’s doing the best he can.

As he turns around, he eyes his bed. He thinks about Wolfy and comics and snuggling under blankets. That’s not what’s going to help him right now though, as much as wallowing and self-pity is what he craves. It will only consume him. He needs to keep his brain busy. He looks over at his desk, the assignments stacked up waiting for him. It’s the smart thing to do.

It’s surprisingly easy to tune his brain into his homework. He buries himself in math, equations that need solving, rules that have to be followed and applied. It’s hard to stray too far when he has threads of numbers that he needs to balance, using logic to get himself to the only conclusion that makes sense. If only everything in life were so simple.

He’s nearly done when he hears his dad come home from work. His mood instantly sours but he tries to ignore it. He needs to find $x$. That’s suddenly the only thing in his life that matters.
“Hey, kiddo,” Stilinski greets, standing in his doorway. “Everything okay?”

“Fine,” Stiles says, not looking up. He can sense his dad staring at him.

“Chris Argent came into the Station to see me this afternoon,” Stilinski says.

Stiles freezes, gripping his pen a little too hard. “He’s lying.”

“I haven’t even told you what he said yet,” Stilinski responds in a tone of voice that’s all too familiar. Impatience and a lack of humour. The sound of his childhood.

Stiles throws his pen down, giving him a challenging look. “What did he say then?” he asks. He wants Stilinski to have to say it. He wants to make him squirm.

“He said he’s worried about you,” Stilinski says. “I’m worried about you too.”

Stiles rolls his eyes, looking back down at his book.

“Stiles, you can’t do that,” Stilinski says. Stiles grits his teeth. He really doesn’t need a lecture right now. “It’s dangerous. You’re putting yourself in a position to be taken advantage of. You’re already vulnerable, I don’t want to see somebody hurting you more than you already have been.”

Stiles bows down his head, squeezing his eyes shut. Stilinski doesn’t understand. Nobody understands. The only part that hurt was having Peter taken away from him. Nothing else can be worse than that. He’s already at rock bottom. What more could he possibly lose?

“Chris gave me this,” Stilinski adds, a note of discomfort in his voice. “He said you should look it up.”

Stiles opens his eyes to see his dad place a post-it note onto his textbook. There’s a single word written on it. He frowns. “What is this?”

“Look it up,” Stilinski repeats. “I did. I think it will help you.”

Stiles picks up the note. Subdrop. He doesn’t get it. Stilinski steps back, straightening up, like he wants to get as far away from it as possible.

“So,” he says, the clear signal of a change of topic. “What do you want for dinner?”

“I don’t care,” Stiles says, still staring at the word.

“I can go grab some takeout,” Stilinski offers.

“Yeah, god forbid you act like a parent,” Stiles responds.

Stilinski stands there for a moment and Stiles feels like he’s about to catch shit for being disrespectful. Suddenly he craves it. He needs someone to be accountable for him. As usual, his dad proves that person’s not going to be him. He leaves the room without another word, making Stiles sink into his chair. A minute later, the front door opens and closes and Stilinski’s car leaves the driveway. He can’t even be bothered to parent his own child anymore. Stiles doesn’t really blame him. He’s not worth it.

He takes a calming breath and pulls his laptop towards himself, typing in the word subdrop. His eyebrows immediately raise. “Subdrop” is a feeling that life seems a bit heavier, a bit more boring the period from 35 to 48 hours after an intensive BDSM-session. BDSM? Isn’t that whips and chains? Okay, he had a chain, but that was just to keep him safe. Peter never hurt him. It wasn’t
like that. Life certainly does seem heavier since he lost his Daddy though. It seems unbearable.

He starts clicking on links and reading blogs and articles, finding out about other people’s experiences, and it all starts to sound very familiar. The fireflies had a name, that was subspace, a mix of adrenaline and endorphins, dopamine and oxytocin. Happy hormones, Peter had called them once. He wasn’t wrong. Stiles feels like he should have been paying more attention. And when Peter held him afterwards, when he rocked him in his lap and stroked his hair, that was aftercare. He was making sure he came down smoothly and he was always attentive for the rest of the day. He was making sure he didn’t drop. Now he’s dropped hard.

He draws his feet up onto the chair, hugging his knee as he keeps reading. *At an extreme, the sub can begin to experience those feelings of depression, rejection, anxiety, fear or even guilt. That feels like a pretty accurate description of the last few days. It feels a little better to know that it’s not his fault, that there’s nothing wrong with him. This is normal.*

_They also report longing for support and reassurance from the Dom with whom they shared such a powerful experience._

Stiles chews on his lip, hugging his knee harder. That’s all he wants and to see it there in black and white makes him feel so validated. And Daddy always did take care of him. He was so good at guiding him through the aftereffects of an intense session together. The day Stiles got taken away from him, the multiple orgasms, was one of the most intense sessions that they’d shared and his Daddy couldn’t look after him, couldn’t give him his aftercare. No wonder he feels lost.

He hears his dad come back but he doesn’t call for Stiles, doesn’t come to see him, so Stiles stays immersed in the articles. He starts to read about aftercare tips, how he can make himself feel safe and secure. He knows the only thing he really needs is Peter’s arms but he doesn’t know when he’ll get them back. He tries not to think of the word _if_. He’s already spiralling into a dangerously dark place. For now, all he can do is take care of himself and try to take the edge off. It has to be better than feeling as empty and broken as this. He feels like he deserves to feel like that after everything he’s done, but the articles suggest that’s just his hormones talking. He really wants to believe them.

One of the things that a lot of the sites suggest is writing in a journal. He remembers the leather-bound book that Peter gave him to put his thoughts in. He told him he’d need it more the further into his training they got. He feels so touched that his Daddy made sure he had everything he needed to take care of him, that he had clearly put the effort into doing it properly. Stiles never used it like he was supposed to. Maybe he should start. That’s what the psychiatrist told him too. If he’s doing it though, he’s doing it for Daddy, there’s no doubt in his mind.

In fact, so many of the things on the lists he finds are things that Peter encouraged him to do. He took such good care of him. Stiles loves him so much more, even though he didn’t think that was possible. He loves him deeper. He’s going to keep himself safe for him. The doubts that creep in are just the subdrop. He has a word for it. He wonders what the word is for Peter refusing to open the door, for telling him to leave.

“Hey, kiddo.”

Stiles jumps, yanked from his thoughts. He closes his laptop, feeling instinctively like it’s something private, something he doesn’t want to share. Stilinski looked this up before he did though. Stiles feels himself shy away, painfully exposed. He doesn’t want to know what he made of it.

“Dinner’s ready,” Stilinski says, making an obvious effort at cheeriness.
“Oh, right,” Stiles says distractedly. He’d forgotten about dinner. “What did you get? Burgers?”

“I made perogies,” Stilinski says.

Stiles looks up at him, placing his feet back down on the floor as he turns his chair to face him. “You made perogies?” he asks carefully. “From scratch?”

“Your mother’s recipe,” Stilinski confirms.

The words fill Stiles with so much joy that he jumps from his chair, crossing the room to hug his dad. Stilinski freezes for a second and then his arms are around Stiles, hugging him back. By the time Stiles has caught up with himself, the hug feels too good to pull out of. Hugs are good for subspace. And all Stiles wants right now, if he can’t have his Daddy, is his mom. Her comfort food is a close second. And his dad is trying. This is what trying looks like, right?

“I don’t know if they’re good yet,” Stilinski says. “But I followed all the steps.”

Stiles pulls away, taking a step back to put some space between them. He feels weak and vulnerable but he manages a smile. “Thanks.”

“You want to go try them?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles nods his head, Stilinski giving him the warmest smile he’s seen in a long time.

The perogies taste good. Really good. Almost as good as mom’s. Stiles didn’t even know his dad could cook. They’ve had that recipe on the fridge for years but neither of them has ever attempted it. They eat in silence and Stiles is grateful for the quiet, the chance to just enjoy them. It settles something in his soul, even if a little part of him is waiting for the other shoe to drop.

“Did you look it up?” Stilinski asks. “The word.”

Stiles sighs. There it is, the thing that’s going to tear it apart. “Yeah,” he says.

Stilinski nods, taking another bite of his dumpling. “Did it help?”

Stiles looks down at his food. He feels weak admitting it. “Yeah.”

“That’s good,” Stilinski says. “I was thinking that maybe we could look into getting you a new therapist. One who’s a little more… specialised.”

Stiles cringes. The implication makes him feel dirty. He doesn’t want to know what his dad thinks of him after reading those sites. “I don’t want to see a therapist.”

“I know,” Stilinski says apologetically. “But I think this is bigger than us, kid.”

Stiles looks up at him, the words ringing some kind of alarm bell. Us. The only us Stiles wants to be a part of is he and Peter. His dad is trying to force a bond, trying to make him forget what really set all this in motion. By bringing up the subdrop, he’s trying to put the blame on Peter for the state of Stiles’ life. Peter always took care of him though, he never let him drop. He never let bad things happen to him. That was all Stilinski.

Stiles watches him warily as he finishes up his food, determined not to let his guard down again. He can embrace the self-care he needs, can be gentle with himself, but that doesn’t extend to the people around him. They have to earn that. Stilinski hasn’t.
Chapter End Notes

Pages I pulled subdrop quotes from [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
Chapter 23

The first thing Stiles does when he climbs out of bed is roll out his yoga mat. He needs something to centre him. He can’t afford to let his thoughts spiral for even a second. They’re far too dangerous.

This is self-care, he tells himself as he follows through the tutorial. This is important. He deserves this. That last part is the hardest to believe. He feels like the worst person in the world. He wasn’t good enough for Daddy to want to keep him. The benefits of Peter having Stiles in his life clearly don’t outweigh the costs. He’s simply not worth it. And then he wasn’t good enough for Chris, couldn’t even surrender in the right way, and Chris knew what he was offering. He knew because he wrote that word down on a piece of paper and handed it to Stiles’ dad. He knew, and he didn’t want him.

His dad was so kind to him last night, so gentle and understanding. Stiles knows he looked up subdrop, that he probably has ideas in his head of what Peter did to him. Stiles could see it on his face, he thinks that Peter tied him up, that he hurt him, that he used him. None of it’s true. Peter was so patient with him, he let him explore the part of himself that he discovered with Peter, let him come to it at his own pace, on his own terms. He never forced him, not once, and he could have done. The way he lifted him into the bathtub that first night showed just what he was capable of physically, but that was the only time he ever used his strength against Stiles, and even that was done out of love. He wanted Stiles to have his scent, to really, truly belong.

Wanted. Past tense. Peter doesn’t want him now. Neither does Chris, which hurts, even if he only went there out of desperation. It’s just humiliating more than anything, the shame of being inferior clinging to him. And he knows, deep down, that his father doesn’t want him either. He sold him. He’ll do it again, once everything’s calmed down. Stiles isn’t safe here. Maybe if he goes away to college, if he escapes Beacon Hills, he could have a chance. Scott would be with him. He wouldn’t let him be taken again. Stiles can’t make himself want that though. He can’t make himself want anything but Peter.

The yoga video comes to an end and Stiles somehow feels more agitated than ever. He shouldn’t have to worry about being stolen away from his life all over again. He shouldn’t have to sit in his own home and be scared that every noise is a staged home invasion to cover for the fact that his father just doesn’t want to have to deal with him. That he’d rather have whatever price he’s worth on the black market. He remembers that stack of cash Peter put on the front desk when he took him home from the Foundry. If Stilinski got even a fraction of that for selling him then maybe it was worth it. Stiles has been nothing but a burden in his life.

He gets to his feet, opening his bedroom door and listening. He can’t hear his dad. He makes his way downstairs, easing open the door to Stilinski’s office. He looks around at the paperwork, not even sure where to start. He moves it around on the desk but he’s not going to find anything incriminating here. It’s going to be hidden.

He starts opening drawers, pulling things out, scanning over every bit of paper. The place is a mess, nothing is filed in a way that makes sense, and Stilinski files things for a living, surely he should be more organised than this. But maybe that’s the point. You can’t find anything if you don’t know where to look.

He gives a frustrated sigh, pulling open the last drawer in his desk and finding overdue mortgage payments and outstanding hospital bills. Stiles looks at the dates. They’re new. His dad is sinking in debt but he hasn’t paid anything off. It doesn’t make sense. The bank statements tell the same
story, he’s taking out nearly as much as he’s putting in every month. He must have put the money somewhere else. Stiles pulls the drawer out from the desk, searching behind it. There must be something.

“Stiles?”

Stiles freezes, feeling the fear creep up his spine. His dad doesn’t sound angry, just confused. Stiles turns to face him.

“What are you doing?” Stilinski asks. “Are you looking for your mail? I put it over here.”

He reaches onto one of the shelves, offering it out to him. Stiles just stares at it as he gets to his feet. He grabs one of the bills.

“Why haven’t you paid this?”

A heaviness comes over Stilinski’s face. “Stiles, I don’t want you to worry about that, I have a system in place, I’m in touch with all those people, we’re not going to lose the house or anything.”

“Where’s the money?” Stiles asks.

“What money?” Stilinski responds.

Stiles stares at him. He looks genuinely lost. “Do you need to launder it first? I’m sure you know all the best ways to do it, your job must have taught you that at least.”

“Stiles, what an earth are you talking about?” Stilinski asks. “What money?”

Stiles drops the bill, wrapping his arms around himself. It doesn’t feel safe here. He can’t get back out of the door without coming in contact with his dad though. But he wouldn’t hurt him. That would be too obvious. He’d let someone else do it. He has more money to play with this time, even if Stiles can’t find it. Maybe that means he’d do it right this time.

“I think I’m going to go to school today,” he says, trying to change the subject.

“Are you sure you’re up to it?” Stilinski asks. “It’s okay to take some time for yourself. Do something you enjoy. Go easy on yourself.”

Stiles knows that he’s giving advice on dealing with subdrop, and not matter how clumsy it is, a part of him is touched. He’s trying to understand. Or maybe he’s just using it as a tool to cut Stiles off from his friends, keep him isolated and easier to control.

“I want to go,” Stiles says. “I need to keep my brain busy and Scott and Lydia will be there. Anyway, I have that math assignment to hand in.”

“If you need to leave, please tell me this time,” Stilinski pleads. “You need to stop disappearing. We all care about you. We care that you’re safe. Where did you even go? Scott was worried sick.”

Scott, Stiles thinks. Scott, but not you. Scott knows where he was, Stiles doesn’t need to keep secrets from him, but at least he knows that Scott is on his side, that he didn’t tell his dad he’d been to see Peter. He’s not sure he should tell Scott he’s been again though. He didn’t approve of the first time. It’s not as though it matters now, he can’t go back. Not if Daddy doesn’t want him. He was given a new rule. Leave and don’t come back. The rules never used to hurt him like this. He clings on to the tiny spark of hope that maybe Daddy will still come for him. When things have calmed down. When the timing’s right. Maybe.
“I have to get ready,” Stiles says, standing up a little taller as he approaches the door. Stilinski, thankfully, moves out of his way.

“I’ll be at the Station, but I can leave any time if you need me,” Stilinski insists.

“I won’t,” Stiles says, making his way up the stairs.

He’s getting used to which pants fit over the cuff without being obvious or bulky. He gets dressed, putting his books into his backpack, pretending it’s any other morning. He goes to school, that’s what he does. There’s nothing scary about it. He can handle this.

He texts Scott to let him know that he’ll be there and he doesn’t ask, but Scott still tells him he’ll meet him outside before first bell. Stiles smiles at his phone. Scott takes care of him. Stiles might have to count on that for a little while.

He grabs some fruit for breakfast on his way out of the house, jumping into his jeep. He always thought that Beacon Hills was too small, but now it seems huge compared to his life with Peter. In that house it was like the world had ended and they were the only two people left. Peter was his entire universe. He always knew he wasn’t Peter’s, he went to work, he had friends, he baked pies for the local police department apparently. But to Stiles, he was everything. All he would ever want and need.

It’s overwhelming now to drive through town and see so many people living out their mundane lives. He feels disconnected from it, like he’s stepped into somebody else’s dream, and if he can’t go to Peter’s, if he’s going to be a good boy and follow the rules, then he wants to just go to the preserve and find the most remote spot he can, wants to pretend that he’s the last man alive, because maybe then it would be easier to be alone. The preserve is where he was taken from though. The preserve led to the basement which led to the Foundry and this time it won’t lead to Daddy.

He grips the steering wheel harder, focusing on the road ahead of him. School. He has to go to school. He has to take his mind off his own desperation. It’s just subdrop. There’s a word for it. He needs distractions and self-care and people who love him. That’s what he’ll find at school. That’s what he’s driving towards.

Scott is waiting outside for him and Stiles feels a little lighter when he sees him there, just like he said he would be. He’s his Alpha. He has his back. Stiles can depend on him. The thought makes him want to fold with relief, but he needs to be stronger than that. He needs to be tough. That’s what Peter always told him. Maybe this is what he meant.

He takes a shaky breath, waving back at Scott across the parking lot. No thinking about Peter, not right now. Looking at the big picture doesn’t help, it just reminds him of everything he’s missing and that makes him drop lower than ever. Routine. Normalcy. Focus. That’s what he has to cling to, stringing together a series of manageable tasks until the day is finally done. Task one, get out of the jeep. Task two, walk to Scott. Task three, go into the classroom and don’t leave until the bell rings. He’s done it a million times before. There’s no reason he can’t do it now.

“Hey,” Scott greets warmly.

“Hi,” Stiles returns, giving him a smile.

“I never saw you yesterday,” Scott says.

“Yeah, yesterday was a day,” Stiles says, giving him a meaningful look. “But today is a different
“It is,” Scott agrees. He looks at Stiles for a moment. “Are you doing okay?”

Stiles shrugs, the question making him want to just give up. “I have to be.”

“You don’t, actually,” Scott says. “You can be not okay. We’re here for you.”

“Thanks,” Stiles says, trying not to let his voice crack. “But I can’t handle not being okay anymore. I need to just… level out my hormones. All those brain chemicals. Just get through it.”

Subdrop is temporary, that’s what everything he’s read says, he’s not broken. It’s like getting the flu, he’s going to get better, even if it doesn’t feel like it right now. He just has to take care of himself.

“Well, you don’t have to do it alone,” Scott says, putting a hand on his shoulder.


Scott gives a nod as the bell rings. Stiles looks towards the building, glad that Scott’s hand is still on his shoulder, grounding him. He’s under control. Scott will keep him safe.

The first class of the day is business. As Stiles steps into the room beside Scott, Coach’s face lights up and Stiles feels himself shy away at the intensity of it.

“Stilinski!” he greets, stepping out from behind his desk.

“Hey, Coach,” Stiles responds.

“I heard you were back from the great beyond,” Coach says, slapping him a little too hard on the back.

“I wasn’t dead, Coach,” Stiles says, exchanging a look with Scott.

“Is that what that means?” Coach asks. “Well, it’s good to have you back.” He points a finger at him. “You’re going to be at lacrosse practice after school today, right?”

“Oh, uh, I don’t know,” Stiles says.

“Don’t let me down, Stilinski,” Coach says. He turns to Scott. “I can count on you, can’t I?”

“I’ll be there, Coach,” Scott assures him.

“Good,” Coach says. He looks between them for a moment. “Alright, sit down, I’ve got a class to teach.”

Stiles gives Scott a bemused smile as they make their way to their seats. “Good to know some things never change.”

The class is much easier to keep up with than history. Coach barely seems to use the textbook anyway and his classes are always visual with plenty of real life examples and entertaining tangents. Stiles tries to focus on every word that Coach says, repeats them in his mind so that he can’t think about anything else. Every lapse in concentration feels like he’s stumbling down a rabbit hole, like a real physical sensation of the ground giving way beneath him, his stomach flipping over. He takes a breath and he curls and uncurls his hands and he forces himself to listen to
the Coach’s voice. When that doesn’t help, he looks at Scott. His Alpha won’t let anything bad happen to him.

He tempted to slip out of school in the gap between classes, the door to outside calling to him at the end of the corridor. He has a math assignment in his bag though. Math is his next class. He can’t leave without handing that in. The thought soothes him. One tiny step at a time. And once that assignment is on the teacher’s desk then he’s already in the class, it makes sense to stay. Break it down into tiny little parts he can handle. That’s how he’ll get through it.

He sits behind Lydia, staring at the intricate braids in her hair, following them over and over again. He’s not even paying attention and that fact makes it so much more tempting to just get up and walk out, but then what? He can’t go to Peter’s house, the only place in the world he wants to be. He can’t have the security of his friends because they’re here. He can go back to his empty house but then all he’ll do is climb into bed and cry. Nothing is going to make this better. If he’s here, at least he’s safe. He has to hold onto that.

By lunchtime, he’s exhausted with the effort. He stares at the lunch options and it suddenly feels impossible to make a decision. The choice between meatloaf and fish sticks feels literally life or death. He can feel his chest tighten, the tension rising through his body, his eyes flicking from one to the other until it’s all a blur of watery eyes.

“You’re holding up the line,” the cafeteria worker says harshly.

Scott reaches out, putting a hand on his arm. “You alright?”

Stiles looks up at him. He knows he’s not, he must reek of anxiety. “You go first.”

“Okay,” Scott says carefully.

He chooses meatloaf and veggies and an apple. Stiles copies his order, turning around to follow Scott back to their table where Lydia is already sitting with Liam and Mason. Scott sits down, saying something to Liam, but Stiles can’t hear it over the noise of the cafeteria. He looks around, tray clutched in his hands, and there’s so much movement and shouting and laughter, he can’t find anything to focus on. He looks down at his tray. One bite at a time. That’s all he needs to do. Bite, chew, swallow, repeat. He’s not an idiot, he can eat in a noisy room, but the din is like the opposite of white noise, assaulting his senses when he just needs calm. He needs nothingness.

“I’m going to eat outside,” he says, his voice a little louder than necessary. Everyone looks up at him.

“I’ll come with you,” Scott says.

“It’s a nice day,” Lydia agrees, gathering up her things.

“Yeah,” Liam says, grabbing his tray, but then he stops, looking up at Stiles. They haven’t spoken since Stiles got back, Stiles didn’t stick around long enough the last time he was at school, and Liam has that look on his face like he’s not quite sure what the right thing to do is. Stiles is sick of seeing that look, but he knows it comes from a place of love.

“Let’s all go,” Stiles says, giving Liam a little nod.

Liam smiles at him, relieved, like a puppy who didn’t get kicked. “Okay.”

It’s better outside, in the fresh air. There’s still movement, still shouts, but it gets lost to the openness. Stiles can deal with it. He eats his lunch, one mouthful at a time, listening to Scott and
Liam talks about lacrosse. The thought of going to practice, of exerting himself, makes him feel sick. Apart from his one walk in the woods with Peter, the only thing to get him breathless, other than panic attacks, was sex. He still doesn’t know if that’s the right word but Peter said it was all sex. Stiles might never find out what real fucking is like now though. Not without Peter. He was the only person who’s ever wanted him.

He tries to clamp down on the thought. Not only does it make him feel desperately lonely, he’s sitting opposite two werewolves and he doesn’t need them picking up on the fact that he’s thinking about that. It shouldn’t make him feel dirty though. What they shared was so wonderful, it was an intimacy he didn’t even know existed. He hates that he has to feel ashamed of it now because no one can understand how beautiful it was.

He pokes at his meatloaf on his plate. Peter would never feed him crap like this. He bites down on his tongue until it hurts. He’s not supposed to think about Peter and yet even the most mundane thought leads back there. He shovels a forkful of veggies into his mouth, soggy and overcooked, and contemplates going home at the end of the day. He’s not sure if that’s better or worse than lacrosse practice. He needs an incentive. He needs to make himself a little subdrop kit to look after himself like the websites recommended.

He turns to Lydia. “Are you free after school?”

“Do you want to study?” she asks.

“No,” Stiles says. “I want to go to the mall.”

Lydia smiles at him. “Then you asked the right person.”

All he has to do is get through the afternoon. In the last period of the day, Scott and Lydia have AP biology together and Stiles is left on his own. He sits down in his class, thinking about how easy it would be to leave. Neither of them would see, they couldn’t try to stop him. But he’s already arranged to meet Lydia out front after school and he wants his nice things. He deserves them. He tries very hard to believe that. Peter would say he deserved them. Stiles isn’t sure he’d say that anymore though.

He closes his eyes, pressing the heels of his palms into them until he starts to see colours. By the time he opens them again, everything is bright and disorientating. There’s nothing for him to focus on, no friend to anchor himself to. He listens to the teacher, the discussion around him, but it’s not enough. He picks up his pen, starting to sketch on his pad, drawing Lydia’s hair that he spent all of math staring at, tracing the twist of the braids over and over again. He’s not learning anything but he’s here. He hasn’t fallen apart. That fact feels monumental.

They drive in separate cars to the mall, Stiles following behind Lydia, and he feels safe indicating when she indicates, changing lanes when she changes lanes. He knows the way to the mall, could get there in his sleep, but he likes that he doesn’t have to. He’s not responsible for getting himself there. Lydia is taking that on for him.

He parks up beside her and they walk into the mall together, the noise and the business and the brightness. It’s immediately overstimulating. He can feel it all pressing down on his skull.

“So, is there anything in particular we’re looking for in our retail therapy today?” Lydia asks.

Stiles turns to face her, grateful that she’s there to ground him. “Pyjamas,” he says. “Soft pyjamas. Really soft.”
She smiles at him. “I know just the place.”

Stiles nods, following after her. He was counting on it. He doubts he’s going to find anything as luxurious as the clothes that Peter bought for him, but he needs something decadent, something that makes him feel so comfortable and cared for, even if he’s only caring about himself. That’s an important part of the process too though.

Lydia leads him into a store he would never go in on his own. She navigates it with a familiarity that shows she is no stranger to their men’s section, and Stiles can just imagine her coming here to try and turn Jackson into a more presentable piece of arm candy. That was the old Lydia though. She uses her powers for good now.

They head over to sleepwear and it looks nothing like the printed pyjamas he has at home. Everything is sleek, mature, and Stiles can’t help reaching out and feeling all the different fabrics. They feel good. This is probably the kind of place that Peter shops. Stiles looks around. No, Peter gets everything tailored, even lounge wear. This would probably be considered slumming it for him.

Still, he manages to find something similar, closing his hand around the fabric and rubbing the pads of his fingers against it. It makes him feel soft and small and safe. He takes out his phone, bringing up the website for the store.

“What are you doing?” Lydia asks.

“Ordering it online,” Stiles says.

“They don’t have it in your size?” Lydia asks, looking through the rack.

“They do,” Stiles says. “But I need to put them on my dad’s credit card and I can’t do that in the store without actually having the card.”

“I’ll get them for you,” Lydia says.

“No, you don’t need to do that,” Stiles dismisses. “It’s fine, I can get next day delivery.”

“But we’re already here,” Lydia says, grabbing the set. “You’re not going home empty handed. Retail therapy is about instant gratification. Come on.”

There’s no room for arguing so Stiles doesn’t bother, just follows her to the register. This is what Peter would have done, treated him, bought him a present. It was the only good part about him leaving every week. It feels nice to have Lydia believe that he deserves it too, believe that he’s a good boy.

She hands the bag over to him as soon as she’s paid and Stiles clings to it as they walk out of the store together. It’s a physical representation of her love. He feels like he needs that more than air right now. He blinks away the mistiness in his eyes.

“Did you have anything else in mind?” Lydia asks.

“This is enough,” Stiles says.


Stiles can’t fight back the little smile. He chews on his lip. There’s all kinds of things that people think he shouldn’t want and he’s not sure where the line is anymore. “Do you still have stuffed
animals?” he asks.

“Yeah,” Lydia says simply. “Do you?”

“No,” Stiles says. “I mean, maybe in the loft somewhere, I don’t know.”

“Do you want one?” Lydia asks, and she makes it sound like it’s such a reasonable thing.

Stiles thinks about it. He hated Wolfy when Peter brought him home. He hated the thought of being infantilised. And maybe with Daddy that ended up being okay, but it’s still not really what he wants. It makes him feel far too vulnerable. He sighs.

“I know,” Lydia says, taking hold of his hand and steering him through the mall. She’s so warm, so solid, so real and dependable. He switches off and just lets himself be led. It makes something in his head so much lighter, like helium.

She takes him to a homeware store, guiding him to the back where there’s aisles of cushions in every colour and fabric imaginable.

“These are good for snuggling up with,” she says, letting go of his hand to explore the aisle. He feels suddenly unanchored. “I like being cosy.”

“Cosy is good,” Stiles agrees, following after her down the aisle, reaching out to feel the cushions.

Cosy was wrapped up in Peter’s arms and his expensive blankets. Cosy was his window seat with his comics and Wolfy. But maybe this can be cosy too, he thinks, squeezing a cushion. He just needs something to get him through. Daddy will be back, or he won’t, but Stiles has no control over it, that fact has been made abundantly clear to him. For now, he has to do this for himself. He has to find his own definitions.

He’s tempted to go with one of the faux fur ones, there’s some that feel similar to Wolfy, but he doesn’t want that. In the end he picks out one that’s soft and squishy, the fabric like a supple felt beneath his fingers. He grabs it in blue to go with his room. That seems like the grown-up thing to do.

“Get two,” Lydia says, grabbing another one to match. “Two is always better than one. You can put your head on one while you cuddle the other, or just box yourself in with them.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees.

He follows her to the register again, taking the bag from her once she’s paid. A little voice tells him that he’s taking advantage, but she wants to do this, Stiles needs to accept that and be grateful. Besides, he doubts it’s her money she’s spending anyway. Divorces lead to generous parents.

“What else do we need?” Lydia asks as they step out of the store.

“This is enough,” Stiles says, holding up the bags. “This is great. Lydia, thank you, seriously.”

“Good things come in threes,” Lydia says. “Let’s go for one more. Indulge me.”

Stiles lifts his head, trying to look around the mall, but the number of people just makes his head feel like it’s spinning and he can’t focus on anything. He looks down at the bags instead, playing with the handles. He’s loved. He takes a deep breath and lets it sink in. What does he need to take care of himself, to pamper himself, to make him feel relaxed and content? He looks up at Lydia.
“Bubble bath?”

She smiles. “Follow me.”

The smells hit him the second they step into the store. He stands in the doorway, paralysed, everything fighting for the attention of his senses. It’s too much. Lydia reaches over, taking hold of his hand again as she guides him.

“You probably don’t want floral,” she says, walking through the store. “Fruity or woody or fresh?”

“Woody,” Stiles says, quickly. “But subtle.” It’s what Peter would choose, he was obsessed with the scents of wood and earth around them. Actually, he’d just bathe Stiles in his own scent, but he wouldn’t hand that over to Stiles, so this will have to do.

Lydia considers the options for him and then offers him a couple of choices so that he doesn’t get overwhelmed. He picks one out, clutching the bottle as they queue up, imagining stepping into a warm bath. It always felt so good, everything melting away, making him weightless and so at peace. He craves that more than anything right now.

“Thank you,” Stiles says again as they head out of the store, another bag in his hand.

“It’s nice to see you smile,” Lydia says, leading them back to the parking garage. “You take care of yourself, sweetie, okay?”

“I will,” Stiles promises, because it’s easier to do it when someone else tells him to. He holds up the bags as he walks around to the driver’s door of the jeep. “I can now.”

“You can,” Lydia agrees. She places a kiss on his cheek before walking over to her own car. “Call if you need anything.”

Stiles nods, opening his car door. “Have a good weekend.”

“You too, honey,” she returns, climbing into her car.

He can’t follow Lydia home so he has to concentrate but he already feels lighter, just from her taking care of him. He can’t rely on other people, but he has the tools to take care of himself now. He’s going to go home, have a nice, relaxing bubble bath, put on his new pyjamas and then snuggle down with his cushions. Maybe he’ll do some reading or watch a movie in bed. It’s Friday night, he deserves to indulge himself.

He pulls up to his house, trying to overcome the dread that being back here brings him. He doesn’t want his mood to be ruined already. He doesn’t want to sink back down. He takes a breath, centring himself. All he has to do is get up those stairs and then he can lock himself away for the rest of the night.

He grabs his bags, climbing out of the jeep. He can hear murmured voices as he walks into the house and then his dad is there in front of him as he closes the door. Stiles shies away, holding onto his shopping bags tighter. It feels like he has to protect them, like he has to protect himself.

“Stiles,” Stilinski says, a look on his face like dread. It makes everything in Stiles tense. “I need you to just listen to me for a moment, okay?”

Stiles shakes his head. He doesn’t trust him and this sounds like something he’s not going to like.

“There’s someone here to see you,” Stilinski says, making it sound incredibly serious.
Stiles frowns, glancing at the living room doorway. “Did you find a kinky therapist that makes house calls?” he asks, edging himself towards the stairs.

“Stiles,” his dad says again. Stiles looks at him. “I had someone come see me at the Station today.”

“I haven’t done anything,” Stiles says, shaking his head. He’s been good all day, no matter how much he felt like he was going to fall apart. This isn’t fair.

“You’ve driven out to Peter’s house,” Stilinski says.

Stiles feels like the bottom falls out of his world, reeling from the drop. “Scott told you?”

“No,” Stilinski says.

Stiles’ mind races. Scott must have told someone. He’s the only person who knows Stiles was there. Except Peter. Peter knows. Stiles drops the bags onto the floor and pushes past his dad, feeling like everything is tilting with him. There, in his dad’s favourite chair, is Peter. Stiles feels like all the air has been punched out of him. He moves on unsteady legs, just needing to get to him, when Peter lifts a hand, holding it up firmly.

“No.”

Stiles halts in his tracks, standing there in the middle of his living room. Peter is here. Peter is right in front of him. Why can’t Stiles have him yet?

“You came for me,” he says, his voice cracking.

Peter sagas back in the chair, dropping his hand. Regret passes over his face. “I really didn’t.”

Stiles’ face falls. He can’t make sense of anything. He shouldn’t have to when Peter is here. Daddy will take care of him. But maybe he has to earn it first. Maybe he has to prove himself before Peter will take him home.

“I’m eighteen,” he says, throwing a glance back at his dad. “He can’t stop me.”

Peter sighs, getting to his feet and closing the space between them, but he stops so much shorter than Stiles needs him. “Sweetheart, that’s not what any of this is about.”

Stiles looks at him, pleading and lost. “I don’t understand.”


Stiles feels a shudder go through him and then the tears are coming. He’s not sad, he’s just frustrated and confused. He doesn’t know what’s going on and it feels instinctively unsafe.

“But don’t do that,” Peter says, but it’s not that commanding voice that Stiles is used to. He doesn’t sound like he’s in control. He sounds guilty and like this isn’t what he came here to deal with. He sounds like Stilinski.

Stiles wipes at his face, staring Peter down. “Why are you here?”

Peter seems to consider that for a moment too long and Stiles’ hands curl into fists. This man isn’t his Daddy. He’s weak. He’s unsure. He’s tired and worn down and giving up.

“I’m here because you deserve a proper explanation,” Peter says. “And an apology. And a
goodbye.”

Stiles clenches his jaw until it hurts. “I’m not saying goodbye.”

Peter looks at him with such pity. “Stiles…”

“Fuck you,” Stiles bursts out, giving him a challenging look. Peter just sags. “Fuck you,” Stiles repeats, his eyes instinctively darting to the corner of the room.

Peter levels his gaze at him. “No,” he says, sounding more like himself. “It’s not my place to do that.”

Stiles nods his head, pleading with him. “Yes.”

“Stiles, no,” Peter says.

“I broke a rule,” Stiles says.

“There’s no rules,” Peter tells him. “Not anymore.”

The tears come again, and Stiles can feel himself going under, drowning in the tidal wave of desperation that comes over him. He needs to submit. He feels like he can’t breathe until Peter accepts him again. He doesn’t deserve this. He’s tried so hard to be good, even when everyone else was tearing it apart. He just has to show his dedication. He has to make Peter understand.

He starts to fold down to his knees but Peter reaches out and catches him, holding him firmly at arm’s length.

“Don’t,” Peter pleads.

Stiles looks up at him and he can see the tears starting to form in Peter’s eyes as well. He’s never seen him like this before. Part of him just wants to comfort Peter while the other part despises him for not being the rock that he needs. In the end he just steps forward, fisting his hands in Peter’s shirt.

“I want to go home,” he says through the tears. “I just want to go home.”

“I know,” Peter says. “But you’re not mine anymore.”

“I am,” Stiles insists. “Always.”

“No,” Peter says. “You never were.”

Stiles tightens his grips in Peter’s shirt. “Don’t say that.”

“Stiles, I need you to just listen to me for a minute,” Peter says. Stiles nods, looking up at him attentively. Peter flicks his eyes away, unable to meet his gaze. “I thought I was doing the right thing by sending you away. I thought a clean break would be easier. You just cut people out and you move on.”

Stiles thinks about the way Peter’s family cut him off, threw him aside, and his heart aches. No wonder that’s how he would deal with it, by shutting Stiles out. But he’s here. He’s trying. Stiles is so proud of him.

“You deserve better than that,” Peter says. Stiles feels his hope swell. “You deserve an explanation. You need to know where you stand and what that means and what comes next.”
Stiles nods his head. They can work through this. They can figure it out.

“You didn’t belong at the Foundry,” Peter says. “You didn’t belong with me. You got taken away from everything you knew and that must have been so scary for you. I’m glad that I could make you even a little bit happy, but you belong here, with your dad. This is your home. This is where you need to stay.”

Stiles tightens his hands in Peter’s shirt. “You can’t leave me here with him,” he says, his voice hushed and desperate. “He’s going to sell me again. It’s going to be so much worse.”

Peter closes his eyes, giving a shuddery exhale. When he opens them again, he looks defeated. “Stiles,” he saysSadly. “Your dad never sold you.”

Stiles screws his face up in confusion. “What are you talking about?”

“I never believed that,” Peter says. “There might have been a question in my mind, but I didn’t believe it. You were clinging to this hope though and I had to snap it. The easiest way to make you trust me was to make someone else the bad guy.”

Stiles feels himself go hot with rage. He loosens his fingers on Peter’s shirt, taking a step back as he stares at him hotly. He thought Peter was all he had, the only one he could count on, the one person who would always keep him safe, and it was a lie.

“I hate you,” he grits out.

“You should,” Peter agrees.

Stiles feels the fire go out of him just as quickly with Peter’s acceptance. They’re just as broken as each other. How did he never see it? He shakes his head. “I don’t though,” he says. “I love you.”

“I know,” Peter says.

“You love me too,” Stiles insists.

Peter gives the tiniest little nod. “I know.”

“But you’re going to leave me,” Stiles says with resignation, trying to hold back the tears.

“I don’t have any other choices,” Peter says. “I can’t do this to you, Stiles.”

“I get to decide that,” Stiles says.

“But you can’t,” Peter says. “I took that power away from you. But you have a future ahead of you. That’s what you need to focus on now.”

Stiles shakes his head. “I can’t do it without you.”

“Yes, you can,” Peter tells him. “You’re going to be amazing.”

Stiles feels himself crumple again because, despite everything, Peter still believes in him. Maybe he’s the only person who does. It’s so much more than Stiles deserves.

“Look at me,” Peter says. Stiles lifts up his wet eyes, even as he’s shaking. “This is the part where we need to be strong.”

“I’m going to die if you leave me,” Stiles says.
“You’re not going to die,” Peter says. “It’s just going to feel like it for a while.”

Stiles finally gives, folding into Peter and Peter, thank god, holds him back. He wraps those strong arms around him and he pulls him in, burying his face in Stiles’ neck. Stiles clings to him, sobbing with abandon, feeling so safe and so betrayed at once. This doesn’t mean anything. Peter has already given up on them. He’s decided that they’re not worth it. But Stiles can feel all of that love and devotion in the way that he holds Stiles like he’s the most precious thing in the world. Why can’t they have this? What’s the point in any future that doesn’t involve Peter?

As the sobs wrack his body, Peter keeps him upright, holding him securely, and it reminds Stiles of the night he touched Peter’s phone, the night he nearly ruined everything. Maybe he did. But that night, after he’d done his corner time and he and Peter had talked it through, had agreed that it had to be them against the world, he felt this same give in Peter, this fierce protectiveness that showed a vulnerability. Stiles is his weak spot. Now Peter has lost everything.

He pulls back, wiping at his face with the back of his hand as he looks up at Peter. “I’m not giving up on you.”

Peter’s body goes lax and he looks at Stiles with such defeat and disappointment.

“You can’t stop me coming to your house,” Stiles says. “I’ll be there for you. I’ll wait.”

“If you come to my house again, I will get a restraining order against you,” Peter says. “You don’t want that on your record while you’re getting ready to go to college.”

Stiles shrugs, unconcerned. “I already have a restraining order.”

Peter gives him a quizzical look but pushes it aside. “Don’t throw away your future,” he says. “Not when you’re getting a second chance.”

Something about that is sobering to Stiles. After the kidnapping, the basement, the Foundry, he feels like he deserves it. But Peter was his second chance, his redemption. He doesn’t know how to want anything else.

“Here’s the thing,” Peter says. “A series of unfortunate circumstances led you to me. Our paths crossed where they shouldn’t. That’s nobody’s fault. But it stops here. End of story.”

Stiles shakes his head, feeling like he’s going to break down again. He doesn’t have anything left.

“I think you know that too,” Peter says gently.

Stiles bites down on his own lip, wanting to tear right through it. He can’t let go. He doesn’t know how.

“So here’s what happens next,” Peter says. “We have to say goodbye.”

Stiles feels his stomach turn over, bile rising in his throat.

“We can cry and we can rage and we can make it messy and painful,” Peter says. “Or we can do it with dignity. We can hold our heads up and we can be brave, and then we can fall apart later. Because it’s going to hurt, but let’s not make it hurt any more than it has to.”

Stiles is reminded of the first time Peter left him to go to work. The outcome is a forgone conclusion, Peter is walking away, but they get to decide how they react to that. That’s where the power comes from. Stiles had been a good boy that day. He didn’t make a fuss when Daddy
walked out of that door. He made it easier for both of them. He smiled and he waved and he wished him a good day. That wasn’t forever though.

“I don’t know how to do it without you,” Stiles says honestly.

Peter nods. “I talked to your dad. He’s going to help you. I told him how, told him everything you need.”

Stiles frowns at him, clinging onto Peter’s arms. His dad can never give him what he needs. He’s not even capable of the unconditional love part.

“He’s a good man,” Peter says. “You’re going to be okay.”

Stiles feels something give in him because if Peter thinks that, then Stiles is inclined to believe him. He trusts him implicitly. But Peter doesn’t know Stilinski. Not like Stiles does.

“So,” Peter says, levelling his gaze at him. “We have one last hug, we say goodbye, and then we draw a line under it.”

“I don’t want to,” Stiles says, hating that he sounds like a brat. He’s lost the will to put any meaning behind his words though. He feels like he’s wasting his breath.

“We don’t always get what we want,” Peter responds.

“You promised,” Stiles says. “You said when I finished my training you were going to show me the world. I’m not finished. You didn’t finish me. You can’t leave me like this.”

Peter lifts his hand, touching the side of Stiles’ face. “We’re all works in progress, sweetheart.”

Stiles reaches up, gripping Peter’s hand in his own. There’s a comfort in those words somehow. It’s like the subdrop, it doesn’t mean he’s broken. He doesn’t have to be perfect. His mistakes won’t define him.

“Okay,” Peter says, giving his hand a squeeze. “So dry your eyes. Then let’s be brave.”

Stiles takes a deep breath, trying not to let it shudder as he exhales. If Peter tells him he can do it then he can. It really feels as simple as that, even with this stabbing pain in his chest. He lets go of Peter, lifting his hands and wiping away the wetness on his cheeks. He breathes in and out, centres himself. Daddy taught him how. Stiles wants to make him proud, even now. Especially now.

Peter nods. “Come here.”

Stiles goes to him, folding so easily into his arms. No crying, he reminds himself. Be brave. He holds Peter, revels in his warmth, his security, trying not to let it sink in that this could be the last time. Peter is giving him this as a kindness though. All he’ll get if he tries again in the closed door he’s been offered so far. He needs to savour it. He doesn’t want to ever let go.

Peter holds him firm and strong, a hand rubbing up and down his back. It’s so comforting, Stiles melting into it. Peter always took care of him, no matter what anyone else says. Stiles doesn’t understand why this is wrong. He doesn’t understand why they have to stop. The kidnapping was bad, but Peter was all good, always. Peter was everything. How does Stiles go on without everything? It’s not a hole, it’s just a void that the rest of his life is going to slip into.

Peter squeezes him with his whole body and Stiles knows that this is it. His heart rate sky rockets and he holds on tighter. He knows he’s not supposed to. He knows he’s not being good. How is he
supposed to give this up though?

“Shhhh,” Peter soothes into his ear.

“Daddy,” Stiles whispers, so low that it’s only between the two of them.

“I know, baby,” Peter whispers back, something in his voice Stiles hasn’t heard before. “Be brave. Don’t make it hurt more than it has to.”

Stiles nods and then Peter eases himself away. Stiles lets him go. He’s never had a choice in this.

As they part, a gap between them that could be bridged by the tiniest of touches, Peter looks away, and Stiles can tell that he’s composing himself. Stiles doesn’t know how to be strong if Peter’s not. He won’t be the one who lets them down though. He can do this. He can do anything for Daddy.

Peter finally looks at him, his face solemn as he swallows uncomfortably. “Goodbye, Stiles.”

Stiles feels like his entire soul splits apart. His throat closes up and the words are going to choke him, he knows they are. He moves his tongue around in his mouth, parting his lips, but he can’t make himself say it. He bows his head, trying to just breathe as the heaviness presses down on him. Two words and this is all over. If he doesn’t say them then it’s still over, he reminds himself. His power doesn’t lie in stopping this. It lies in letting it go.

He lifts his head, taking a deep breath, feeling it fill his whole body. “Goodbye, Peter.”

Something flickers over Peter’s face and then he smiles at him, proud. When Daddy’s proud, Stiles gets a reward. It doesn’t work that way anymore though. All he gets now is left behind.

Peter walks out of the room and Stiles turns to watch him, his dad escorting him out. Stiles drops down onto the couch, drawing his legs up and hugging them to his chest until it hurts. His whole body is shaking. Be brave, the tells himself. Be brave, be brave, be brave. But for what?

The front door closes and his dad comes back into the room. He stands there, hovering, awkward, and Stiles hates him. He hates him more now than he did for selling him. Except maybe he didn’t sell him. Stiles closes his eyes. He can’t even begin to get his head around that right now. Nothing cuts through the immediacy of the open wound that Peter has left in his chest.

Stilinski moves closer and Stiles jumps up from the couch. “I’m going to Scott’s,” he says, heading for the door. Stilinski steps in front of him.

“I don’t want you leaving right now, Stiles,” he says. “You’re in no fit state. You can go upstairs and you can slam the door and you can shut me out but please don’t leave this house.”

“So I’m your prisoner?” Stiles asks.

“You’re my son,” Stilinski says.

Stiles glares at him. “I’m going to Scott’s.”

He full body barges him out of the way, grabbing his shopping bags from where he dropped them in the entranceway. He does slam the door on his way out, but it’s not nearly as satisfying as he’d like.

The tears finally come when he’s halfway there and he has to pull onto the side of the road because he can’t see. He feels like he’s letting Peter down as he bends over his steering wheel, sobbing like
a lost child. It’s what he feels like. His Daddy is gone. He’s only letting down himself. He’s spent his whole life doing that. He can live with it.

He’s exhausted by the time he finally calms down, but calm isn’t the right word, the storm is still raging inside him. He feels like he’s slipped below the waves and no one can hear him scream now. It’s going to consume him. Maybe he should just let it happen now. Maybe he should pull into oncoming traffic. The thought of taking someone else out makes him feel sick though. His own demise leaves him unmoved.

With a sigh, he turns his key in the ignition, finishing the journey to Scott’s house. He lets himself in, Melissa coming through when she hears the door. She already has a look of pity on her face before she even sees him.

“Hey there, kiddo,” she greets. “Your dad said you’d probably be showing up.”

Stiles feels humiliated. “Did he tell you to send me home?”

“He told me to give you a hug if you want one,” Melissa says.

Stiles instinctively wraps his own arms around himself, feeling warmer at the thought. If his dad’s first instinct is hugs over punishment, then maybe Peter is right. He shakes his head at Melissa’s offer. “But thanks.”

Melissa gives him a little nod. “Scott’s upstairs. Go on up.”

He takes a step towards the stairs and then stops, turning back to face her. “Are you going to tell my dad I’m here?”

“Unless you want him to put an APB out on you,” Melissa responds. “He said he’s okay with you staying here, as long as he knows you’re safe.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. “You can tell him.”

Melissa gives him a kind smile as he turns and heads up the stairs. Scott is at his desk on his laptop, turning in his chair as Stiles enters the room. Stiles drops his bags down onto the floor and then throws himself face down on the bed.

“Hey,” Scott says. “How are you doing?”

“Okay,” Stiles responds. “I just wish I was dead.”

“No,” Scott says, his tone so abrupt that Stiles looks up at him. He gets up from the desk, crossing the room.

Stiles frowns at him. “What?”

“Have you eaten?” Scott asks, sitting down beside him.

“I’m not hungry,” Stiles says, trying to bury himself in the pillows.

“That’s not what I asked,” Scott says.

Stiles looks up at him, feeling simultaneously under attack and smothered with love. “No,” he admits.

“I’m ordering food,” Scott says, taking out his phone. “Do you have a preference?”
Stiles just shakes his head.

“I’m ordering Chinese,” Scott says. “We’re going to eat and then we’re going to watch a movie and I’m going to be right here.”

Stiles stares up at him, feeling the heaviness settle in a different way. “I’m not going to do anything.”

“I know,” Scott says. “I wouldn’t let you.”

Stiles smiles at him, feeling like he might cry again. He can’t be responsible for himself right now though. He’s glad that Scott is willing to do it for him without him even having to ask.

“Did my dad tell you what happened?” he asks.

Scott nods. “I know that had to hurt. But I’m glad he’s doing the right thing.”

Stiles squeezes his eyes shut. It doesn’t feel like the right thing.

“You’re allowed to be upset about it though,” Scott says. “You’re allowed to not be okay.”

Stiles takes a breath, the validation settling something inside him. His subdrop is normal. His breakup is normal. He’s not sick or wrong for feeling these things, even if no one else can truly understand what he’s been through.

“What did you and Lydia buy?” Scott asks.

Stiles opens his eyes, looking over at the bags. “Pyjamas,” he says. “I think I want to put them on.”

“That’s a good idea,” Scott agrees. “I’ll order the food.”

Sitting up feels like moving through water but Stiles retrieves the pyjamas, taking them through to the bathroom. He shrugs off his plaid shirt, pulling his T-shirt over his head. Reaching into the shopping bag, he pulls out the pyjama top, letting his fingers explore the softness of the material. It’s so comforting and yet somehow it’s like a punch to the gut. He deserves this though, he reminds himself. He’s not bad. He’s not.

He takes the tag off and pulls the shirt over his head, smoothing it down against his body. It feels nice, but his eyes go to his chest where the family crest should be resting over his heart. He’s slammed with grief and his already raw throat aches around the sudden tightness. He forces himself to release it, to take a breath. He doesn’t have to look at the big picture right now. He can’t. He just has to get through the next few moments, and then the next few, and hopefully before he knows it they’ll be stringing together without him even having to try.

He sags. It doesn’t feel possible right now. All he has to tackle is what’s immediately in front of him though. Put on his pyjamas. Eat some food. Be a good boy. If he can just get through to bedtime that would feel like a pretty huge achievement right now.

He takes his pants off, looking down at the cuff on his ankle. His chest feels like it’s going to cave in under the pressure. He doesn’t know if he needs it anymore. He reaches down, touching the padlock. He certainly doesn’t belong. He’s untethered. Free, he supposes the word is. It’s the cruellest thing he can imagine. This isn’t a choice he needs to make right now though. He doesn’t even have the key with him, he couldn’t take it off if he wanted to. He sets the decision aside for now, relieving himself of it. He likes the way the cuff feels. It soothes him. He’s going to let himself embrace the feeling and not worry about what it means and how much he still has to lose.
He pulls on the pants, settles them on his hips where Peter always placed them when he dressed him. Stiles never had to lift a finger. He was so cared for. But Lydia is looking after him, buying him nice things. Scott is looking after him, making sure he eats, keeping him safe. It’s not the same, it will never be the same, but it might just get him through the night without falling apart completely. That’s all he can reasonably expect right now.

He goes back through to the bedroom where Scott is sitting on the bed with his laptop. Stiles reaches into a bag, grabbing one of his cushions and taking it over to the bed, slumping down beside Scott. He hugs the cushion tightly to his chest, fingers digging into the softness.

“Do you want to watch Star Wars?” Scott offers. “I still haven’t seen it. What number’s the first one again?”

Stiles remembers his date night with Peter, watching *A New Hope* together, his head in Peter’s lap. That was supposed to be a regular thing, a special time just for the two of them, putting the focus on their relationship, but he got taken away before they got to have their second date. They should have been watching these movies together, he loved sharing them with Peter, but now he’ll never get the chance. He bites down on his lip. He can’t face them right now.

“Something else,” he says.

“Oh,” Scott says, seeming surprised. “Okay. What are you thinking?”

Stiles shrugs. Decisions are beyond him. They’re far too big a responsibility.

“I know,” Scott says, searching for something. He brings it up with a triumphant grin. “X-Men!”

Stiles smiles despite himself. “We’ve watched this movie a million times.”

“You up for it?” Scott asks.

Stiles snuggles down on the bed with his cushion. “Always.”

They settle in to watch the movie and Stiles feels small again, especially when Melissa comes to bring their food to them, along with plates and sodas. Just like a sleepover when they were twelve. There’s something so comforting in that fact.

Stiles doesn’t really have any appetite but he picks at his food, knowing that eating is the right thing to do. He wants to do the right thing. He doesn’t want to let Scott down. He can’t stand the thought of being a disappointment or a burden or anything but perfect. He’s going to be so good.

Scott puts a spring roll on his plate and Stiles obediently picks it up and eats it, but he’s grateful when the food is gone and he can curl up with his cushion by Scott’s side. It’s reassuring, feeling the heat from his body, knowing the strength that it contains. Scott will keep him safe. Scott will be his rock. His Alpha.

He lets his eyes fall closed. He already knows the movie by heart, he doesn’t need to see it to follow what’s happening. His eyes are burning and tired from all the crying and it’s such a relief to finally let them rest. He shuffles instinctively closer to Scott, Scott moving with him so that they come to rest together, Stiles’ head against his shoulder. Stiles’ throat closes up at how loved he feels.

“Thank you,” he whispers.

“I’m not going anywhere,” Scott tells him.
Stiles knows the words are supposed to comfort him, but they only remind him of Peter’s abandonment. He hopes Scott’s promises are worth more than that.
Stiles feels his stomach drop as he pulls into the driveway. He stayed at Scott’s house for as long as he could but, without the key to take the cuff off, he can’t take a shower or, more importantly, use his new bubble bath. He just wants some him time. He wants to switch off for a little while and maybe have a really good cry. As much as Scott told him it was okay to not be okay, he still feels like he’s expended a lot of energy trying to be good. He wants to wallow for a little bit. He wants to just feel sorry for himself and not worry about it making him a burden.

Coming home doesn’t feel comforting like it should though. Stiles doesn’t want to even call it home but Peter didn’t give him much of a choice. He bites down on his lip. He can’t spiral right now. He needs to take care of himself. Maybe that includes a little bit of denial just to get through the next few moments.

It’s starting to get dark and he can’t sit in his car all night. With a huff, he grabs the shopping bags from the passenger seat; used pyjamas, a well hugged cushion and some bubble bath he’s desperate to try out. He lets himself into the house, half-expecting to be ambushed by his dad, but he’s sat in the living room, watching TV. Stiles could probably get away with going straight upstairs but something draws him towards the doorway. Stilinski sits up straighter, looking up at him.

“Hey,” Stiles says.

“Hi,” Stilinski smiles. “I’m glad you’re back.”

Stiles shrugs. “I just want to take a bath. I’m going to go upstairs.”

“Can we have a chat first?” Stilinski asks.

“Can we save it for after?” Stiles responds. “I just really want to go have a bath.”

“I’d just really rather we go through it before you see what’s in your room,” Stilinski says.

Stiles freezes, fear making the hairs on his arms prickle up. “What’s in my room?”

“It’s a schedule,” Stilinski says, getting to his feet. His reluctance is clear. “Peter thought it would be a good idea. He thought it would give you a sense of security.”

Stiles swallows uncomfortably. He hates Peter’s name on his father’s lips. He hates that they sat together and discussed him like they were trading care instructions for a puppy.

“We can look at it together?” Stilinski suggests.

Stiles shrugs, chewing on his lip. Stilinski looks at him sadly and then leads the way.

The schedule is written up on the board Stiles used to solve mysteries on. Now it just tells him how to string moments together to make a day. How the mighty have fallen. Every hour is accounted for, even his free time is put into blocks.

Peter never laid it out like this for him but Stiles always knew what to expect. Alarm, Peter showers, Stiles gets out of bed while Peter makes breakfast. After that, Stiles’ time, yoga and forty-
five minutes of video games and studying and comics. Lunch with Peter, then afternoons for training, or sometimes for treats. Back upstairs while Peter made dinner, Stiles allowed to use his toybox again until Daddy came to get him. Then dinner, sitting at the dining table because dinner was important and it always felt more intimate. Then bath time, Stiles’ favourite time of the day, Daddy washing him, pampering him, soaking him in his scent. Then taking Daddy’s hand to climb out, Daddy drying him off, dressing him, taking him to bed and tucking him in. Daddy climbing in behind him and cuddling him tight and keeping him safe all night long.

Stiles swallows around the lump in his throat as he looks at what his dad has laid out for him. He can’t really take it in, but it makes him feel safe. He’s so humiliated by that fact.

“Weekdays are pretty straightforward,” Stilinski says, gesturing to the board. “Get up, breakfast, go to school. You attend all of your classes. I don’t know what your thoughts on lacrosse are right now, but I put your practices down on here. Morning practices, if you choose not to go then you can sleep in later. For after school practices, if you don’t go then you can do something else with your time, but the rule is that you need to let me know where you are.”

“That’s a rule?” Stiles asks, a little too eagerly. Rules he understands.

“When school finishes, I need you to call me and tell me where you’re going, whether it’s lacrosse practice or Scott’s house or to the mall with Lydia,” Stilinski says. “I’m not going to stop you, but I need to know.”

“That’s a rule?” Stiles asks again.

Stilinski considers him for a second. “That’s a rule,” he agrees, almost reluctantly.

Stiles nods, feeling himself settle. “Okay.”

“Whatever you decide to do, homework starts at five o’clock,” Stilinski says. “If you want to do it with Scott or Lydia, we can talk about that, but this is homework time,” he says, pointing at the board.

“Homework time,” Stiles repeats.

“After that is dinner time, then it’s bath time or shower or whatever you feel comfortable with,” Stilinski says.

Stiles wraps his arms around himself, wondering how much he knows, how much Peter told him. They’re intimate details that shouldn’t have been shared. They’re private. He feels betrayed that Peter could have given them away so easily.

“When that’s done, you’ve got some wind down time before bed. You can watch TV, play videogames, read, whatever you want. Then it’s bedtime. Lights out.”

Stiles nods. “I get it.”

“Weekends are less structured,” Stilinski says. “You can get up later, there’s time for homework, mealtimes are in here,” he explains. “And you can meet up with your friends, you’ve got free time to do what you want with. Then it’s bath time, wind down, lights out.”

“Okay,” Stiles says. He likes it laid out like that. It makes sense.

Stilinski turns to face him fully, looking solemn. “I need you to understand something, Stiles,” he says. “I’m not doing this to control you. I’m not doing this for my benefit or for my own
satisfaction. I’m doing it because Peter said that you could get unsettled if your routine changed while you were with him and so we agreed that maybe a strict routine here would help you transition back into everyday life. It would cut down on the anxiety while you found your feet again.”

Stiles hugs himself tighter, ashamed at the fact that they’ve been discussing his weaknesses like this. He knows that Peter would only ever do it to help him, out of love. Stiles remembers the day after the dinner party, when his routine had been messed up the day before and he didn’t get his bath time, he completely fell apart and Peter had to stop his work to come calm him down. Stiles is still ashamed of that, but Peter understood. Baby needs his schedule.

He’s passing that advice on to Stiles’ dad because he knows it’s his responsibility to keep Stiles safe now, to take care of him. Stilinski has never been good at responsibility though. He probably had countless examples of Stiles’ failings to talk about when discussing what he needed to overcome. Stiles bets he could barely contain himself once the topic arose.

“Is this something you think would be helpful?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles moves closer to the board, lifting his hand up to chew on his thumb. He thinks about his days with Peter, overlays them in his mind with the schedule in front of him. It’s so different that it’s difficult to compare but it doesn’t feel quite right. He likes the idea of being tied to something, being guided by it, especially if Peter had a hand in it, but he’s built up his own self-care too and it doesn’t quite fit here.

“Uh,” he starts, but he’s not supposed to argue. Being a good boy means respecting who’s in charge and it’s not him. It’s never been him.

“What?” Stilinski prompts.

Stiles shakes his head. “It’s nothing. This is good. I like this.”

“Stiles, this is for your benefit, it has to work for you,” Stilinski says. “Do we need to change something? We can scrap it if you want.”

“I want it,” Stiles quickly. His dad can’t dangle so much security in front of him and then take it away. It’s so soothing, looking at everything laid out, never having to think about any of, never having to answer the question of what comes next.

“So what doesn’t work?” Stilinski asks.

Stiles shrugs, shrinking down into himself. “I like to do yoga in the mornings. It makes it easier to get out of bed and then you get into a rhythm. It just sets up the day.”

“All right,” Stilinski says, grabbing the pen and writing it in. “Yoga sounds like a good idea.” He turns to face Stiles. “Anything else we should put in?”

Stiles shakes his head. “No, thank you.”

“Okay,” Stilinski says, putting the lid on the pen. “But we can change this any time you need to. That’s the idea. Then we’re not going to need it at all.”

Stiles hugs himself again, the thought making him feel terrifyingly untethered. He looks at the clock and then the current block on the board. Bath time. Perfect.

“Can I go take my bath now?”
Stilinski replaces the pen and looks at him. “Can we talk first?”

“We’ve been talking,” Stiles says, feeling his chest tighten.

“I just think there’s something we need to talk about,” Stilinski says. “Something I can’t let fester any longer.”

“It says bath time,” Stiles points out, desperation cracking his voice. “It says that now is bath time. I need to go in the bath.”

“You thought I sold you?” Stilinski asks, his voice so heartbroken.

Stiles sits down on the bed in surrender, tears already pricking at his eyes. He shrugs, staring down at his hands. Stilinski comes to sit beside him.

“Stiles,” he says, imploring, but Stiles can’t look at him. “How could you think that?”

“It made sense,” Stiles says numbly.

“If I have ever done anything that made that make sense to you then I am truly sorry,” Stilinski says. There’s a sincerity in his voice that Stiles hasn’t heard in a long time. Maybe not since Donovan. “Stiles, you are everything I have, I would never do anything to hurt you.”

“I didn’t believe him at first,” Stiles says, his voice sounding weak and pathetic. “But he kept saying it and I know that it happens and I know that I’m not a good kid.”

“Don’t you ever say that,” his dad responds fiercely. Stiles looks up at him, seeing the tears shining in his eyes, and it breaks something in him.

“You need the money,” he says.

“I need you more,” Stilinski insists. “You know I’d lose everything before I’d ever let you go.” He shakes his head, wiping at his eyes. “I thought you knew that.”

“I know it’s not easy,” Stiles says. “Looking after me on your own. I know you have other responsibilities, ones that you chose. You didn’t choose me.”

“Of course I did,” Stilinski says, looking appalled. “Stiles, I always wanted you. Your mother and I were so happy when we found out she was pregnant. You were our lives.”

“But you didn’t sign up to be a single dad with a kid like me,” Stiles says. “You didn’t choose that. But Peter did. Peter chose me.”

Stilinski grits his teeth, looking furious. “Peter manipulated you and played mind games with you and convinced you that I didn’t want you.”

“But he chose me,” Stiles says.

“He’s a monster,” Stilinski says harshly.

Stiles feels the tears filling his eyes. He looks down at his lap, hugging himself. That’s what Derek called him too. Stiles still can’t believe the story he told about his sister, but if Peter lied about this, if he really was just fucking with him when he convinced him that his dad sold him, what else was he lying about? What else was he capable of?

“He came back for me,” Stiles says, more for his own benefit than his father’s.
“He came to say goodbye,” Stilinski says carefully.

Stiles nods. He can’t lie to himself anymore. “So he’s not a monster. Not if he wanted to help me.” He looks up at the board, all the work that’s gone into it. Peter knows what he needs. He always knows exactly what he needs.

“He stepped up,” Stilinski agrees begrudgingly.

Stiles looks at him. “He came to the Station?”

“Yeah.”

“That was really brave of him,” Stiles says. “He didn’t know he wasn’t going to be arrested or if you were going to use it against him and claim he was incriminating himself. He didn’t know if he was going to face any police brutality.”

Stilinski looks away with a huff.

“Do you still want to murder him?” Stiles asks pointedly. “You still think he deserves that?”

Stilinski turns back to face him and Stiles can’t read his expression. He’s not guilty or remorseful, but he’s not angry either. “Maybe I’d settle for kicking the shit out of him.”

Stiles smiles despite himself, ducking his head down and biting on his lip. He doesn’t understand his response, hates himself for it, because there’s nothing funny about his dad wanting to hurt the man he loves. Just one of the reasons he’ll never be good enough for Peter.

“Can I go now?” Stiles asks, getting to his feet and clapping his hands together. “It’s bath time.”

“There’s just one more thing,” Stilinski says reluctantly. “I need you to give me the cuff.”

Stilinski looks equally uncomfortable. “You can’t keep that thing on all the time. I don’t think it’s healthy.”

“It’s mine,” Stiles says, knowing how petulant he sounds.

“You bought it with my credit card,” Stilinski points out.

Stiles’ face falls. He wonders how long he’s known. He sits back down on the bed beside him, putting on his best good little boy look, eyes wide and earnest. Peter always liked it. “Please don’t take it away from me.”

“I’m not,” Stilinski assures him. “You can have it to sleep in. I understand why you need it.”

His eyes flick away in distaste and Stiles wonders again how much Peter told him. He feels like he’s going to throw up. Stilinski focusses on him again.

“When you get up in the morning, I need you to take it off and give it to me,” Stilinski says. “Then, after bath time, I’ll give it back to you. You don’t have to do anything to earn it, you get it back every day. I’m not playing games, I’m just giving you a schedule. A time and a place for things.”

“That’s a rule?” Stiles asks. “If I give it to you then I get it back? That’s a rule?”

Stilinski sags and Stiles can tell he’s not cut out for this. He’s not supposed to lead him with
reluctance.

“That’s a rule,” Stilinski agrees.

Stiles nods. “Okay.” He has to follow the rules. Nothing makes sense if he doesn’t.

He opens up the drawer in his nightstand, taking out the key before lifting his foot up onto the bed. Just like he did for Peter. This just feels humiliating. He pulls up his pant leg, revealing the cuff and feeling his cheeks burn crimson. There’s tears in his eyes, his hand shaking as he fumbles the key into the lock. The engraved lock. I belong. But he doesn’t. Not anymore.

He slips it open, unbuckling the cuff, his ankle feeling lighter. It’s a sickening sensation. He feels like he’s going to fade away. He offers it out to his dad, unable to meet his eyes.

“Thank you,” Stilinski says. He places it down on the bed between them. “You can put it back on after your bath. That’s the right time to wear it.”

Stiles hugs himself tightly, staring at it through glassy eyes. “Thank you.” It’s the right thing to say, even if he’s seething with hatred. He has to be a good boy. This is a rule. Good boys follow rules.

Stilinski reaches into his pocket, pulling something out and placing it on the bed beside the cuff. Stiles looks down as he pulls his hand away to see the other key.

“Peter asked me to give this to you.”

Stiles lets out a noise against his will, a broken little sob that catches in his throat. Peter didn’t keep it. He’s not going to come and claim him. He handed care over to his father and he’s washing his hands of him. Stiles feels the emptiness clawing inside him, a cold, dark dread that feels like it’s going to consume him. He doesn’t know what comes next but he’s certain he doesn’t want it.

“I’ve been looking into therapists,” Stilinski says. “There’s lists of professionals who are… familiar with the lifestyle.”

“What lifestyle?” Stiles asks, looking up at him.

“Kink friendly,” Stilinski says. Stiles grimaces. “I think it’s important that you talk to someone who understands what you’ve been through, who can help you put that in context.”

“It’s not kinky,” Stiles says, even as the shame creeps over him again. “It was love.”

“You shared a certain dynamic,” Stilinski says. “You need to talk to someone who will understand that word that Chris gave you.”

Stiles shrinks down in himself. “Can I go take my bath now, please?”

“Yeah,” Stilinski agrees, sounding disappointed. “But maybe later we can look at the options together. When you feel up to it.”

“I don’t want to,” Stiles says, getting to his feet.

“Stiles,” Stilinski starts.

“You said I could take my bath,” Stiles says, feeling his jittery anxiety rising. His dad is terrible at this. He needs to follow the schedule too, not just Stiles. He needs to enforce the rules. He’s never been good at that though.
“Yeah,” Stilinski agrees. “Go ahead.” He gestures to the cuff on the bed. “I’m going to leave this here so you can put it on when you’re done.”

“Thank you,” Stiles says. He’s a good boy, even if his dad doesn’t seem to give a fuck.

He grabs his bubble bath and goes through to the bathroom, locking himself inside. It doesn’t feel as special when he has to run the bath himself. Daddy used to do it for him. He opens up the bottle, pouring the liquid under the running tap and watching bubbles start to form. He swishes his hands through the water, encouraging more, adjusting the taps to get the temperature right. He ends up overfilling the tub but there’s still not enough bubbles. He sighs, shutting off the tap. Daddy made it look so easy. Daddy made everything easy. Stiles can’t do this on his own.

He takes a deep breath and reminds himself that he doesn’t have a choice. Self-pity and tears aren’t going to get him anywhere. Peter believes in him. He thinks he’s brave. He must, or he wouldn’t have left him like this. He came back to make sure he was okay. Stiles needs to be okay. Scott’s words echo in his head, telling him it’s okay to not be okay, and Stiles feels himself crumble again. How is he supposed to make sense of any of it when they’re all conflicting each other? But Stiles trusts Peter. Above anyone else in the world, he’ll always trust Peter. That means he needs to be brave now. He needs to be tough.

He strips off his pyjamas, stepping into the water, disappointed when it’s too hot. It’s bearable, but it’s not like Daddy used to make. His baths were always perfect. Stiles doesn’t have the magic touch. He stands there, watching the water going out of the overflow, and once it levels out, he adds a little more cold water. It still doesn’t feel right but it’s enough that he can lower himself down into it. He can feel sweat start to prickle at his brow. Peter’s baths never made him feel like this. It was always just like floating.

Stiles lies back though, closing his eyes as he lets the water take his weight. It still feels good. After a while, he adds a little more cold, and then it’s nearly right. It will do. He feels like maybe that’s all he deserves right now. No more pampering. No more Daddy. Time to face the real world. It’s uncomfortable and imperfect and so stark. He can feel himself dropping and it’s such a miserable feeling. He wants fireflies. Subspace. He wants that warm and tingly feeling inside his brain.

He sinks further into the water, tipping his head back so that his ears go under. The pressure is so comforting while the water filters everything out, leaving him with the sensation of white noise as his ears are plugged. He sighs happily, letting it consume him like he’s wrapped up in it, a blanket of nothingness.

It makes him go somewhere else in his head, or maybe he dozes off for a while. He opens his eyes, staring up at the ceiling, the lights so much harsher than Peter’s bathroom, the tub smaller, the room utilitarian and unwelcoming. It breaks the spell so completely that he squeezes his eyes back shut and takes a breath before submerging himself completely. He has to bend his legs to get himself under, his knees sticking out over the water, but it caresses him everywhere else, soothes him and warms him and cleanses him. Stiles feels like maybe it even loves him. He stays down there until his lungs burn and his black vision blurs red at the edges, surfacing with a desperate gasp.

He wipes at his eyes, taking in deep breaths as he feels the ache in his head ease. He reaches for the shampoo, lathering it into his hair, trying to slide his fingers over his scalp in the same way Peter did, but it doesn’t feel anywhere near as good. Everything is muted. He tips his head back, sinking his ears below the waterline again as he rinses the suds from his hair. His fingertips don’t slide like Peter’s do. They don’t make his scalp tingle with every brush.
He sits up with a huff, reaching for the washcloth. This isn’t about Peter. This is about him. Self-care. He’s got to step up and do it himself. Do it for himself. It’s so much easier to do what somebody else wants though, to have the responsibility taken away from him. He can’t be wrong if he’s just doing what he’s told. The only person he has to follow now is his dad, and he doesn’t trust him to always have his best interests at heart. Peter wanted him to flourish. His dad just wants him to get better so that he’s not such a burden anymore.

He wonders if he’s being unfair as he drags the washcloth over his skin. His dad didn’t do this to him. He didn’t hate him enough to sell him. Or maybe it just never occurred to him. Stiles squeezes his eyes shut. When Peter first put the idea forward, Stiles had rejected it with everything he had. He can’t remember why now. All he feels is distance between them. Nothing’s been right since his mom died. His dad was under so much pressure, emotional and financial, the responsibilities weighing down on him, and maybe Stiles got lost somewhere in the mix. Is his dad a bad person? He can’t even remember. He just knows that all the dots connected and Stilinski became the bad guy.

It’s hard to shake the feeling that turned into fact somewhere along the way. Peter told the truth though. He loved Stiles so deeply that he told this lie to make him love him back, and then he loved him enough to set him free of it. Stiles has to respect that. He has to trust it. He has to try and let the poison seep away.

When he’s done washing himself, he lies back in the water and closes his eyes, trying to just enjoy it. It’s a good feeling, the water moving gently around him as it settles, carrying his weight so he doesn’t have to carry it himself. It’s comforting. Stiles needs comfort. He needs something to stop him sinking under again.

When the water starts to cool around him and his fingers are wrinkled at the ends, he pulls the plug from the bath just like Peter always used to do for him, and then he tries to find the will to step out. He misses Daddy’s hand to help him and guide him. He squeezes his eyes shut, gritting his teeth. Every tiny fraction of his day hurts. There’s no part of it that isn’t laced through with Peter.

With a huff, he pushes himself from the bath before it drains completely, grabbing a towel. Not as soft as Peter’s. Not as good as Peter’s. He rolls his eyes at himself, drying his body before towelling his hair. He pulls his pyjamas back on and goes through to his bedroom, sitting on his bed as he grabs the cuff. He buckles it into place, pulling it snugly around his ankle until he feels his chest ease. How is he supposed to go without this all day tomorrow? It feels like a cruel and unusual punishment. Why isn’t he allowed his favourite comfort, the first thing that Peter ever gave to him.

He picks up the lock, considering it. Peter doesn’t have a key anymore, does the lock even mean anything? The words engraved into the metal seem to mock him because he doesn’t belong, not to Peter, not here, maybe not anywhere. He feels so disconnected from everything he used to know, from everything he’s discovered since. He feels like a visitor in his own life. He places the lock into his nightstand, along with both keys. It would be a lie to wear it now. The comforting pressure of the cuff is enough. It calms him like a security blanket.

As he closes the drawer, he checks the time on the clock before looking over at the board. Wind down time. He guesses this is toybox time. He doesn’t have a toybox anymore though. He looks around his room, tapping his fingers against his thigh. Nothing interests him. All he wants to do is hug his cushion and cry. The only time he ever remembers feeling like this is when his mom died and he was so miserable it stripped everything else away. There was no comfort, no enjoyment, in anything. All he wanted was her. Sometimes his dad would hug him, but mostly a bottle was better comfort than Stiles.
His dad was never the one who was there though. It was his mom who used to make his dinner and do his homework with him. It was his mom who tucked him into bed at night and read him a bedtime story. After she died, Stiles did his own homework and took responsibility of dinner because his dad never understood healthy options. He was drinking himself to death, what did he care what they ate. It was Stiles who tucked himself into bed and read comic books while his dad worked late or fell asleep in front of the TV. He used to cry himself to sleep thinking about his mother’s voice, her fingers stroking through his hair as he drifted off to stories told so softly.

He gets to his feet, going down the stairs. His dad is sat on the couch, watching the local news. Stiles doesn’t acknowledge him, just goes to the bookcase and starts searching. They never throw anything out, they must still be here. He feels a little glow of victory as he pulls the children’s titles from the shelves.

“Do you want to watch something?” Stilinski offers.

“I’m good,” Stiles replies, hugging the books to his chest as he jogs back up the stairs.

He pulls his cushions from the shopping bag on the floor, taking them over to the bed with him where he lets the books tumble from his arms. They were his mom’s when she was little and she passed them on to him. He smiles at them, feeling like she’s there with him. He settles back on the pillows, cushion tucked under his arm as he grabs one of the books, starting to read. He likes how familiar they are, how the subject matter isn’t challenging. He doesn’t have to think too much, he can just get lost in them. He needs easy right now.

He keeps an eye on the clock because he can’t count on his dad to tell him his time’s up like he always could with Peter. Stiles never had to think about the schedule with him, it just happened. He took it so for granted, how much Peter did for him. Now he has to take responsibility. He has to do it for himself.

One of the rules was that he put his things away whenever Peter came to get him, so when it’s nearly lights out time he gets to his feet, straightening up his room. He makes space on his shelf for the books, lining them up neatly, and puts his cushions onto his bed before stashing the empty shopping bags in the bottom of his closet. It feels good to have everything in order. Daddy would be proud.

He climbs under his covers, trying to arrange his pillows and cushions for maximum comfort, when there’s a knock at the door. “Yeah?” he calls.

His dad eases it open, peering it at him. “Hey,” he greets. “How are you doing?”

“Lights out, right?” Stiles asks, nodding at the board.

“Yes,” Stilinski says, coming further into the room. “I’m not your jailer, though. That’s just scaffolding. We can go off script.”

“I’m fine,” Stiles says tightly, hugging his cushion tighter to his chest.

Stilinski sighs. “Well, I’m not working tomorrow so I’m going to be up for a while if you…” He cuts himself off, seeming to deflate. “If you felt like some company.”

Stiles frowns at him. “It’s lights out time.” Stilinski really doesn’t respect this schedule at all. It means nothing to him and, by extension, Stiles isn’t important to him either.

“Yeah,” Stilinski says, looking dejected. “Goodnight then.”
“Night,” Stiles agrees, snuggling down.

Stilinski considers him for a moment before giving a little nod, closing the door on his way out. Stiles reaches over, flicking the light switch and plunging the room into darkness. The lack of stimulation is calming. He digs his fingers into his cushion, feeling the softness as he closes his eyes. He can’t let his mind settle on the things that he’s missing, he has to focus on what he has. Pyjamas, cushions, the lingering scent of the bubble bath, all gifted to him with love from Lydia. Books from his childhood, gifted to him by his mom. A lifeline, gifted to him by Scott, his Alpha.

He falls asleep wrapped up in their love, waking up feeling surprisingly rested. There’s a guilt that comes with that, like this should be harder for him. Daddy would want him happy though, even if Daddy apparently doesn’t want him. Stiles sighs. This shouldn’t be his first thought of the day.

He sits up, looking over at the board. Yoga. He likes yoga. That’s a reason to get out of bed.

He rolls out his mat, following along with a tutorial on his laptop, his body waking up with the movements, coming alive, feeling like it belongs to him. The routine done, he lies down with his eyes closed, breathing in and out. He can feel every inch of himself, from his toes right through to the top of his skull. It doesn’t feel like a prison, it just feels like his.

He opens his eyes, looking up at the board. Breakfast. Breakfast means seeing his dad. Breakfast means handing over the cuff. He pulls himself to a sitting position, reaching down to touch the buckle. He’s not locked in. Anyone could take this from him now, they wouldn’t even have to break it, no tools required. It should make him feel vulnerable, untethered, but he thinks it might be a relief if someone stole him away. They’re only taking him from himself.

The thoughts invade his brain, the woods, being grabbed, slammed into the ground. He still has no idea what they injected him with. Does his dad know? He said they could talk about the case if he wanted. It’s one mystery Stiles doesn’t want to explore though. He feels queasy at the images that play out in his head uninvited. He doesn’t think he’d survive being taken again. But if his dad didn’t do that, if he didn’t pay those men to fake a kidnapping and get him to the Foundry, then maybe he really is safe now. If this wasn’t about him then maybe there’s a way he can let it go.

He swallows uncomfortably, his stomach refusing to settle. He thought he was going to die in that basement. But he didn’t. He also didn’t do anything to save himself. There was nothing he could do. True powerlessness. He pulls his knees up to his chest, hugging them tightly. Nobody found him, and by the sounds of it they really were looking.

He feels his heart start to hammer in his chest, palms sweaty against the material of his pants. It was real. There’s no conspiracy theory to distance himself from what happened to him. Clinging to his dad selling him had become a coping strategy, he realises, and now he’s just left with the cold stark truth. People get stolen from their lives for no reason and terrible things can happen to them. He rests his head down on his knees, squeezing himself into a ball. He ended up somewhere so good though, that’s a ray of light to cling to. He ended up with Daddy. But then he ended up right back here again and sometimes it feels colder and more lonely than the basement.

A shudder goes through him as he hugs himself, screwed his eyes shut as though he can stop the tears. He’s so sick of crying, exhausted by it. His jaw hurts from tensing it, his throat rough, his chest clenched. He can’t breathe, he feels like he can’t ever breathe. The panic slams into him and he unfurls himself, crawling for the window. It takes his shaky hands too long to get it open, fumbling numbly. It’s just adrenaline, he tells himself. Fight or flight. He knows what a panic attack looks like. It’s not going to kill him.

He finally lifts the window, gulping in fresh air, telling himself that’s all he needs. There’s tears
down his face though and an empty, gnawing hollow inside. He feels like it’s all crashing down on him, not just the things that hurt now but the things that Peter made better by loving him. It was worth it to go through that to get to his Daddy, but he feels like the wound has been opened afresh and he’s bleeding all over the carpet. Maybe that would make him feel better.

He leans against the wall beside the window, letting the air wash over him. He just needs to breathe. It’s as simple as that. In through the nose, out through the mouth. He starts to pull in air, remembering his dad helping him through the last one, and all the times before that. His dad who didn’t sell him. His dad who tried to find him. His dad who was there when it counted, if not all the time. But he was a single parent. He was grieving too. That was meaningless to a child, but Stiles should understand it now. The loss of Peter has left him debilitated. He doesn’t think his dad has this depth of feeling in him though. Or maybe that’s what he was trying to drown.

Stiles wipes at his face, realising that his heartrate has settled, breaths coming naturally. He survived. A panic attack won’t kill him, no matter how much he might want it in the moment. He pulls the window shut, hands going down to the cuff. Breakfast time. He’s not going to suffer the indignity of taking this off in front of his dad. He has to do it now. Peter didn’t keep the cuff on him all the time, only when he needed it. He can last a little while without it. Fresh tears spring to his eyes as he works the buckle free.

His ankle feels too light as he walks down the stairs, stepping into the kitchen where his dad is already sat at the table with a cup of coffee and the newspaper. He sits down opposite him, Stilinski looking up with a kind, careful smile. It makes Stiles sag because it’s just so obviously learnt from some course on handling victims. All it does is put distance between them.

Stiles reaches across the table, silently offering out the cuff, his eyes cast downwards. He can’t stand to see the look in his dad’s eyes. He feels ashamed enough already.

“Thank you,” Stilinski says, taking it gently from him. “I’ll put it somewhere safe.”


Stiles finally looks up at him. “You have to put it somewhere safe now,” he insists. “Please,” he adds, because it’s not his place to make demands, but he can’t have it sitting there so carelessly while they eat breakfast, reminding him just how fucked up everyone thinks he is.

“Okay,” Stilinski agrees, getting to his feet. Stiles watches him leave the room, hoping he’s capable of actually taking this seriously. He can’t take being let down again. He just needs his dad to take care of him for a while, even if he resents Stiles for needing it when they’re supposed to be past this now. Stiles isn’t a kid anymore.

Stilinski comes back through empty handed, leaning against the counter. “I went shopping yesterday, what do you feel like eating?” he asks. “I got bacon and eggs, bagels, I can make pancakes, French toast, there’s fruit and yoghurt.”

He looks at Stiles expectantly and Stiles feels his chest clench again. He moves his mouth ineffectually and then shrugs.

“Your choice, whatever you want,” Stilinski says.

Stiles clasps his hands together on the table. It’s the worst thing Stilinski could possibly have offered him. He can feel his eyes getting damp again, his thoughts spiralling off like they’re filled
with helium, and he can’t grab hold of a single one of them. It’s just breakfast, he tells himself. He can do this. But he really, really can’t.

“I’m sorry,” he says, trying to catch hold of the panic attack before it takes him over again. “I’m not being petulant on purpose. I’m not being bad. I don’t want to be bad. I just… I can’t. I’m sorry, I can’t.”

“Stiles,” his dad says, coming over to him. He slides into the seat beside him, his big, strong hand landing on both of Stiles’, grounding him. “It’s okay. You’re okay. You’re not bad. You’re not going to get punished here, you don’t have to be scared.”

Stiles looks up at him. “Peter didn’t punish me. Discipline is about correction, not punishment.”

Stilinski’s jaw tightens, distaste taking over his features. “Yeah, I definitely want to kick the shit out of him.”

“That’s not helping,” Stiles tells him.

“Right,” Stilinski says with a certain about a resignation. “Sorry.” He squeezes Stiles’ hands beneath his own. “So, decisions are hard,” he says.

Stiles nods, feeling the pressure in his chest ease. That’s at least one little thing that his dad understands. Maybe the rest will follow.

“How about we narrow it down,” Stilinski says, getting to his feet and opening the fridge. “Fifty-fifty.”

Stiles frowns, watching as he turns around with a pineapple in one hand and a carton of eggs in the other.

“Fruit salad or pancakes?” Stilinski asks, gesturing to the relevant ingredients.

Stiles feels his heart sink. He can’t be responsible for this. It’s not just about what he eats for breakfast, it’s about how much trouble his dad has to go to, the fact that he’ll have to eat it too, how easy it will be to clean up afterwards, whether it will fill them until lunchtime. There’s so many variables. He looks up at his dad with pleading eyes, trying to communicate how big what he’s asking is, but his dad just looks back at him levelly, like he believes in him. It’s a such a horrible burden. Stiles can only let him down.

He looks back at the ingredients. Fruit salad or pancakes. His dad has made it as straightforward for him as he can, has taken two classic options that are different enough that he has to have a craving one way or the other. It’s been so long since he’s thought about food as something he has any kind of say in. It comes down to instinct though. What does he want? That’s all his dad asked him. All other considerations should go out of the window.

“Pancakes,” he says, rushing out the word before he can change his mind.

Stilinski smiles at him and he looks so proud. “Pancakes it is.”

Stiles watches from his seat as he mixes the batter, heating up the pan. It’s put him at ease to watch this, to know that he’s taken care of. There’s that first sizzle as the batter goes in, the smell already filling the air.

“You want to grab the butter and syrup?” Stilinski says. “And set the table.”
Stiles freezes. He never had to do that. He wasn’t *allowed* to do that. When he doesn’t respond, Stilinski turns to look at him.

“Everything okay?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, but he still doesn’t move. The rules are different now, he reminds himself. If he’s asked to do something, he should do it. Maybe that’s the new rule. It’s far too open-ended though, he can’t live like that. But right now, this is what he’s been told to do. “Yeah,” he says again, getting to his feet.

It’s muscle memory, just like everything else in this town. He grabs plates and cutlery, reaches up into the top cupboard to bring down the syrup. He used to have to stand on a chair when he was little, and then he’d drink it straight out of the bottle. No quality parental supervision.

He sits back down as his dad plates up the pancakes, bringing them over. He’s still being taken care of, he tells himself, picking up his knife and fork. And maybe helping out isn’t the worst thing in the world. He didn’t like how helpless Peter could make him feel sometimes, not even letting him take care of himself. He was acting out of love, Stiles reminds himself. Always out of love. Daddy took care of his baby boy. He remembers those little frustrations now that he’d pushed out of his mind, how he was always put aside while Daddy did the grown-up things by himself.

“Am I allowed to do laundry?” he asks, looking up at his dad.

Stilinski raises his eyebrows at him. “Are you *allowed*?”

“That was a rule,” Stiles explains.

“Laundry was a rule?” Stilinski asks.

“I wasn’t allowed to do chores,” Stiles says, feeling like Stilinski is judging him. “Like laundry or cooking or making the bed.”

“Why not?” Stilinski asks.

“It wasn’t my place,” Stiles says. “Peter took care of it all. He liked taking care of me.”

“He liked control,” Stilinski says. He sighs, looking like this is already too much responsibility for him. “You can do chores,” he says. “If it gets too much, if you can’t handle it and you want some help, just ask, I can help you. But you’re *allowed*.”

Stiles nods. “Okay. Thank you.”

“Please ask,” Stilinski says, leaning forward and giving him a meaningful look.

“I did,” Stiles says, frowning at him.

“For help,” Stilinski clarifies.

Stiles looks down at his plate. There are so many people he’d go to before his dad. “I’m going to do some laundry,” he says, looking back up. “Do you want me to do any of yours?”

Stilinski looks disappointed, sitting back in his chair. “I’ll take a look.”

Stiles puts his plate in the sink when he’s finished eating, going upstairs to get dressed. He doesn’t have to worry about what pants he wears now the cuff is missing. He stares at his bare ankle, tears dampening his eyes, but he blinks them away. He gets to have it when he needs it most. His dad’s
right, it belongs to him, he makes the rules. Stiles gets it after bath time. He can respect that. He can wait.

He gathers his pyjamas and some other clothes, taking them downstairs to the laundry. His dad has left some things for him so he adds them in, pouring in the washing powder. He only saw Peter doing laundry when the sheets were dirty, when Stiles had come all over them, or sometimes both of them. It didn’t happen like that nearly enough though. He loved when it was just kissing, open-mouthed, tongues sliding together, their bodies pressed against one another, a push and pull of hips. Stiles feels his cock go hard, standing there in the laundry room, staring at the washing machine. He feels so dirty. His entire life seems out of context now.

He wishes they had more time together. Stiles was still learning, he didn’t get to finish his training, he has no idea how close he even was. He wishes Peter had fucked him, just once. He’s never been overly sentimental about it, but he wanted Peter to be his first. It’s a milestone and Stiles wanted to give it to him. He wanted to always remember them together like that. But they weren’t together. They made out, mouths and bodies pressed together, hands exploring and grabbing, but Stiles had done that much with other people. It never ended like that for he and Peter because everything was a learning opportunity, it was about so much more than just want.

Peter taught him what he was capable of, focussed everything he had on Stiles and his body and showing him all these new sensations. Then he used his own body to teach Stiles what he liked, teach him how to make him feel good, teach him how to be perfect for his Daddy. It built upon itself each time and Stiles could always see the goal in sight, can appreciate even now what Peter was trying to do, but they’ll never finish. He squeezes his eyes shut. How can he be this turned on and this distraught at once?

He remembers what Peter told him though. He’s a work in progress. Peter didn’t get to finish him, but that doesn’t mean he has to stop learning. He wants everything Peter gave him, he knows that. He just has to figure out the rest on his own.

He goes upstairs, checking the board. Free time. He sits down at his desk, pulling his laptop towards himself and writing in a single word. Subspace. He starts clicking through the results, finding that he prefers blogs with real experiences rather than the more instructional websites. He can relate to these people, to what they feel and experience, the connections they have to their Doms, and that makes him feel a little bit less lonely. This is a normal thing to want and there are plenty of people who would be willing to share it with him. He doesn’t have to give up on what he’s discovered with Peter just because they can’t be together right now. He doesn’t want anyone else, but he wants this. He wants to go under so bad it’s like an ache.

He pushes away the logistics of it, the very real tragedy that’s playing out in his life, everything torn to shreds. He can want this. He can just want. He can figure out his own training for now. Peter wanted him to have a project, something to research and keep that mind of his busy, and Stiles had chosen to learn about being a Companion, so that he could be the best Companion that Peter could ever hope for. He wanted to be perfect for him. It’s still a life he wants, one he could have if he self-surrendered to the Foundry for real this time, but the thought stops him cold. He wouldn’t get Peter again, and he knows how bad some of the Masters could be. If he gives himself to someone, he wants to be in control of it. That’s why he wants to learn about being a submissive.

Every post he reads, every anecdote and scenario and fantasy, he imagines himself with Peter, imagines how it would play out between them, imagines how perfectly Peter would guide him through the scene. It plays out flawlessly because they were always so in sync. It was the easiest thing in the word to submit to Peter and he always made it worth it.
His cock gets hard again and he shifts on his seat, fighting the urge to drop his hand to his lap. That’s a rule. That’s the first rule. He’s not allowed to touch his cock. He sits back in his chair. Is that still a rule now? He’s certainly not going to ask his dad about it. But then his dad hasn’t given him any rules that he hasn’t specifically asked for, begged for, so he can assume that’s null and void now. He looks down at his tented pants, feels the throb that makes him bite down on his lip. He wants it so badly. It doesn’t feel like that belongs to him though. Daddy decides when he comes. He doesn’t have a Daddy anymore though.

He fights back the heavy feelings that press down on him, clicking through to another page, following the rabbit hole as deep as it goes. There are so many ways to be dominated. He doesn’t even have to leave his computer. The thought makes him feel sick though. He can’t imagine giving himself to anyone but Peter. He might not want him anymore, but to Stiles, he’s still owned. He can’t just give himself away to some pervert on the internet because he wants to get off. What he had with Daddy was special. It was everything. Mind, body and soul. He’s not going to find that anywhere else.

He closes his laptop, looking over at the board. Twenty minutes until lunchtime. He wipes at his damp eyes, gritting his teeth against his determinately hard cock. He should take a cold shower. He deserves it. Punishment. That’s not what Daddy would want though. Discipline is about correction, not punishment. He needs to correct his hormonal body. It doesn’t get what it wants all the time. It doesn’t get what it wants unless Daddy says so and Daddy’s never going to say again.

He can feel the panic closing in again. Every time he thinks he can handle this, it slams down on him afresh. His life is a series of moments strung together by panic attacks. He just needs to focus on the rules, on the schedule. He needs to make Daddy proud because this is hard for both of them. He saw it in Peter’s eyes, that broken feeling that lives inside him, shining through every time he looks in the mirror. They’re damaged in a way that only they can understand. No one can make this right except for each other.

He pushes his chair away from the desk, wrapping his arms around himself. It doesn’t make sense to him, this separation. It’s not what either of them want. But Peter has a career, a reputation, and society is going to hold this against him. They’re going to hold Stiles against him. Stiles can’t be the reason he loses everything again. But wasn’t Stiles everything? Peter was everything to him.

He lifts his feet onto the chair, burying his face in his knees as he cries. He cries for himself and he cries for Peter and he cries for what they had. He cries for his Daddy, and his toybox and his rules. He cries for his cuff and his chain and their bed that they shared. He cries for all the things that Daddy did to him that nobody else will ever be able to replicate. He read all the stories that were shared in blogs and on message boards and he wants those things but he wants them with Peter. With anyone else he feels like it would only ever be sex.

He feels a little better when his tears are finally cried, like he’s shed some of his grief with them. He remembers this process with his mom. Each time he cried, he let her go a little bit more, and the guilt of that left a darkness in him. So many things since then have added to the shadow inside him that he feels like his soul must be stained black by now.

He wipes at his face, pulling himself together, and then he goes downstairs because it’s lunchtime. He doesn’t really expect his dad to have remembered, but he’s there in the kitchen, putting some sandwiches together. Stiles stands there in the doorway, feeling so touched that he wants to go over there and hug him. He wants to feel his arms wrapped around him, warming the darkness out of him, making him feel human again.

Stilinski turns, taking him in, and there’s no way he can’t see that Stiles has been crying. “You
“Okay?” he asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles lies, because what other option does he have?


“Is that a rule?” Stiles asks.

Stilinski frowns at him. “Is what a rule?”

“Setting the table,” Stiles says, clinging to the possibility. “Do I set the table at mealtimes? Is that a rule?”

“Stiles,” Stilinski says heavily. “Can’t we just make it up as we go along?”

Stiles levels his gaze at him. “Is that a rule?”

“If it makes you feel better, sure,” Stilinski says, irritation clear in his voice. Stiles shies away, edging out of the doorway. Stilinski sighs, putting down what he’s doing and turning to face him fully. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to lose my patience. I’m not used to you being this…” He gestures helplessly with his hand, no kind way to say it.

“Pathetic,” Stiles finishes for him, looking down at the floor.

“I’m not used to you needing me this much,” Stilinski says. “But you always needed me. I just maybe didn’t always do the best job of being there. But I’m here. I am. And it would be really great if you could set the table for me at mealtimes. I think that should be your job.”

Stiles shifts on his feet. It’s not an instruction, but he can tell his dad’s trying. He should give him a chance. He steps into the room, going to grab a couple of glasses.

His dad’s sandwiches are nothing like Peter’s, but if he spends his whole life comparing things to Peter then he’s never going to be satisfied. He’s just grateful that his dad doesn’t try to make too much small talk. He really doesn’t feel like chatting right now. Luckily, conversation is not a rule.

After lunch is homework time so Stiles sits down at his desk with his extra credit assignments. He supposes these matter now. It matters if he gets a high school diploma. Nobody’s going to carry him through life. He’s going to have to do it all on his own. The question of college looms, but it’s too big for him right now. Just this stack of assignments. That’s all he has to worry about. It’s already smaller than when he started. Slow and steady wins the race. He’s never been either of those things, but Peter taught him about patience. He taught him about doing things right. He can respect him by taking that lesson forward.

He plays videogames when he’s done, thoughtless and comforting. His old school console got him through a lot of rough times after his mom died. He wonders if it’s still in the attic with the rest of his childhood. He wonders if it still works.

Scott calls him in the afternoon to check in and Stiles lies back on his bed with his cushion, Scott’s voice down the line like a hug. Stiles needs every tiny reminder he can get that he’s loved. He needs incentives not to throw everything away. Peter believes in him. He wants him to make the most of himself. He always did. He thinks Scott wants that for him too.

He goes downstairs a little early for dinner, setting the table, feeling a sense of accomplishment when he sees it all laid out. Stilinski smiles at him, a real smile that’s full of affection, and Stiles
can’t help smiling proudly back. He’s being a good boy.

He goes to run his bath after dinner, and he’s better at it than the night before. He slips into the warm water, not perfect like Daddy made it, but it feels good. It’s feels nice, like it soothes some physical ache inside him. Everything hurts, his body sore from tension and panic attacks, his emotions feeling as though they’re sticking to him like bruises. The water eases it though, it holds him and takes his weight and warms the emptiness that’s nestled inside him.

He wants to cry again as he washes his own hair, the loss making itself painfully known. Independence is never what he wanted. He doesn’t have enough energy to even form the tears anymore though. Instead, he goes through the motions, washing himself, drying himself, going back through to his bedroom.

Waiting for him on his bed is the cuff. Stiles assumed he was going to have to go and ask for it, humiliate himself by making his desperation known, but he gets his cuff back after bath time. That’s a rule. Rules are followed without you having to ask. Stiles is so grateful as he goes over to the bed, buckling it onto his ankle. It’s like a missing piece slotting into place. He takes a deep breath, letting it settle in his lungs and clear his head. He’s okay. He’s safe. Locked away for bedtime. Maybe that can be enough.

He looks at the board, even though he knows what comes next. Wind down time. The confirmation of seeing it written there is comforting to him. No surprises. He knows what’s expected of him.

His pyjamas are folded on top of the pile of laundry he did earlier and he grabs them, pulling them on. He puts away the rest of his clothes, making sure his room is tidy, that everything is in its place. Tidying up his things is a rule and Stiles likes knowing that it’s done. He takes the laundry basket with his dad’s things still in the bottom, going to put them in his room. His dad isn’t there and Stiles lingers in the doorway for a moment before he has to step away. It looks so stark and lonely. It looks like his insides feel.

He retreats back to his own room, going over to his shelf to grab one of his mom’s books. As he stands there, trying to decide, his eyes fall on the chessboard, folded away. There’s an unfinished game of chess at Peter’s house. He wonders if he’s tidied it away by now. That would be like giving up on Stiles. He’s already done that though, Stiles reminds himself. He drew a line under it. Goodbye.

Stiles pulls the board out, hugging it to his chest, the pieces rattling inside. This is the one he used to play with his parents, sitting on his mom’s knee, his dad across from him. Wholesome family fun. He hasn’t taken it off the shelf in a long time. It sat here gathering dust for years after his mom’s death until he used it to try and explain the supernatural to his dad. And he didn’t believe him. Dismissing Stiles has always been his first instinct.

Stiles looks over at the board. His dad is trying. He gave him the schedule. He gave him his cuff. Stiles thinks about his mom, how disappointed she’d be if she knew that they’d become so distant with each other. She was always the light in this house. They’re useless without her. Stiles looks down at the board in his arms. This is something she gave him, just like those books. A gift to bring him closer to his father. She used to walk him through it, just like Peter and his little hand-drawn guide. Stiles has neither of those things now, but maybe he can still figure it out.

He goes down the stairs, finding his dad sat at the kitchen table, work spread out around him. Stiles’ heart sinks. He leans against the doorway, chessboard clutched at his side. His dad looks up at him, straightening in his seat.

“Hey,” he says, seeming surprised to find him there. “I left the cuff on your bed.”
“Yeah, I found it,” Stiles agrees. “Thanks.”

Stilinski nods. “You okay?”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, looking down at the documents spread out in front of him. “What are you working on?”

“It’s a B&E,” Stilinski says, glancing at it. “Did you need something?”

Stiles shakes his head. “I can come back another time.” He starts to turn away.

“Hey, no, I don’t have to do this right now,” Stilinski says. “What did you want?”

Stiles hesitates but he turns back around, stepping into the room. He holds up the chessboard, the pieces clattering inside it. “I just wondered if you wanted to play chess with me.”

“You want me to teach you?” Stilinski asks.

“I know how to play,” Stiles responds. “Peter taught me.”

Something passes over Stilinski’s face and Stiles wants to leave again. Stilinski takes a breath and nods. “Yeah, I’d love to play, come sit down.”

“Don’t you have to do this?” Stiles asks, gesturing to the documents in front of him.

“Who cares about some B&E?” Stilinski asks, slotting everything back inside the folder.

“I think whoever’s house it is might care,” Stiles says.

“Yeah, well, I’ll care again tomorrow morning,” Stilinski says, putting the file aside.

Stiles can’t help smiling at him as he sits in the seat opposite, opening up the board and taking the pieces out. “I’m black.”

“Fair enough,” Stilinski agrees, smiling back at him as he helps to set up the board.

It’s like the yoga, with the guide in front of him he can do it without even thinking, but when it’s taken away he suddenly doubts every move. He loved those little sketches that Peter drew for him, showing him the moves of each piece, and he knows it without having to check now, he knows that he knows it, but he doesn’t have the confidence to move any piece without second guessing himself at least ten times. His dad doesn’t seem to mind. Half of chess is just waiting for the other person to move. Maybe Stiles is putting together some great strategy rather than just trying to remember if a knight can take a bishop like that.

He starts to get into the rhythm of it though, starts to trust himself a little more. Peter gave him the tools he needs to be able to do this. He gave him so many things. Stiles looks at his dad, eyes scanning the board, working out his next move, and he realises that this is the last thing Peter gave to him, his parting gift. Not the game, but his father.

“You didn’t sell me?” Stiles asks. He doesn’t mean for it to sound quite so blunt, but he’s done not saying what he means. They talked in circles around this for days before Peter gave him the truth. It’s time to just face things head-on.

Stilinski looks up at him, his face falling. “I didn’t sell you,” he says earnestly, a straightforward fact rather than the manipulative words Stiles would have expected once. This he believes. “I looked for you every single day.”
Stiles nods, that heaviness settling in his chest again. “I knew you would,” he says, his voice cracking. “When I was in the basement, have you been in the basement?”

“I went down there the day Scott found it,” Stilinski confirms, such sorrow in his eyes. “While you were still missing.”

“I don’t know how long I was down there,” Stiles says, his eyes falling down to the board. “I couldn’t count the days. But I always thought you were going to find me.”

“I’m so sorry, Stiles,” Stilinski says, sounding so utterly broken.

Stiles shrugs, fighting off the scared little boy inside him, the one who just wanted his dad to come rescue him, who believed that he could. “You tried.”

“Scott waited an hour that night to tell me after you got grabbed in the Preserve,” Stilinski says. “He thought he could find you on his own, that he could pick up your scent. He didn’t want me to worry. I was so mad at him. I yelled at him in my office like it was his fault when we should have been out looking. I apologised to him later but I can tell it stuck, that guilt I put on him. That’s why he called his dad in when the case hit a dead end. He wanted to make it right. And I was mad at him for that too.”

Stiles wraps his arms around himself, not able to lift his eyes. He hates the thought of them all hurting when he was gone. He’d convinced himself that they would all be okay without him just because he selfishly wanted to stay with Peter, and then he’d turned his back on them again and tried to go back to him. He would have left them. He would have given them up. He was going to tear their lives apart all over again.

“I don’t care that I’m not the one who found you,” Stilinski says. “I don’t care that I got taken off the investigation. I’m just glad that you’re back. All I have ever wanted is for you to be safe. After your mom died, that is the only thing that matters to me. I’d sell a kidney to keep us afloat before it ever crossed my mind to let you go. I do all of this for you. What good would money or a house or my career be if I didn’t have my son?”

Stiles squeezes his eyes shut, gripping himself until his fingers dig into his arms strong enough to leave bruises. Peter chose his career. He chose his reputation. Stilinski has always chosen him. Stiles hasn’t always deserved it, hasn’t always appreciated it, but he can see it now. His dad stood by him, just like he’s standing by his mess of a child now.

Stiles opens his eyes, looking up at him, and he can barely see through the clouded tears. He blinks a couple of times, his dad looking back at him with equally damp eyes and a look that punches Stiles in the gut.

“I love you,” Stilinski says fiercely.

Stiles nods. He can’t quite bring himself to say it back, but he believes it. He feels it instinctively. He loosens his grip on himself, reaching across the table. Stilinski watches the movement, taking a moment to catch up before taking Stiles’ hand in his own, holding onto it firmly, making him feel safe.

Stiles lifts his other hand, wiping away a tear. For once they’re not broken tears though. They come with a tiny bit of hope. His eyes fall back down to the board. “It’s your turn.”

“Yeah,” his dad agrees.

He keeps hold of Stiles’ hand as he considers his options, making his move. They don’t talk again
as they focus on the game between them, but they keep their hands joined together across the table, and Stiles feels like maybe the world won’t end tonight.

Chapter End Notes

There are two more chapters to go in this fic but I go back to work on Monday after having the summer off so they might come at you a little slower. Please be patient with me while I get back into a routine. You guys are awesome, thank you for all the support, it really means the world to me <3
Stiles still feels off balance as he steps out of the therapist’s office, walking towards his dad’s car. There’s so much to unpack and he doesn’t feel up to it, everything assaulting his senses. His dad presses the key fob, the lights flashing as the doors unlock, and Stiles feels a little better once he’s inside, pulling on his seatbelt.

“How did it go?” Stilinski asks.

“I hated it,” Stiles responds honestly.

“I know,” Stilinski says sympathetically. “But you lasted the whole session this time. That’s good. You should be proud of yourself.”

Stiles gives him a look. “Because I managed to stay in a room for an hour?”

“I know it’s not easy,” Stilinski says. “You did a good job. And if this therapist doesn’t work out for you, then we’ll just keep working down the list until we find a better fit.”

“I didn’t mind him,” Stiles admits. “I like him better than the last one. He knew what I was talking about and he could put some of it in context.”


Stiles shrugs, leaning against the door. “I guess.”

He doesn’t like the implication that Peter was doing things wrong, that he was a bad Dom, but Stiles has been doing his own reading lately, and the kink-friendly therapist they decided to try out definitely gave him another perspective on it. The reality of the situation is stark.

Peter loved him though. He loves him. Stiles wants to believe that Peter just didn’t know any better, that they were fumbling their way through it together, but then he remembers little phrases that Peter used, going under, dropping. Peter knew about the lifestyle. He knew about the terminology and how to take Stiles to those places with practiced ease. Even when Stiles was so totally, completely his, he kept him in the dark about it. He wanted the power of making Stiles believe this was something unique to them rather than a series of hormones and reactions that any two people in sync could incite. He feels angry about that, feels used, but then the guilt of thinking that way about his Daddy swallows him up and he wraps his arms around himself, fighting back tears.

“I still miss him,” he says out loud, even though it’s the last thing his dad wants to hear. He needs a witness though. He needs a moment to cling to when the bad thoughts inevitably consume him again.

“I know,” Stilinski says, starting up the car. “But you’re being so strong. I’m really proud of you, Stiles.”

Stiles turns, giving him a little smile as they pull out of the parking lot. It feels good to have someone believe in him.
When they get home, Stiles goes straight upstairs to do his homework because that’s what the schedule says. He’s running a little late today because of his appointment but he knows that it was necessary so he doesn’t beat himself up about it. The schedule has to work for him. That’s what his dad told him.

Stiles likes having it there, something to anchor him and make his decisions for him. The last few days he’s gotten back into going to school, breaking everything down by the schedule to get him through the day, his chest getting tight if he couldn’t stay perfectly aligned with it.

When he needed an extra ten minutes for his homework one night he drove himself to tears with guilt, certain his dad was going to come in any second to tell him he was late for dinner and demand to know why the table wasn’t set yet. When he finally got downstairs, eyes wet and heart pounding, his dad was calmly putting the finishing touches to dinner and Stiles realised he wasn’t in trouble. He wasn’t bad. The schedule has to work for him. It’s there to support him, not control him. He wonders if the same was ever true of Peter.

He squeezes his eyes shut, pressing his palms firmly against the closed lids. He doesn’t like that therapy brings up so many questions, makes him doubt himself, but the truth is that these things have to be asked. He was living in a fantasy world, one that Peter had built for him, and maybe they could have stayed there forever if those stupid kids didn’t find his phone and if the FBI hadn’t been tracking it. He doesn’t think it would have been the worst thing in the world. He doesn’t think it would have ruined him. Maybe it already has.

He’s grateful that the therapist was willing to talk about his relationship with Peter at face value and not with the hellish background it emerged from. He didn’t want to talk about the basement or the Foundry. Those were demons to face another day. He wanted to talk about Peter, about subdrop, about how he was supposed to live without his Daddy. It took a lot of nerve to say that word, Daddy, but the therapist didn’t even flinch. It was a popular kink, Stiles had discovered, though he hated framing it like that. It cheapened it.

The therapist listened as Stiles detailed the life he had been torn out of, the intimate details of what he and Peter had shared, the rules that he had to follow, the stages that they worked through to make Stiles his little boy. The therapist disagreed that this counted as consent and Stiles was ready to walk out of the room right then, but he could tell it wasn’t said with judgement. He wanted Stiles to understand how it worked. Stiles wanted to understand as well.

They talked about informed consent and negotiation and how Stiles could refuse to take the next step with Peter, but he didn’t have any say in what they explored, didn’t get to choose what he was comfortable doing. Peter told him what was going to happen and Stiles told him when he was ready for it. Apparently that’s not how kink negotiation was supposed to work. But Stiles wouldn’t have known what to ask for back then. Peter was just guiding him. He was taking care of him. The therapist explained that Peter had a responsibility to educate him on his options and let him make his own decisions. He talked about contracts and defining the expectations and dynamics of the relationship, which sounded like the least romantic thing Stiles could imagine.

He knows he has a lot to learn though, the websites he’s been reading have told him that much, and the therapist talks with confidence on the subject, so Stiles is inclined to believe him. He’s not going to profit from lying to Stiles. Peter had everything to gain.

Stiles opens his eyes, looking over at the schedule. The therapist had said that it was important for him to start to regain his sense of self, to actively break Peter’s rules. He agreed that the schedule could help ground him while he found his feet again, but that he should distance himself from the specifics of Peter’s domination.
Rule number one is that he’s not allowed to touch his cock. Stiles had pointed that out to the therapist because the man never shied away from the graphic, sexual details, so now Stiles was at the point where he was asking a medical professional for permission to jerk off. The humiliation should have killed him on the spot. The therapist recommended it though, said it was a good way to even out his mood, just like Peter had told him right at the start. He said it could be empowering to take his body back. Stiles thought that sounded like something you would say to a sexual assault victim.

He sighs, turning back to his desk. Homework. It’s time for homework. He can’t confront all these things in his head right now, the wants battling the guilt battling the defiance battling the utter mortification. He feels a fight in him but he's not even sure who it’s against anymore. He just needs his schedule and the security of knowing that he’s doing the right thing. This he doesn’t need to question.

He works until dinnertime, finishing off one project and outlining a second. He’s been working so hard, he almost has enough credits to graduate, and he supposes that it matters now. He’s not about to get swept off his feet, that has been made abundantly clear to him. He supposes he should start making plans. Maybe he just needs another week to get himself together.

He walks over to the board and grabs the pen, drawing a little star on the current moment in time. When the weekly schedule cycles back around and he hits it again, he’s going to do something about it, even if that something is acknowledging to another person how terrifying the prospect is. It’s on the schedule. He has to do it.

He goes downstairs and sets the table while his dad finishes up dinner. Stilinski places the pot of chilli in the middle of the table, serving himself. Stiles stares at the ladle left in the pot, waiting for his dad to put some into his bowl, but Stilinski just starts eating. He keeps offering Stile these little moments of independence, but Stiles can’t help the way he instinctively feels rejected. He’s used to being taken care of. Doing anything for himself feels like a punishment.

Stiles pushes the thought aside. He’s a good boy. He grabs the ladle with sudden urgency, serving himself a portion. As he sits back in his seat, picking up his spoon, he doesn’t miss the little smile his dad sends his way. Stiles wishes he were actually impressive because he wants to earn that pride that’s radiating from Stilinski right now.

He eats his dinner, his mind suddenly loud again in the quiet without anything immediate to focus his thoughts on. He runs over what the therapist told him about empowerment and reclaiming his life, and it’s scary because that automatically means he’s turning his back on Peter. Peter turned his back first though. Peter walked away. A lump in Stiles’ throat makes it hard for him to swallow his chilli.

He worked so hard to be everything Peter wanted but it all fell apart anyway. Part of him wants to hold himself in this place so that they can pick up where they left off. He still so desperately wants to finish his training. He thinks about the complete surrender that he offered Peter and it was so freeing. The way that Peter could make him feel. How is anything ever supposed to compare to that? Peter could do things to his body that Stiles couldn’t even do to himself. He’s destined to be broken and unfulfilled forever now, even if he could break the first rule, even if he could bear the thought of anyone else touching him.

He groans with frustration, shifting on his chair against his half-hard cock. He doesn’t want to feel this way anymore.

“Is it too hot?” Stilinski asks.
Stiles looks up at him, startled, his cheeks burning red. “What?”

“Are you okay?” Stilinski asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles says. He blinks at him a couple of times, catching up with the conversation. “Yeah, this is really good.”

Stilinski nods, looking down at his own food for a moment. “I’ve been avoiding doing late shifts, but I’m going to have to take one tomorrow, there’s no one else to do it,” he says apologetically.

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. He knows he can’t always come first. His dad has responsibilities.

“I can make you something and leave it in the fridge for you to heat up,” Stilinski says. “Or you can go to Scott’s. I’m sure Melissa wouldn’t mind.”

Stiles thinks about it for a moment. He always used to make dinner for both of them, used to make sure his dad was eating right, or eating at all. Maybe there’s still a tiny part of him that resents that, but he was never helpless back then. As much as he doesn’t feel capable of doing anything for himself, he knows that deep down he hates being helpless. Having Daddy take care of his every need is not the same as being unable to function.

“I can make something,” he says. “I can try,” he adds, because maybe he can’t. He doesn’t want to make promises he might end up breaking. He likes the idea of taking care of this one tiny thing though. It’s a big thing, he tells himself. It’s a basic survival need.

“Okay,” Stilinski nods, clearly not wanting to make a big deal out of it and spook Stiles, but Stiles can see that pride in his eyes again. Stiles loves putting that look there.

“Okay,” he agrees, turning back to his food.

Once dinner is finished and the table cleared, Stiles goes upstairs to start running his bath. He still can’t get it as perfect as Peter unerringly did. He kneels on the floor by the bath, swishing his hand through the water to mix in the bubble bath. As the foam starts to form on the surface, he swills his hands more gently, feeling the water moving through his fingers.

He remembers when Peter used to do this, make the water move around Stiles while he was laid in the bath, the ripples caressing him and making him shiver. He can almost feel it now, that way that Peter had of touching him without touching him. That was how much power he had, like he controlled the elements. Stiles would have believed it once. He would have believed anything.

He sighs, trying to ignore the way his cock stirs as he stares into the water. Bath time was his absolute favourite, the sheer intimacy of it, that feeling of being so loved and cared for. He thinks about the few times they shared the bath together, leaning back against Peter’s body, knowing that he would hold him up and keep him safe. Even though it wasn’t supposed to be sexual, being skin to skin like that, feeling Peter’s muscled body so solid beneath him, those strong arms bracketing him, his soft cock nestled against Stiles’ ass.

Stiles bites down on his lip, his cock giving a throb. He’s not supposed to want that, he got in trouble during that first shared bath when he got hard. Not trouble, Stiles thinks, Daddy didn’t punish him, he just corrected, told him it was inappropriate, gave him a chance to fix the situation. Daddy always guided him to the right behaviour, always let him know when to course correct.

It’s a natural reaction though, Stiles thinks indignantly, getting hard from being naked and intimate with a sexual partner. It should be a positive thing, even if they weren’t doing anything sexual at the time, even if it didn’t lead anywhere. It’s an expression of attraction and love, and Peter made
him feel ashamed of it, just like he made him feel ashamed of his sexual fantasies about Lydia, the ones Peter forced him to talk about in the first place.

It’s fucked up, Stiles realises. He was only allowed to be sexual when Peter deemed it appropriate. Every other time he was taught that he was wrong or dirty or a handful, but he’s not. He’s not. There’s nothing wrong with him. There’s nothing wrong with a healthy teenage boy getting himself off twice a day. There’s nothing wrong with getting hard when your partner washes your hair with such love and tenderness, your bodies tangled together in the water. There’s nothing wrong with wanting to fuck.

He shuts off the tap, resting his cheek against the edge of the tub. Despite everything, he just wants to be good, and so his horniness feels like a character flaw. The first rule is that he’s not allowed to touch his cock. Those aren’t the rules anymore though. Peter isn’t the one who makes them now, and he clearly has no interest in enforcing them.

The first rule now is that he has to set the table. Or maybe it’s to follow the schedule. His dad never set it out clearly enough. He thinks he knows what his dad wants more than anything from him though, the only thing he’s really asked of him. The first rule is to work on getting better. He’s been so big on self-care since he discovered what subdrop was, but it’s all been inspired by Peter. His usual go to for a shitty mood would be jerking off, and maybe he should follow the therapist’s advice and reclaim that. He reaches through the warm water and pulls out the plug, feeling suddenly determined.

He leaves the water to drain, going across to his room and closing the door before he opens it again. During bath time, his dad always leaves the cuff in his room for him so he can put it on when he’s getting ready for bed. If his dad walks in on him jerking off, he thinks he might officially be off sex for life. He does not need any more neuroses where that’s concerned. He needs some time and some space to make this happen. He can’t let shame be attached to the act.

He goes downstairs, finding his dad in the kitchen, doing the washing up. “Hey, dad,” he says in the tone of voice he perfected as a kid who liked to eat candy before dinner.

“Yes?” Stilinski responds, looking at him sideways.

“So, now is bath time and then wind down before lights out, right?” Stiles says, as though he hadn’t internalised the schedule the first time he saw it.

“It is,” Stilinski agrees in a level tone of voice, clearly waiting for more.

“I was thinking I might wind down now,” Stiles says. “And then I can take a bath after, then I’ll go straight to bed, I promise.”

“Whatever works for you,” Stilinski says easily.

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. “So I don’t need my cuff yet.”

“That’s fine,” Stilinski says. “I’ll have it ready for when you’re out of your bath.”

“Right,” Stiles says, shifting on his feet. “But don’t come in my bedroom is what I’m saying. Please.”

Stilinski turns to face him, raising an eyebrow. “Understood.”

“The therapist said it was a good idea,” Stiles blurts out.
Stilinski can’t keep the amusement off his face. “It’s fine. I’m glad you’re following their advice. I’ll be down here until I hear water running.”

Stiles nods. “Okay.” He turns to leave but then hesitates. “I know I’m a lot to deal with, but thank you.”

Stilinski’s expression turns serious. “Stiles, you’re not something to deal with. Don’t ever think like that. I’m here for you, whatever you need.”

Stiles smiles, feeling his eyes fill up. “Thank you.”

He goes upstairs, closing the door behind himself and then standing awkwardly in the middle of the room. He doesn’t even think he’s turned on anymore. Is jerking off for the sake of jerking off really a good idea? The subdrop pages he’s been reading recommend it. The therapist thought it would be a positive step. Even Peter sung the praises of the healing properties of orgasms, right before he started playing God with them.

Stiles hates feeling that way about Peter, the resentment that creeps in from other people’s judgemental thoughts. He goes over to the bed, flopping down and pulling one of his cushions towards himself. Peter might have rationed out his orgasms, but that was only to teach him discipline. Peter was so calm and measured and in control. Stiles was impulsive and pleasure driven and drawn to instant gratification. Peter wanted to teach him the rewards of self-restraint. He wanted to make sure they’d complement each other when they finally fucked.

If they ever fucked, Stiles thinks bitterly. He could see Peter withholding that from himself just to give Stiles a reason to keep pleasing him, some illusive thing to work towards. Stiles didn’t need a reason though. He was eager to finish his training, but not just for the prize at the end of it. He wanted to be a good boy. He wanted it so badly that he still can’t shake the feeling. Was that really not enough for Peter? Was he really not enough?

Stiles grips the cushion tighter, pressing his face into it with an anguished noise. Pining after Peter is not what he’s supposed to be doing right now. Neither is counting his own flaws. His thoughts seem to cycle like water down a drain, trying so hard to believe in Peter and then trying so hard to not. At the end of the day, he’s not sure it even matters. The truth is the truth. Peter is gone. Stiles is not.

He takes a breath, deep and full, feeling his whole body move with it, trying to inhabit every inch of his skin. He needs to re-find his sense of self. The first rule is to work on getting better. Peter would be ashamed of the way he’s acting now. He set him free. He loved him enough to do that. Now Stiles has to live up to it.

He pushes the cushion away, sitting up and taking off his plaid shirt, followed by his T-shirt. He unfastens his pants, pushing them down but leaving his underwear in place. He’s not ready to face something as brazenly sexual as his naked body. He moves beneath the covers, remembering all the times he climbed into Peter’s bed, wanting to surround himself in his scent, even if he couldn’t distinguish it himself. It was the place he always felt safest. These blankets are touched by no one but him and it’s such a lonely thought.

He slides his hand down, fingers running along his waistband, not feeling right about going any lower. He has permission to live his life, which is all the permission he’s going to get. Stiles is so used to belonging to somebody else though. He stopped thinking of his body, his pleasure, as something that he owns. It was something Peter allowed him, something he gave to him. Now it all feels like so much crushing responsibility that he doesn’t want.
Maybe he can just pretend. Peter is at work. Peter told him to have an orgasm today so that he’d be nice and relaxed for when Daddy got home. Because Daddy wants to play with him, but he wants to take his time, he doesn’t want to deal with Stiles being fidgety and impatient.

Stiles bites down on his lip, his fingers edging closer, but he doesn’t touch himself quite yet. He doesn’t want to risk breaking the spell. He shifts his hips, his cock starting to stir. Stiles would finger himself in Daddy’s bed for Daddy, lubed up and sliding deep. He’d be so ready if Peter wanted to fuck him. Maybe that’s what it is. Maybe tonight is the night and Daddy wants to make sure he lasts. Stiles would want it to go on forever.

Stiles creeps his hand lower, fingertips reaching the base of his cock through the material of his pants. Maybe this doesn’t even count, but he knows that it does. He’s crossing a line. He’s shattering every promise he ever made to Peter.

He pulls his hand away in frustration, slamming his fist against the mattress. He needs to get out of this headspace. He can’t fantasise about Peter and then break his rules. He can’t be a good boy and move on with his life. He just doesn’t know how to come to terms with that fact, and it makes the moving on all the less appealing.

It reminds him of the first time Peter went to work and left Stiles all on his own with the instruction to get himself off. It was before the subject of sex between them had officially been broached, even though Peter had clearly laid the groundwork. He remembers the way he struggled that day, all of the aborted attempts, all of the things he had to go through just to do what used to come naturally for him. He felt broken and now he feels that way again but he’s on the opposite side of the line in the sand.

He rolls over onto his stomach, gripping hold of his pillow with both hands. He let go of something that day, whether he realised it at the time or not. He gave up, on his freedom and his autonomy and himself. Leaving was never an option, he was Peter’s property, from a legal standpoint at least, but that doesn’t mean it wasn’t the moment he let go. He has no one left to surrender to now though. All he can do is try to relearn himself. It’s all he has left.

He goes back to one of his old faithfuls, Danny and a homework assignment and a closed bedroom door. It’s an easy place to go, Danny is distant enough now that Stiles isn’t going to run into him in town and feel like a creep, but he’s real and familiar enough to make Stiles feel something. And he’s not Peter. The two aren’t even slightly comparable. Stiles thinks maybe that’s what he needs right now.

Stiles has never been sure if Danny was serious when he said that he was a cuddler, but it secured itself in Stiles’ headcanon. He remembers all those times they did lab work in Stiles’ bedroom, the times he wasn’t harbouring a fugitive in there, and Stiles’ mind used to wander, like it did so often, drifting away from the task at hand to the abs he knew were under Danny’s shirt. And his strong hands wrapped around a lacrosse stick. And the fact that he was experienced and could probably give Stiles quite the education away from the textbooks. The thought of warm cuddles after was just the perfect cherry on top. He spent way too much time thinking about sharing handjobs or blowjobs and then lying on Stiles’ bed in each other’s arms.

He wants to regain that mindset that feels so adorably childish to him right now. He plays out a specific fantasy for himself, one where Danny is writing notes and Stiles just grabs his hand, making Danny look up at him, their eyes meeting, a spark between them. He rolls his eyes at himself. All of his sexual fantasies are so embarrassing.

He shifts his hips though, pushing down into the bed as he feels his body start to respond, nestling into his safe space. He thinks of Danny turning in his chair, their hands still grasped together, and
they’d kiss, tentative at first, then with tongues, then with grabbing hands, standing up to get closer, to move to the bed, the friction of denim against denim.

It gets Stiles hard even now, these well-worn fantasies he’s held onto for so long, and he rocks downwards with a little groan, imagining Danny stripping off his shirt. It’s nice. Everything’s nice. It’s so innocent though, so soft. He never thought to want anything beyond that, not consciously anyway. His porn was always so generic. He feels like he’s discovered a whole new world inside himself now, not just because of Peter, but all the research he’s been doing since he discovered what having a Daddy really meant.

Reading the experiences of other people who liked the same things as him, and who liked things that hadn’t even occurred to him but that he now definitely wants to try, it’s made something settle inside him that always felt slightly out of place. He thought it was the bisexuality that had always made him feel out of place, like he was neither one thing or the other, but now he feels like he’s starting to figure himself out. This is something about himself that he wants to explore, and what safer place than in his own head.

He presses his hips more deliberately into the bed, running through the images in his head in the hopes that something will stick. Kneeling. Deepthroating. Face fucking. Hands that grab and guide and restrain. Being bent over. Or on his back, legs up over someone’s shoulders. Bondage. Blindfolds. Handing over total control. He moans, fucking down against the bed, a smile falling over his lips with such utter relief. He’s not broken.

He rolls onto his back, pressing his hand against his hard cock before his mind can catch up with him. He grips it through the thin material of his underwear, massaging as his hips ride upwards, feeling a flush of arousal drench his whole body. It’s been so long since he’s felt like this. He shoves his underwear out of the way, kicking it down his legs, spreading his thighs before he finally takes hold of his cock. It feels indescribable, like he’s never touched himself before, and he realises just how much he’d given up on his own body as though it was a thing that never belonged to him in the first place.

He focusses on the physical sensations, not wanting to drown in his own mind and have it pulled away from him all over again. He gives all his attention over to the slick slide of his hand, the precome leaking from the tip, the heat in his body and the way his stomach muscles tighten. He squeezes, swiping his thumb over the head, feeling a shiver go through him. It’s such a perfectly inescapable feeling and it floods him with wonderfulness, the pleasure pooling inside him.

He tries not to go too fast, wanting to enjoy it, to build up to it, but he has no intention of denying himself. He keeps his hand as steady as he can, gathering up precome, smearing it back down his length, hips lifting up from the bed to thrust into his fist. It’s so freeing to be in touch with his body like this.

He imagines being laid out for someone else like this, imagines hands, a mouth, touching him in all the ways he craves, all the ways he’s read about in incredibly NSFW blogs of submissives who have all the same cravings as him and know how to confidently embrace them. If he lets them, they could easily become a new breed of more mature, more experienced fantasy. He felt guilty for every word he read, tried so hard not to get turned on because it was wrong and it wasn’t Daddy and he didn’t have permission. He pushes all that aside now though and lets some faceless person play out all of his wants.

Kneeling. He wants to kneel. He wants to be petted. He wants cock offered to him so that he can taste and play and explore. He wants that to be encouraged, the opportunity to learn at his own pace without an end goal in sight. He wants to sit in someone’s lap, wants to be kissed, wants to
feel a hard cock against him. He wants make out sessions that go somewhere organically, where the gameplan hasn’t been decided without him before their lips even meet. He wants someone strong, but if they’re not strong enough, he wants to be tied up. He wants to be at someone’s mercy, even if there’s still a hint of danger in it.

That helplessness still feels freeing to him and maybe that’s just a sexual hang-up, not being comfortable with wanting what he wants, needing someone else to take control of it and having the luxury of just feeling. This isn’t something he can handle analysing right now and so he screws his eyes shut and runs his other hand through the precome at the head of his cock, using the slickness to circle fingers around the tight muscles of his ass, making something light up behind his eyes. That’s enough for now, that teasing touch, the one that makes him so shivery and needy.

He’s close, can feel the tightness in his balls, in his whole lower body, building up with heat and tension. This is a line though, the ultimate line, one that he can’t ignore. If he stops now, maybe he can still be forgiven. There might be enough penance to make amends, but not if he comes. His orgasms are for Daddy, they’re gifts of Daddy’s love, they’re a part of his training. It’s all undone if he goes through with this, and Stiles feels like he might unravel with it. It’s already shattered beyond repair though, they can’t go back now, and even if they could, it wouldn’t be to the same thing. No more Daddy. No more fireflies. He lets out a sob. All he could hope for now is Peter and subspace and maybe to fall in love all over again, but clinging to that feels so precarious. It’s about him now. It’s about getting better from all the fucked-up things that took his life out of his control. He deserves this. He has to take ownership of himself.

He arches his back, parting his lips with a choked off moan as he squeezes his cock tighter, hand moving rapidly over his length. His breaths are coming in urgent pants, his body wound so tight that he feels like he might pull something. He can hear his heartbeat inside his own ears, muffling everything else, the pressure building up in his brain. Just let go, he tells himself. Just let it all go.

He presses his finger more firmly against his hole, hand moving in a blur over his cock as his toes curl and his entire body seems to stutter. He feels like he’s going into cramp but then it finally tips over, the flood of pleasure and endorphins and utter fulfilness. He shudders and jerks, head thrown back, his finger breaching his hole as come spills over his fingers, his stomach, and Stiles moans, almost crying with the sheer relief and wonderfulness, hand still moving wetly over himself until he can’t stand it anymore.

He pulls away, both hands falling limply still, his body still writhing with the aftershocks as he groans, wanting to fold into himself. He decides to give, why not go for full indulgence, grabbing a pillow, but not one of his nice cushions, he has enough self-awareness for that at least. He rolls onto his side, curling around the pillow as the shudders still make him twitch, his body sensitive and his mind so vulnerable. He’s safe here though. He’s safe with himself, the little waves of euphoria bleeding into a deep-down contentment. He sighs, feeling proud and empowered and a little bit fragile. It’s gone now. He’s not going to cry over it. He’s done enough of that.

He drifts, not with fireflies or even anything close, but it’s a nice feeling. When his body comes back to him he’s disappointed. He feels better, so much better, he needed that so badly, but he’s still not sure he likes inhabiting this skin and bones when there feels like so little reward. He hates being responsible for the upkeep. He hates the thought of having to wash it and care for it all by himself. Independence is empowering too though, whether he wants it or not. Now is bath time. Then he can curl up in bed and let the oblivion slip over him. He has a feeling he’s going to sleep well.

He drags himself from bed, pulling on his underwear and grabbing his pyjamas, trying not to feel dirty as he makes his way to the bathroom. There’s nothing wrong with embracing his sexuality.
There’s nothing wrong with expressing it. He might be sweaty and come stained, but that’s nothing to be ashamed of. It’s natural and healthy and good. He tries to hold onto that fact as he locks the bathroom door behind himself, refusing to face himself in the mirror.

He drops his pyjamas onto the counter and leans down to run a bath, but it feels too close to being with Peter. He doesn’t want to associate with those memories right now. He can’t bear to face them. He feels like they might swallow him whole and then the guilt will pull him under. He’s not going to drop. He can’t afford it. He feels proud that he’s self-aware enough to read the signs and educated enough to understand what they mean. Maybe he can get through this after all. Maybe. If he really, really wants to. The jury’s still kind of out on that one.

He stands up, turning on the shower instead. He strips out of his boxers, tossing them in the hamper before stepping under the hot stream of water. It feels good, using a hand to wash the come off his abs as the water soothes something inside him. He tips his head back, washing his hair. His head is still swimming a little so once all the shampoo is washed away, Stiles sits down on the floor of the shower, letting it fall onto his shoulders like such a gentle caress. He stays there, eyes closed, body lax, and if he cries a little bit, who would be able to tell with all the falling water?

When he gets back to his bedroom, the cuff is waiting for him on the bed, just like it always is. He smiles to himself, feeling safe, but not because of the cuff, because of the knowledge that his dad has his back.

He goes over to the bed, sitting down and lifting up his leg as he picks up the cuff, looking at it in his hands. He bought this because of withdrawal. He bought it so he could keep himself safe for Peter, locked away for his Daddy, a representation of his ownership. He’s not owned though, not anymore. As wretched as that makes him feel, there’s a tiny glimmer of possibility that comes with it. All those things he was willing to sacrifice in order to be Peter’s, he gets to keep them now. His friends, his family, his future. Maybe it’s not the choice he wanted to make. Maybe if Peter walked in here right now and said he’d take him back, then Stiles would climb straight into his car without saying goodbye to anybody. But Peter isn’t coming back. Stiles gets something else instead. Peter’s last request was that he not waste it.

He grips the cuff tightly in his hand, knowing that putting it on would be counterproductive to this entire evening, but he’s not ready to let go of it get. He climbs into bed, pulling the blankets around him like he used to be wrapped in Peter’s arms. He hugs one of his soft cushions, the cuff gripped tightly in his hand like a lifeline. If his dad comes to check on him at lights out then Stiles must already be dead asleep, his body sated and settled in a way he hasn’t felt in far too long.

Stiles wakes up before his alarm, looking at the sunlight creeping in through the blinds. He feels well rested. He feels good. He shifts, pushing back the covers, the cuff beneath him making an indentation in his arm. If his dad comes to check on him at lights out then Stiles must already be dead asleep, his body sated and settled in a way he hasn’t felt in far too long.

He pushes himself out of bed, unravelling his yoga mat onto the floor. He puts on his favourite tutorial, one he pretty much knows by heart, but he likes having someone there to guide him through it and encourage him. He breathes and he moves and he stretches his body, feeling like it’s changed overnight, like he’s more in touch with it. He smiles softly to himself. Most of this floaty, contented feeling is just the hormones, but that’s okay, Stiles can top them up whenever he wants, twice a day if he feels like it. The thought makes him a little bit giddy, like he’s just discovered jerking off for the first time all over again.

It’s still early when he finishes his routine and he sits on his yoga mat, looking over at his schedule. There’s something else written on this morning, something he hasn’t taken advantage of
so far, but he thinks he wants to today. He wants to try. His chest puffs up a little as he gets dressed before heading downstairs for breakfast.

“You’re up early,” his dad comments.

“So are you,” Stiles responds, handing over the cuff, a little ritual he barely notices himself doing anymore. “I thought you were on a late shift.”

“I am,” Stilinski agrees, looking down at the cuff. “Which means I’m not going to be around tonight to be able to give you this.” He extends his hand out towards Stiles, offering it back to him. “I want you to take this and put it under your pillow. I trust you not to use it until you’re supposed to.”

Stiles takes it, touched by the action. His dad’s belief in him makes him glow. He’s being good. No. He’s getting better. He’s half tempted to say he doesn’t need it, but even if he doesn’t wear it, he wants it with him. He kind of wants to fake putting it in his bed and carry it around all day with him instead. He feels like some switch might click in his brain that takes him back to Peter’s house though. He rubs his thumb over the soft lining, considering it for a moment. He wants it. He also wants to not be late. He holds the cuff back up to his dad.

“Can you do it?” he asks. “I have to leave soon.”

“Where are you going?” Stilinski asks, frowning at him.

“Practice,” Stiles says.

His dad’s face brightens with something unreadable. “You’re going to lacrosse practice?”

Stiles shrugs. “I’m going to try.”

Stilinski smiles at him. “Good for you.” He takes the cuff, nodding his head. “I’ll take care of this. It will be under your pillow. And if you need anything, anything at all, call me. Okay? If the empty house gets to you, go to Scott’s. Just let me know where you are.”

“I’ll be okay,” Stiles says, and he actually believes it. “But I’ll keep my phone with me,” he promises. “I’ll let you know.”

“Thank you,” Stilinski says, squeezing his shoulder on the way past, a gesture filled with such familiarity and love. It makes Stiles sag happily in his seat before reaching for the cereal.

He texts Scott before he leaves the house, smiling to himself as he pulls up outside the school and Scott is stood there waiting for him. Stiles likes things he can count on. He has more than one guiding force now but that doesn’t dilute them. Having more building blocks can only make him stronger.

Stiles smiles at him as he climbs out of his car, Scott’s hand landing on his shoulder as soon as they’re close enough, making Stiles feels so calm and safe. His dad has him. Scott has him. He feels guilty that he’s still not sure if this is his first choice, but at least it means that maybe he’ll be okay.

They head through to the locker room, getting their gear on before walking out onto the field together.

“Stilinski!” Coach says with glee. “That’s what I’m talking about.”
“Hey, Coach,” Stiles says. “I finished that extra credit assignment last night.”

Coach turns his lip up in distaste. “I don’t care about that, I’m giving you an A.”


“You think I want to read school assignments in my spare time?” Coach asks, looking at him like he’s an idiot. “Just get out there. And if you’re not working hard enough on the field, that A can turn into a B, Stilinski.”

“Understood,” Stiles agrees, exchanging a look with Scott before they go to join the drills on the field.

Practice is tough, Stiles is out of shape from months spent sitting around in various rooms, in various states of losing his mind. No one can say he doesn’t try though. He puts everything into it, wanting so badly to achieve, to please Coach, to just get through it in one piece to prove to himself that he can. Every time he feels himself flagging, he finds Scott on the field, feeling that deep seeded need to follow his example. It keeps him going, even if he’s slower than everyone else, less coordinated than everyone else, can’t keep up with the action. He makes it through to the final whistle, panting through Coach’s typically berating dismissal before heading after the others towards the locker room.

“Good job, Stilinski,” Coach says in one of the most earnest voices Stiles has ever heard him use.

Stiles turns to face him. “Thanks,” he says. “I mean, I was terrible.”

“You really were,” Coach agrees with no hesitation. “But good job.”

Stiles smiles. Somehow it’s the biggest compliment he could ever be paid. “Yeah,” he agrees, standing a little taller. “Thanks.”

“I’m still not reading that assignment,” Coach dismisses, walking away from him.

Stiles rolls his eyes, following Scott to the locker room.

School is still the easiest part of his day, when there are clear rules that he knows will be enforced, consequences to his actions. It takes some of the responsibility off him and he’s always grateful for that. He sticks close to Scott and Lydia, needing their grounding presence to get him through the sensory overload that is a busy high school, still not wanting to branch outside their little circle. It’s safe here. Cosy. They make him feel like everything might just be alright.

At lunchtime, he listens to them talk about Derek and his suspicions of a dark magic user in town. It’s not the possibility of evil that spikes his anxiety, but the mention of Derek. He hasn’t spoken to him since Derek warned him away from Peter, since he told Stiles the story about Laura. Stiles still can’t reconcile that with anything he knows to be true. He guesses he probably owes Derek an apology though. And Derek owes him one. He has a feeling that isn’t going to happen though.

He mulls it over during his afternoon classes, weighing up an empty house versus the company of his friends, the awkwardness of seeing Derek again versus the security of his schedule. He doesn’t have to be home until five though, that’s what the schedule says, so long as he tells his dad where he is. If it’s not against the rules, he’s not sure he has enough reason to stay away. He not sure that he wants one.

He calls his dad from the school parking lot as he makes his way to his jeep.
“Is everything okay?” Stilinski asks, clearly trying to keep his voice level.

“It’s fine,” Stiles assures him. “I’m fine.”

“Okay,” Stilinski says. “Good. What’s going on?”

“Nothing,” Stiles says. “I was going to go to Derek’s loft with Scott and Lydia for a while. If that’s okay.”

“Yeah, of course,” Stilinski agrees. “Is something going on?”

“I don’t know,” Stiles says. “Derek thinks so. I can fill you in later.”

“That would be good,” Stilinski says. “Call me when you’re on your way home.”

“Okay,” Stiles agrees. “I’ll make sure I’m back by five.”

“I don’t care about that,” Stilinski dismisses. “I just want to know where you are. Stay as long as you need to.”

“Okay, dad,” Stiles agrees, ignoring the way the words stick in his throat. Stiles still has so many tiny things that feel close to insurmountable, but sometimes he forgets that his disappearance changed all of their lives, not just his own. It’s hard for his dad to have him out of his sight. Stiles is going to do his best to never worry him again.

When they get to Derek’s loft, Stiles hangs back, lingering at the top of the steps as Scott and Lydia approach Derek who’s pacing with an open book, many more spread over the table where Chris Argent is sitting. Stiles sighs. He guesses he has more fences to mend. He plays with his hands, his eyes going back to Derek who’s looking at him with nothing but kindness.

Stiles makes his way down the few steps, trying to fight the metaphorical sinking feeling the physical act gives him. His hands are still clasped together, twisting his fingers until they hurt.

Derek isn’t the bad guy, Stiles kind of knew that all along. He doesn’t think Peter is the bad guy either though. He knows how naïve they’d all think that sounded, especially if they knew what Derek knew, but not even Derek knows Peter now. Stiles doesn’t know what happened to Laura, doesn’t know if Peter was involved or not, doesn’t know if he was capable of doing such a thing. What he does know is that Peter is broken and alone, more so now than ever.

Peter was abandoned, maybe fairly, but it changed him, it had to. The man Stiles knows has a deep need for belonging and family and unconditional love. He doesn’t think that Derek would recognise him, but he doesn’t think anyone in this room would recognise who he was when he was with Peter. That doesn’t mean it was a lie. What they had in their little bubble was real, Stiles is certain of that, whether it could survive the outside world or not.

He and Derek have two truths that cannot be reconciled with one another, but that doesn’t make them enemies. From the look on Derek’s face, maybe he understands that too. Stiles takes a breath, offering Derek a little smile. Something softens in Derek and he gives a nod, curt but meaningful. Stiles returns it and Derek looks back at his book, ready to accept that as the end, but it doesn’t sit quite right with Stiles. He closes the space between them, pulling Derek into a hug. Derek freezes for a moment, but then his free arm comes up, warm and solid, giving Stiles one pat on the back before holding him until Stiles lets go.

“I thought you’d probably be gone by now,” Stiles says, stepping back to give him some space.
“And leave you guys unsupervised?” Derek asks. “You’d all fall apart without me.”

“Correction,” Stiles says. “They fell apart without me.”

Derek looks at him warmly. “Yeah, that sounds about right.”

Stiles joins Scott on the couch, picking up one of the books and trying to make himself useful. He likes projects. He likes company. He likes the feeling of togetherness in the loft right now. It makes him feel at home.

His eyes keep drifting over to the table where Chris is sat with a map of ley lines in front of him alongside an open book, Lydia sat beside him on her laptop. Chris hasn’t looked at him once but Stiles doesn’t really think that’s about him. There are more pressing matters at hand and Chris is hardly the easiest person to read. Stiles will pick his moment. He’s not going to let anything fester.

He keeps checking his watch, knowing what time he needs to leave by, but the longer he stays the less appealing going home feels. The schedule has to work for him, he reminds himself. It still gives him palpitations to think about throwing it out though. His dad called it scaffolding and Stiles thinks he can probably get behind that. He feels like he needs something to hold him up, to rebuild him. Little by little he’s going to grow out of it though. He has to believe that that’s going to be okay.

When Lydia leaves the table, coming over to grab a book from the couch, Stiles immediately zeroes in on Chris. He gets up, going to take Lydia’s seat, looking at the page she left open on the laptop. Dark magic is nothing he wants to fuck with. He looks over his shoulder at Scott and Derek who are talking about something, which means that they’re probably not about to eavesdrop. He turns back to Chris, leaning on the table to get closer to him.

“So, I have a question,” Stiles says as casually as he possibly can.

“No comment,” Chris says, not looking up from measuring lines on his map.

Stiles has never let a little something like dismissal deter him. “How did you know to give my dad that word?”

“No comment,” Chris repeats firmly.

Stiles snorts a laugh, propping his chin on his hand. “Well, I guess my instinct to knock on your door was right.”

Chris finally looks up at him, a steely expression in his eyes. “No, it wasn’t,” he says. “I fuck grown adults, not children.”

Stiles feels himself shut down, not because Chris is insulting him, because he’s attacking Peter. “Noted,” he responds.

Chris turns his attention back to his map and Stiles lets out a breath he didn’t realise he was holding. He watches Chris for a moment, the focus and determination. Stiles can relate. He feels something soften in him. Chris did a kind thing when he didn’t have to. He dealt with a fucked-up kid throwing himself at him and then sobbing on his floor better than anybody reasonable would. Stiles is not going to go to war for Peter, he’s already made that choice, or maybe Peter made it for him. That doesn’t mean he has to completely let go of him either. He’s not going to make bad guys where there are none though, for his own sanity he can’t go through life like that. Chris is on his side. Stiles isn’t going to take that for granted.
“Thanks,” he says. “For that word. It really helped. I kind of went down a huge rabbit hole, but I’m learning a lot.”

“That’s good,” Chris says, softer now. “Being informed is incredibly important.”

“I get that now,” Stiles agrees. “Safe, sane and consensual.”

Chris smiles, giving him a nod. “Live by it.”

“I will,” Stiles promises, as much to himself as to Chris.

Chris goes back to his map and Stiles looks at his watch. He needs to leave now if he’s going to get home by five for homework time. He chews on his lip, his heart beating a little faster, feeling his cheeks heat. Homework, then dinner, he’ll have to make something he reminds himself, then bath time and wind down. He feels it all pressing down on him. That’s not the way it’s supposed to feel. What is he even going to make? The thought paralyses him but it also wakes his stomach up and he realises he’s hungry. That’s not in the schedule.

He takes a breath and if Chris notices that he’s starting to freak out, which let’s face it, he probably does, he doesn’t draw any attention to the fact. Stiles is grateful. He thinks so much as a kind hand might spiral him into a panic attack right now. He just needs to figure this out and throw off the guilt. He’s not a robot, he’s a fallible human, he can’t live his life in allotted timeslots. Sometimes he’s going to need to answer more immediate needs. He turns in his chair, looking as Lydia curled up on the couch, Scott still talking to Derek. Sometimes he’s going to need to choose something real over pen on a board.

“Hey, Scott,” he calls out. Scott looks up at him with that questioning puppy look. “I’m hungry.”

“Um…” Scott hesitates, like he has no idea what to do with that information. He looks up at Derek.

“You guys go,” Derek says. “This isn’t a pressing matter. I’ll catch you up if we find anything.”

Scott gives a shrug, closing the book he’s holding as he turns back to Stiles. “What do you want to eat?”

The question makes Stiles’ chest tighten, as though the weight of the world has just been pressed down on him. Decisions are still hard, clouded with self-doubt that makes it feel impossible, like a crushing responsibility that might end in disaster. It’s just dinner though. Nobody’s going to die if he makes the wrong choice. It’s not going to send them spiralling into an alternate timeline. He’s allowed to want something and then he’s allowed to ask for it.

“Mexican,” he says decisively. “I want nachos.”

“Okay,” Scott agrees easily.

“I could go for a burrito bowl,” Lydia adds, putting her book aside.

Stiles grins, feeling so much lighter. They have his back no matter what, even if it’s just the nationality of today’s cuisine. He hops off his chair, taking his phone out of his pocket. “I just have to call my dad.”

“Hey, kiddo,” Stilinski greets. “Heading home?”

“Actually, we thought we might go grab some food,” Stiles says, uncertainty creeping into his voice. “Me and Scott and Lydia. I know it’s early but I’ll go straight home and do my homework
afterwards."


“Thanks,” Stiles says. “Hey, do you want me to bring you something?”

“That’d be great, I’d really appreciate it,” Stilinski says.

“I’m going to get you a superfood burrito,” Stiles says.

“That sounds terrible, don’t get me that,” Stilinski says.

“It’s good for you,” Stiles tells him.

“My taste buds will not thank you,” Stilinski grumbles.

Stiles smiles, holding the phone a little tighter. “Hey, maybe I could do my homework there? Hang out for a bit?” There’s a pause and Stiles holds his breath.

“I’d like that,” Stilinski says earnestly.

“Okay,” Stiles says. “I’ll see you later.”

“I love you,” Stilinski says.

It makes Stiles’ heart flutter in his chest, tears pricking at his eyes. Such little words but so evocative. It’s selfish, the fact that he doesn’t want to put himself out there, but it’s so much easier when someone else does it first.

“Love you too,” he says, staying on the line for a moment longer before he hangs up the call. He turns back to Scott and Lydia who are waiting for him.

“Are you ready?” Scott asks.

Stiles stands up a little taller, giving a decisive nod. “I’m ready.”

Chapter End Notes

So we just have the epilogue to go now, we're so nearly there, thank you to everyone who has stuck by this, the fact that you are still here means the world to me <3
one year later

Well, this is it, the end of the road. I want to give sincere thanks to everybody who has read this and come along on this journey with me. It's been emotional and I'm so grateful to have had you here with me. Thank you for your support and your feedback and your emotions. They all mean the world to me. I am genuinely tearing up right now. I hope that you enjoy this one.

At North Carolina, Stiles hated breaks between his classes. Usually it meant time without Scott, left to his own devices, and it never felt right to him. He didn’t know how to fill free time. He always wanted to retreat back to his dorm room, back to Scott. Now, at Berkeley, he’s grateful for any extra time to orient himself. The campus is still new and he realises now just how heavily he leaned on Scott to take care of everything for him, including the location of his next class. He was such a burden. Sometimes he doesn’t know how Scott put up with him for a whole year.

But now he’s on his own and he knows that the history building has benches outside it and that two minutes to the left is a food hall where he can grab something to eat and study, and five minutes to the right is the library and, more enticingly, the glade where he can lay out on the grass and read or people watch or daydream for the next couple of hours until he has to go to his lecture. So he’s doing okay on his own.

He still uses points of reference to get himself around, making his world smaller. It helps him cope with the overstimulation and the anxiety. His therapist in North Carolina taught him the method and it’s become second nature to him so much so that he doesn’t even see it as a coping mechanism. It just makes sense this way. Everyone should do it.

He comes out of the building, passing the murals on the outside of the art gallery, choosing his route by the landmarks along the way. He crosses the plaza and goes through Sather Gate, bringing him out in front of the history building. He pauses for a moment, safe in the knowledge that he’s exactly where he should be, and then turns to keep walking towards the glade.

Someone rushes past him in the other direction, and there’s people everywhere, Stiles doesn’t even know why it sticks out to him, but he turns, watching their retreating back, and before he’s even consciously aware of it, his mouth is calling out “Peter?”

The man turns, an expectant and frankly bitchy look on his face, but it only takes a fraction of a second before he looks like a deer caught in the headlights. Stiles can’t help but grin with a sense of wonder. Peter. It feels surreal to have him stood in front of him, turning his random Friday afternoon upside down.

Peter looks around cautiously, like it must be some kind of trap, an ambush, and there’s a certain surrender in him already that makes Stiles sad. He gave up so easily when he was cornered. Stiles wouldn’t have believed that possible of his Alpha. But then Peter was never his Alpha.

“Hey,” Stiles greets, lifting his hand in an awkward little wave, taking a step closer.

Peter continues to gape at him for a moment before his eyes are darting around again, not with fear
now so much as bewilderment. His gaze settles back on Stiles. “Are you a student here?”

“I am now,” Stiles says. “I transferred for my sophomore year. I was in North Carolina with Scott but my dad had a heart attack towards the end of last year, and he’s fine now, he’s totally fine, but I just… I didn’t want to be all the way over there again.”

Peter nods, his eyes so sad and sincere. “I’m sorry.”

Stiles shrugs, like it wasn’t the most terrifying thing that ever happened to him, and he was sex trafficked and held in a basement. The pack clubbed together and bought him a plane ticket and those hours that he was in the air, not even knowing if his dad was going to be dead or alive by the time he got there, were easily the worst of his life. He made the decision before he landed that, if this all worked out for the best, he couldn’t stand to be this far away again.

Berkeley is a good distance, a three hour drive, far enough that he’s not expected to go back every weekend but close enough that he can be there if he needs to. There’s a sense of independence and responsibility that comes with that. He likes it. He can handle it. He wasn’t sure going in, but he’s really truly doing okay.

“It’s nice here,” Stiles offers, because they’re just standing there and it’s starting to feel awkward. “I mean, it’s weird, because everyone else is in their second year together and they have their little friendship groups and I don’t know anybody. But I started a study group for my sociology class and I don’t know anybody. But I started a study group for my sociology class and people actually came to it so that was kind of cool. And I joined the quidditch league because it sounded like something fun to do, but it is surprisingly athletic and I am not good at it. I like it though. All I did in North Carolina was follow Scott around, and I needed that, I don’t think I would have got through that first year without him, but it feels good to step out of his shadow now. I was ready for it.”

Something softens on Peter’s face, some kind of recognition. “You’re not a sidekick.”

Stiles smiles. “I’m not,” he agrees, remembering the comics that he never got to finish, the ones that told him he could be the hero of his own story. His eyes fall down. “I don’t think I’m a superhero either though.”

“None of us are,” Peter says.

Stiles looks up, meeting his eyes. “I don’t know, I still think Scott might be.”

“Don’t put people on a pedestal,” Peter tells him. “They can only let you down.”

“Yeah, trust me, I learnt that lesson,” Stiles says wryly.

Peter looks away, embarrassed or ashamed, but Stiles doesn’t take the words back. He doesn’t apologise for his emotions anymore. They’re valid, even when they’re messy and unpleasant. He looks to his right, the direction of the glade, but he knows they’re not done by a long shot. He turns back to Peter.

“What are you doing here, anyway?” he asks. “Aren’t you a little old to be hanging around university campuses?”

Peter looks at him, hesitant, and Stiles’ eyes flick to the building they’re stood in front of and then to the leather satchel he’s carrying, a grin coming over his face.

“Oh my god,” he says. “You work here. You’re a professor. This is where you were going every week for your office hours.” He laughs, the pieces slotting into place. “Hey, remember when you
told me that college is overrated? That’s hilarious.”

Peter looks distinctly unamused. “Stiles,” he says cautiously.

“Don’t worry, I won’t tell,” Stiles dismisses. He shakes his head. “Of course you’re a professor, it makes perfect sense. What do you teach? History?”

“Yes,” Peter agrees tightly.

“What course?” Stiles asks. “Something to do with South America?”

Peter sighs, so close to the scathing looks Stiles is used to receiving when he was being tiresome. “Apocalyptic and Millenarian movements in the Atlantic world.”

“I nearly took that course,” Stiles enthuses. “I figured it might be too depressing though. I have enough horrors in my life. I went with gender and sexuality in the twentieth century instead. Fits my whole aesthetic a lot better. Yours sounds really interesting though. Can you imagine if I turned up for the first day of class and you walked in. Would you even recognise my name on the class list? Do you even know my name?”

“Mieczyslaw Stilinski,” Peter says.

Stiles stares at him for a moment. “That is… surprisingly good pronunciation.”

Peter nods. “Your dad corrected the defence lawyer every time he butchered it. He was nearly held in contempt of court.”

A fond smile comes over Stiles’ face. “Yeah, that sounds like dad.” He looks at Peter. “You got dragged into the trial, huh?”

“I did,” Peter agrees.

Stiles nods. “They let me give video testimony from North Carolina so it didn’t interrupt my school, which is good because I don’t think I could have handled being in a room with any of those people.”

“That’s the least you deserved,” Peter says.

Stiles nods again, that vulnerable feeling creeping over him. It can come out of nowhere.

“Anyway, I have a lecture that I need to go… fuck up now,” Peter says, gesturing behind himself.

Stiles gives a little laugh, brought back to the moment and the sunshine and the freedom to do anything. “Yeah,” he agrees. “Hey, we should get dinner.”

“I really don’t think we should, Stiles,” Peter says.

“It’s kind of the least I deserve,” Stiles says. He’s not afraid to use people’s pity for him against them. He hates pity, it deserves to be punished. Pity is not the same as support. Peter gives him a pained expression. “Look, we’re both here and we’re going to run into each other and I don’t need that hanging over me, okay?” Stiles says honestly.

Peter gives a nod of understanding. “I’ll hand in my resignation.”

Stiles gives him an incredulous look. “You’re not going to do that. You threw me away like a piece of trash so you didn’t lose this job. You’re not throwing that away too.”
“I did what was in your best interests,” Peter says. “I’m still willing to do that.”

“The martyr act doesn’t suit you,” Stiles responds. Peter opens his mouth to speak again but Stiles cuts him off. “We did the whole being brave thing, right? We did the ripping off the band-aid thing. But we never did the closure thing. The sorting through it and the clearing the air and the putting it all away. You owe me that, right? We owe each other that.”

Peter sags but he doesn’t argue. It’s not resignation though, it’s acceptance. Stiles knows the difference.

“There’s this Brazilian steakhouse place,” Stiles says. “I’ve been wanting to go there but I don’t have any friends. I have a study group tonight and I have quidditch in the afternoon tomorrow, but we could meet at 7?”

“Okay,” Peter agrees, hesitation still hovering at the edge of his voice.

Stiles nods. “Go fuck up your lecture then, professor.”

“Believe me, I will,” Peter says dryly, and there’s something so familiar about it that Stiles almost feels homesick.

They stand there for a moment, looking at each other, before Peter takes a step back, turning away. Stiles watches him go, trying to remember which emotions are supposed to feel safe. Safe just jumped out of the window though. Safe has gone all the way to hell. Stiles just hopes he isn’t going to join it.

He follows his little mental map of landmarks to the glade, laying out on the grass and taking out his reading. His life is all about compartmentalisation now. It’s not like it was a year ago, he can be spontaneous now, he isn’t held back by rules, imagined or otherwise, and he feels so much better for it. But he likes everything in its place, filed away neatly in his mind, another trick the therapist taught him. He just doesn’t know where to put Peter, so he keeps bumping into the front of his mind.

A little part of Stiles wants to retreat, wants to lock himself away with these thoughts, out of either shame or protectiveness, he’s not sure which. And while wallowing occasionally might be healthy, he knows that this urge isn’t. He’s not cutting himself off from the world for anyone.

So he goes to his sociology study group for his sexual cultures class that evening instead of ordering pizza and sitting alone in his room to eat it. He joins in with a discussion about the role of pornography in stereotyping societal hierarchy, staying present and accountable. It’s heated but respectful and Stiles know that he’s skating on thin ice with some of these subjects he’s chosen, Companions and sex trafficking can come up at any moment, but he doesn’t want to shy away from that. He doesn’t want to be scared of it forever. He wants to explore it.

A couple of them suggest going for a coffee afterwards and Stiles joins them, ordering himself a decaf. He never passes up an opportunity to make friends. He’s not as lonely here as he worried he would be. It was definitely time to go long distance with Scott. He still skypes him the next morning like he does every Saturday though, chatting about their weeks as though they haven’t texted almost every day and wouldn’t be in touch the second anything interesting happened. It’s nice to see his face though, to spend this time together in a way that feels close and intimate. Sometimes they add Lydia into the conversation and it’s just like old times. Nobody gets left behind, even if they’re not in the same place right now.

By the time he gets back from quidditch later that day, he’s sweaty and sun-kissed and really
hungry. His roommates are playing the X-Box in the living room, throwing teasing remarks back and forth. They have a lot of inside jokes. They’re nice guys though and they don’t exclude him on purpose. They invite him to join them playing video games and ask him how his day was, but when he sees the way they interact with each other he can tell it’s mostly politeness. Apparently, friendships are forged in fire freshman year. Stiles wouldn’t know about that. He didn’t step out from under Scott’s wing long enough to find out.

He goes to take a shower, standing in front of his closet afterwards, everything suddenly becoming real and immediate. Peter. He’s going to meet Peter. For dinner. He screws his eyes shut. He very pointedly didn’t mention it to Scott or Lydia this morning which tells him that he’s probably doing something wrong. He starts to tell himself that they just wouldn’t understand, but that’s the logic that led him to running away from home and sitting on Peter’s porch. Twice.

He sighs, opening his eyes. He doesn’t want to run away with Peter now, he knows that much. He also knows what he was googling at two o’clock this morning. But he doesn’t need all the answers right now, he reminds himself. It’s okay to not know things. It’s okay to explore things. It’s okay to be curious.

It felt good to see Peter yesterday, it made him happy on some instinctive level. Happy like seeing a familiar face rather than being reunited with his Daddy though. That word feels strange to him now. He takes that as a good sign. That’s not the life he wants. His therapist told him it’s okay to only have certainty in negatives, even if he feels like it’s taking chunks out of his life. He’s managed to find something more than negative space over the last year. He’s grown. He’s proud of himself. He’s still so far from finished though.

He grabs some clothes, choosing whatever he’d wear to a study session. He’s going to present an honest version of himself and this isn’t a special occasion anyway, even if it might be monumental to them. It’s just a steakhouse. It’s just a conversation. Stiles never expected it to happen, but it still feels like a long time coming.

When he gets there, Peter is already waiting outside, and the relief that Stiles feels upon seeing him makes him realise that he didn’t quite believe that Peter was actually going to show up. But here he is, dressed in nice clothes, but not too nice. Stiles knows the contents of Peter’s wardrobe. This is casual for him.

Stiles approaches him with a smile, feeling so much more at ease already. Peter opens the door for him, like a gentleman, requesting their table with the hostess, and Stiles wonders if this behaviour is automatic for Peter with everyone, or whether he’s unconsciously slipping back into taking care of Stiles, doing everything for him. Stiles isn’t offended by what could be just chivalry, but he’s not about to turn meek and submissive. He’s learnt that there’s a time and a place for that.

They’re seated at a small table towards the edge of the room and Stiles wonders if the hostess thinks they’re on a date. Judging by the way Peter is warily scanning the room, looking for people he might know, or students from the university that might know him, he’s wondering the same thing.

“Are you worried about being seen with me, Professor Hale?” Stiles asks.

Peter gives him a look. “I don’t think it would be in either of our best interests to start rumours.”

“We’re not that close to campus,” Stiles dismisses. “Besides, according to the Faculty Code of Conduct, it’s only unacceptable if you have academic responsibility for me in an instructional, evaluative or supervisory capacity. Which you don’t, and I think I can live without your depressing ass classes, so no one can say shit about us having dinner together.”
Peter stares at him for a moment and Stiles can’t tell if he’s worried or impressed by Stiles’ recitation. He guesses Peter isn’t sure either.

“I looked into university policies last night,” Stiles says. “I have this three point system. First is legality, and this is legal, so we can tick that box. Second is morality, which the jury’s still out on. Then it’s want. Want comes last. Because you have to be smart about want. I’ve learnt that. And want is…”

He looks at Peter and he feels a familiar pull, as distant as it is, because those eyes are so blue and he’s so handsome and, fuck, Stiles knows exactly what those hands could do to him. He knows exactly what that brain could do to him too. He pulls his lip between his teeth before he catches himself, shaking his head.

“Want comes last,” he says firmly.

“You don’t even know me,” Peter says.

“I do,” Stiles insists. “But I know me now too. This last year has contained a lot of soul searching and exploration. You could probably write a YA novel about me. Except it would be pretty X-rated.” He looks up sharply as the server steps up to their table. “Hey.”

They order drinks and sides and the server explains how the restaurant works, placing a token down on the table that tells the servers whether they’re ready for more meat to be brought to their table or not. Stiles plays with the edge of the green disc as the server walks away.

“I’m glad you’ve had some time and space to figure yourself out,” Peter says.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I mean, I’m still learning. I’m figuring things out. I joined this student group at North Carolina, BDSM discussion, but we were pretty hands on. I felt safe with them, we were all equal, we were exploring things together, and that felt nice. It felt good.”

Peter is watching him, patient, attentive, but he doesn’t speak.

“The summer before I went, I fell down one of my research holes,” Stiles goes on. “Safe, sane and consensual, responsible kink, all of that. I had this therapist that my dad found for me. Kink friendly. He talked me through the come down after you left me and he helped me sort through a lot of stuff. You and I were not playing safe. Did you know that?”

“I did,” Peter admits solemnly. “And I’m sorry.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I mean, I’m still learning. I’m figuring things out. I joined this student group at North Carolina, BDSM discussion, but we were pretty hands on. I felt safe with them, we were all equal, we were exploring things together, and that felt nice. It felt good.”

Peter is watching him, patient, attentive, but he doesn’t speak.

“You’re not supposed to forgive me.”

“That’s kind of my decision to make,” Stiles says. “You don’t get to make it for me.”

Peter nods his head in understanding. There’s a chastised look on his face that Stiles doesn’t recognise. Peter looks so much smaller now. So much less powerful.

They get served their first meats and Stiles eagerly takes a bit of everything. He’s starving and it all looks amazing. He shoves some marinated steak into his mouth, talking around it.

“If it makes you feel any better, I had to work to get here,” he says. “I fully went through the five stages of grief over you. I got stuck on the denial and the bargaining for a long time, and then the depression, but I got angry too. I was mad at you for what you did to me. You made me totally
helpless and then you just left me there. So yeah, I got angry. But eventually, by working with the therapists and spending time with my friends, and going to university, I let it go.”

He shovels more meat into his mouth, looking up at Peter who is carefully cutting his steak up, looking so prim and proper. It makes Stiles smile.

“I mean, what was the alternative, I just stay hurt forever?” Stiles asks. “Then you’d still have power over me. So I forgave you because that was the same as admitting that you were wrong and that let me reclaim myself. I don’t want to be bitter because I don’t think that you’re a bad person. I don’t think you ever acted out of malice. And you really did teach me a lot about myself. I’m grateful for that, even if you didn’t do it in a very responsible way.”

“I was awful to you,” Peter says. “Please don’t forgive me.”

“I already did,” Stiles says cheerily. “No take backs.”

The server brings their drinks, putting a cocktail down in front of Peter that’s full of ice and lime chunks. It looks so refreshing as Peter stirs it, crushing down the lime, and Stiles takes a forlorn sip of his soda.

“It’s Brazil’s national cocktail,” Peter tells him. “Caipirinha.”

“And you’ve probably been there and tasted the real thing,” Stiles says.

“I have,” Peter agrees, looking a little sheepish about it.

“What’s the drinking age over there, I bet they’d give me one,” Stiles says. He snorts a laugh.

“Maybe we could have gone on our world tour. Were you really going to do any of that if I ever finished my training?”

“Absolutely,” Peter says earnestly. “I was on sabbatical when I met you, but it didn’t officially start until the summer. I was doing a research project on the collapse of the Mayan civilisation, that’s what I was working on in my study every day. I wanted as much of the scholarly research as possible done by the time I was officially released for the year so that we could go and do the field research together. I was always taking you with me.”

“Wow,” Stiles says, blinking at him. “I definitely thought you were bullshitting me. That would have been amazing.”

Peter nods, looking down at his plate. “I was supposed to make it to the summer, but my head of department could tell that I was struggling. I was having a rough time before I got you. I had a couple of breakdowns at work from the stress of trying to hold it together. I couldn’t stand the empty house anymore. I’d built myself a sanctuary and it was the loneliest place in the world. I used to avoid going home. I was in a bad place.”

Stiles wants to reach out, put a consoling hand on his arm, but he’s not sure what the rules are here. He’s not sure Peter would appreciate it, even if he probably craves it. This is a vulnerable side of him that Stiles has never seen before. He feels like maybe he saw those cracks though, when Stiles tried to contact Scott, the way Peter had clung to him when Stiles had promised not to forsake him again. He always suspected that he was all that Peter had. To have it confirmed hurts in a way he wasn’t quite expecting after all this time. But this is why they’re here. They need to finally get all the poison out.

“We made a deal,” Peter says. “I could have the time off early, follow through on my plans to buy a Companion, because I was telling the truth, I never hid your existence from anyone. But seeing as
I was abandoning my students to a substitute, he asked that I still come in once a week to support them until the summer and help them finish up the course.”

“Office hours,” Stiles says knowingly.

“Precisely,” Peter agrees. “But once we got to the summer, I was going to take you travelling with me. I wanted to share that with you. You were my family. It wasn’t the same without you.”

Stiles smiles slightly. “See,” he says. “I told you you weren’t the bad guy.”

“I did terrible, unforgiveable things to you,” Peter says. “I fucked with your head, very deliberately. I psychologically took you apart. I made you believe that what I wanted was what you wanted.”

“No, a lot of it really was what I wanted,” Stiles says. “This group I went to, I tried out a lot of stuff, so I can say with pretty good authority what I like. I like being held down, and sometimes bondage, but I prefer body contact. And I like being told what to do because I always have a lot of thoughts, too many thoughts, but they get quiet when I let someone else take control. I like that calm space in my head that I can never find on my own.”

He can feel that familiar draw, the craving. He loves going under. He never went very deep, never found that same level of surrender that he did with Peter. There were no fireflies. He was okay with that though. He and his friends from the group, they were just playing around, exploring. He loved every second of it, but he always knew he needed more to be able to fully let go. He’d need to be in love. He’d need to trust them with his life.

“We do differ on a couple of fundamentals though,” Stiles admits, looking back up at Peter. “I am not into Daddy kink. Or honorifics at all. I don’t like true imbalances of power. Infantilism does nothing for me either. I like being looked after, I really appreciate being looked after, I am a slut for aftercare, but I don’t like to be babied. I don’t want to be powerless or have my autonomy taken away. I’m not here to kinkshame anybody, the whole Daddy thing is just… I don’t get it.”

“You were my family,” Peter says again.

“Have you ever been part of a functioning family?” Stiles asks. “Because that’s not how they act with each other.”

Peter looks down at his plate. “I have never been part of a functioning family, no.”

Stiles snorts a laugh despite himself, accepting more meat from the passing server. Peter waves him away.

“Hey, so, funny story,” Stiles says. Peter looks up at him. “I know your nephew.”

Peter freezes, dawning realisation turning to fear. “Derek.”

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees.

Peter sighs. “When I got dragged back to Beacon Hills after the FBI stormed my house, I did wonder. But you’d never mentioned him. And you talked about your friends. You were clinging to them.”

“He hadn’t been around for a while,” Stiles says. “He wasn’t really a part of the pack anymore. But he came back and he had some interesting stories to tell about you. One story in particular actually.” He meets Peter’s eyes. “He said you murdered his sister.”
Peter’s eyes fall away but he doesn’t deny it. Stiles’ heart beats faster in his chest. This is the one thing he’s never quite been able to believe, not from the man he knew. He’s passed thinking Derek lied to him, but he still hoped he could be wrong. He realises that some part of him still really wanted him to be wrong.

“What happened?” he asks. They have to drain the poison. Peter reaches over, turning the card on the table to red. “I’m not done, I want more meat,” Stiles complains.

“Maybe we could just not have any interruptions for a while,” Peter says, his voice strained.


Peter sits back in his chair. “I was taken by some hunters,” he begins, his eyes falling down again. “They held me prisoner and they chained me to a wire fence and they ran experiments on me. They put electric currents through my body and worked out in precise detail what effect it had on my powers. They could pinpoint exactly how to stop me transforming, how to stop me healing, how to take away my strength. They did it over and over until they had it down to a fine art. They did it for months. And then they dumped me in the preserve, weak and helpless.”

Stiles remembers being in the Argent’s basement, Erica and Boyd strung up to electric currents, and he knows exactly who did this. The same people who started the fire. The same people who have been waging war with them ever since Scott got bitten.

“The Argents.”

Peter looks up at him. “I guess you know all the Beacon Hills classics.” He shakes his head. “I’m not making excuses. I’m just telling you what happened.”

Stiles nods, spearing some more meat on his fork. “Then tell me what happened.”

Peter says. “My pack found me. They took me back to the house. I collapsed at Talia’s feet and I sobbed and I begged her to do something. I told her they were sick, they were dangerous, they were planning something. They wouldn’t have let me go unless they already knew how they were going to kill me, kill all of us. I begged her to stop them. And she just, she reached down and she petted my hair and she told that I was tired. I should rest. She’d deal with a threat if it presented itself. I told her it would be too late by then, that she had to act first, but she wouldn’t listen to me. And I’m not making excuses. But I was in agony and I wasn’t of sound mind, it had been months of torture. I wasn’t going to let them do to the rest of my family what they did to me. So I had to take matters into my own hands.”

“That’s why you wanted to be an Alpha,” Stiles says. “So you could fight them yourself.”

“So I could kill them,” Peter says. “Because I knew that Talia wouldn’t. And I knew that I couldn’t, not without Alpha strength. They’d left me in a mess and I wasn’t healing fast enough. I was too weak. It was a necessary sacrifice. It felt necessary at the time.”

He drops his fork, putting his hand over his eyes as he leans into his palm. Stiles can feel tears pricking at his own eyes, imagining the pain, physical and emotional, that Peter must have been going through. He knows first-hand just how ruthless and unhinged Gerard and Kate were, he knows that Peter was right about them planning a horrific act against his family, but he can’t imagine being faced with that impossible situation, of having to hurt someone you loved to save the day. And Stiles already knows the end of this story. It wasn’t worth it. They all died anyway.

Peter takes a deep breath and lifts his head, looking Stiles square in the eye. There’s so much pain
and sadness there. “I ripped her throat out,” he says. “It was messy but it was quick. I wanted it to be quick. I didn’t want her to suffer for a second. I know that doesn’t make it okay. Nothing will ever make it okay.”

Stiles reaches across the table, he can’t help himself, taking hold of Peter’s hand in his own. Peter looks at him with imploring eyes, on the brink of falling apart, and Stiles is filled with a rush of love. He thinks it’s love. Maybe it’s just empathy. This is real though. This is everything Peter ever hid from him. It’s smashing through all of Stiles’ barriers. Peter pulls his hand back, his eyes falling away.

“The rush of power went straight to my head,” Peter says. “I ran out of the house and I hunted them down and I tore them apart. I was like a feral animal. I should have been smarter. I should have made it count. I should have started with her.”

“Kate,” Stiles says with a little nod.

Peter looks up at him. “It was all for nothing without her.” His lip lifts in a little sneer that’s so canine in nature, like his wolf is fighting to come to the surface. “Talia found me. I was strong but I was still recovering. She was stronger. She beat me down and she dragged me back to the house. Down to the basement. Deaton was already waiting for us.”

“Right,” Stiles says, putting the pieces together. “He was your emissary.”

“He was Talia’s,” Peter says, clear distain in his voice. “He surrounded me with mountain ash and he performed some little Druid ceremony. He took my Alpha spark. He made sure I could never get it back. And then Talia gave me my share of the family fortune and she sent me out of the door.” He gets a distant look in his eye. “Sometimes I have these dark thoughts. I wonder if she realised, when she was burning to death in that same basement, that I was right.” He blinks, snapping out of it, looking at Stiles. “I’ve never talked about any of this. I’ve never had anyone to tell.”

“You could have told me,” Stiles says.

“I was trying to make you like me,” Peter dismisses. “But we’re past that now. I don’t deserve for you to like me. You shouldn’t like me. This is who I am.”

“That’s who you were,” Stiles says. “We’re all works in progress, right?”

Peter gives a little laugh of disbelief, the tension easing from his body. “Don’t follow my life advice.”

“No, but it’s true,” Stiles says. “It’s a really comforting thought. Sometimes we make bad choices and sometimes bad things happen to us, but don’t let that be the end of your story. I didn’t let the basement or the Foundry or you be the end of mine.”

“I’m glad,” Peter says. “I feel nothing but shame for what I did to you. You trusted me. I took you apart. I turned you against everyone who loved you so that you’d have to depend on me. And I was so happy doing it. I thought it was my right after so many years to have someone that was mine. Totally, completely mine. I treated you like you were a thing.”

“You loved me,” Stiles says. “You fucked up, but you loved me. That counted for a lot.”

Peter shakes his head. “It doesn’t count for shit when I was abusing you. That’s not how love works.”
Stiles licks his lips, sitting up a little straighter. “Okay, the summer after all this happened, my dad found a local support group. It was for kids who’d been caught up in human trafficking and some of them, like me, ended up at the Foundry. I heard some horrific things. There was one girl… Remember that room where we met? Where you got to decide whether you wanted me or not?”

Peter nods, looking intrigued but cautious.

“This girl got taken in there to meet her prospective Master,” Stiles says. “And he raped right there on the couch, except legally it’s not rape because Companions don’t have rights. Then he said he’d buy her and she was screaming and begging them and they let him take her home. They had to restrain her because she was fighting them so hard, she was terrified to go with this man who’d just assaulted her. But they didn’t care. They sold her. Those are the bad guys. I heard a lot of stories like that.” He looks up at Peter, meeting his eyes. “So love counted for a lot. What we had wasn’t right. It wasn’t a good thing. But it was something. That’s one of the things I had to learn to accept. I had to accept that you hurt me and that you damaged me. And I had to accept that we were in love and we shared something real. Those feelings were real, Peter. I know they were. But I don’t know if I want that again. I don’t know what I want.”

“You have to tick morality first,” Peter reminds him.

“Right,” Stiles says with a little smile. “Morality. Still on the fence on that one.”

“We would be a disaster,” Peter says, but there’s something fond in his voice. “I’m a disaster all on my own. I wouldn’t want to drag you into that.”

Stiles nods his head, not agreeing or disagreeing, but acknowledging. He feels like maybe Peter has more work to do than him. He hasn’t forgiven himself like Stiles has. Sometimes it takes someone else believing in you to give you the confidence to believe in yourself. He reaches across the table, turning the token to green and eagerly greeting the first server who approaches him with more steak.

“I didn’t really like that support group when I went last year,” Stiles admits. “I couldn’t relate to anyone. Because I was still in love with you. But I went to a few meetings over the summer when I was home. I feel like I get it now. Even if I was happy, what happened to me was wrong. It was terrifying. I don’t ever want to think about that happening to anybody else.” He looks up at Peter. “That girl I told you about, she does a lot of advocacy for Companion rights now. I think that’s something I’d like to be involved in. I’m a sociology major and I pick all the classes that have to do with the culture around sex and social hierarchy. Sometimes they cut a little close to the bone for me, but I think it’s what I want to do. I don’t know how, but this feels like something that’s not going to stop being important to me.”

“I’m really proud of you,” Peter says, his eyes soft before he looks away with a huff. “I’m sorry, that’s so patronising, you don’t need me to be proud of you.”

“I’ll take it,” Stiles says with a smile.

Peter looks at him again. “You’re so strong. I always knew you were strong.”

“And yet you took me apart so easily,” Stiles says dryly.

“I think life had predisposed you for that,” Peter says.

“Yeah,” Stiles agrees. “I think you might be right.”

“It makes me incredibly happy to see you succeed,” Peter says. “I’m glad you weren’t held back
by what I did. I’m glad you’re still getting a chance to do this.”

“I missed the acceptance window to take my spot at North Carolina,” Stiles tells him. “I called admissions and explained my story and they requested all this proof. I had to send in reports from the Sheriff’s Office and the FBI to corroborate my story, which is fair enough, anyone can pretend they missed a deadline because they were kidnapped, right? But once I sent everything over they put me at the top of their waitlist and I had a place before the end of the summer. Then my therapist diagnosed me with PTSD and wrote a recommendation that I be roomed with Scott and they gave us this awesome suite. I mean, at this point I was pretty much milking it, but I’d earned that.”

“You certainly had,” Peter agrees, waving off more food while Stiles continues to pile up his plate. Peter looks at it critically, reaching for the token.

“I’m not done,” Stiles insists, slapping his hand down on it to keep it green.

“You can’t possibly eat all that,” Peter says.

“Dude, I’m a poor student, I live on ramen, I’m making the most of this,” Stiles says, shoving another forkful in his mouth. “By the way, you know you’re paying for this, right?”

“Of course,” Peter agrees.

Stiles nods, a smile coming over his face as he swallows. “Hey, remember that restaurant you used to bring me food from? That must be around here, right?”

“It’s a couple of streets away,” Peter agrees. “I can give you the address.”

“You can take me,” Stiles says.

“I’m not sure we should make this a regular thing,” Peter says carefully.

“You promised you were going to take me when I finished my training,” Stiles says. “And I know I didn’t finish, but you said it yourself, I’m doing good. And I worked so hard to get here.”

Peter smiles fondly at him, but Stiles can already see the regret in his eyes. “I thought we were clearing the air,” Peter says. “So that it wouldn’t be awkward if we ran into each other. Not so that we could… what?”

“Hang out?” Stiles says. “We can hang out. I like your company.”

“You need friends your own age,” Peter says.

“I have some,” Stiles insists. “I’m making some. Some guys from quidditch invited me to a party tomorrow night. And I have Scott and Lydia. And Liam and Mason who, now that I’m nearby, call me any time anything weird happens in Beacon Hills or they have a question about anything supernatural, and then I have to go over there and deal with it. That’s what friends do, right?”

“That’s what emissaries do,” Peter says, looking amused.

Stiles stares at him. “I’m not an emissary.”

“I think you’d be a good one,” Peter says. “You’re very intelligent. And when you put your mind to something, you conquer it.”

Stiles feels a little glow inside him. “Flattery will get you everywhere. Also, I’m putting my mind
to you taking me to that restaurant, so by your own logic, you have to take me.”

Peter gives him a scathing look and it makes Stiles grin. It feels like pure Peter, and that’s a greater indication that his walls are down than all of the guts he spilled from guilt.

“You can’t wear jeans or sneakers,” Peter says.

“Okay, I won’t,” Stiles agrees. “And we did all the regrets and the deepest, darkest secrets this time around. We should do the greatest hits next time.”

Peter smiles at him. “You’re going to that party tomorrow night though, right?”

“I’m going to the party,” Stiles agrees. “I need to try and get laid. California has been a dry state for me so far in my life. If I’m going to live here, I need to fix that.”

Peter laughs, picking up his glass. “To healthy sexual relations.”

“Safe, sane and consensual,” Stiles returns, clinking their glasses together.

He takes a sip, looking at Peter over the rim, a little thrill going through him. He doesn’t know if he can sort what they were from the man sitting in front of him now, but he wants to try. It feels like something that would be worth his time. In the meantime, he is definitely going to keep looking for friends and hook ups and people who might be interested in the lifestyle. He misses his old group from North Carolina. He wants to keep exploring, keep growing. He’s still a work in progress, but he kind of hopes he always will be. He doesn’t ever want to set limitations on himself.

Works inspired by this one Are All Works In Progress by HDHale

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!