CAPTIVE

by writeonclara

Summary

It’s porn. Well, it’s sort of porn. Gay sort of porn. Definitely Not Safe For Work. Isaac pushes Stiles out of the way to frantically exit out of the browser before their manager catches them looking at porn.

Or:

Stiles thinks he has college all figured out (despite his sourwolf of a roommate), until he gets scouted to be a model for the popular werewolf skinmag, CAPTIVE.

Notes

I’ve made up a lot of places here. Barnett College is a nod to some of my favorite movies, though transplanted into Northern California. Greenwitch has nothing to do with Greenwich in New York and more to do with witches that might have actually been green.

This fic is pretty heavily inspired by the NECKZ n THROATS universe, but not actually a
part of it. If you’re curious about the awesome NECKZ n THROATS ‘verse, you can check out the masterpost here.
“Holy shit.”

Stiles Stilinski isn’t an idiot. He knows that sometimes students sneak their pets into their dorms. Usually, it’s a bunny. Or maybe a gerbil. He has even heard that someone managed to get away with having a cat for a solid year.

Stiles thinks the giant fucking dog might be pushing it.

Slowly, without taking his eyes off the massive predator lurking in the middle of the dorm, Stiles eases into the room towards the free bed. The dog’s eyes track his progress, but thankfully it makes no move for the jugular. Stiles drops his duffel bag onto the bed and lets out a small sigh of relief, as if being able to set his bag down without being murdered means he passed some sort of test.

“So, uh, Fido, know when your owner’s gonna be back? I think him and me need to have some words. About pets. Big pets. Big pets that are totally not allowed in dorms.”

And Stiles really isn’t an idiot; he graduated from high school with a 4.2 GPA thank you very much, but he thinks he might be missing something important when the dog rolls its eyes.

“Okaaay,” Stiles says slowly, “maybe not a dog. I guess that makes sense, since you’re huge. I mean, really huge. Don’t tell me my roommate brought a w—”

The dog stands, shaking itself off, and then ripples. Stiles scrambles back, knocking the into the side of his bed and going down, hard. The dog’s fur shrinks away to smooth skin and Stiles focuses on that, can’t watch as the bones on its—his face crack and resettle into—

"Jesus fucking Christ."

The man standing in front of Stiles is—very naked. Stiles knows his face is glowing red, though the guy’s clearly unashamed. Not that he has anything to be ashamed of; Stiles would just be grateful if he put on some pants. And okay, Stiles has always been comfortable about his heterosexuality, but he’s starting to question his place on the Kinsey Scale in the face of—

"A werewolf,” Stiles says, keeping his eyes strictly above the waist and thinking that, actually, he is a total idiot. “You’re a werewolf.”

"What clued you in?" the guy—werewolf—asks, lifting one bitchy eyebrow.

Stiles knows, in theory, that werewolves exist. He’s seen them in magazines (has even purchased one or two, though no one needs to know about that) and has read their blogs and has even chatted to one or two in World of Warcraft, debating their unrealistic and stereotyped depiction in MMORPGs (his argument was that everyone is unrealistic and stereotyped in MMORPGs, even humans). He’s just never met one in person. Or maybe it should be in werewolfperson. In the flesh. It’s not like many werewolves like to hang out in Beacon Hills. Sure, they had their fair share of everything else, but no werewolves.

"Uh, you know," Stiles says, flailing a hand in the guy’s general direction, then winces. "Can you put on some pants, dude?"

"Derek," the guy corrects, but thank fucking god, goes to his dresser to grab a pair of ratty gray pajama bottoms.
Stiles clinically thinks that Derek is just as attractive from behind as he is from the front, before he throws himself on his bed with a groan.

"Fucking great," he hisses into his mattress.

"Is there a problem?"

Stiles lifts his head and then nearly jumps out of his skin when he comes face-to-leg with Derek. God, he didn't even hear him cross the room. Stiles scrambles back until he's pressed up against the wall. Derek's glaring at him—no, that's more like a scowl, baring teeth that are way more pointy than Stiles is comfortable with.

"Goddamnit, dude! Warn a guy when you're gonna go all ninja!"

"I said, is there a problem?"

Funny how Derek's soft voice is so incongruous with his face and yet manages to be pants-wettingly menacing at the same time.

"Nothing! No problems here, Nope." Stiles waves his hands in the universal we're all cool here and then, because his brain-to-mouth filter has been broken since he first learned how to string sentences together, says, "it's just, you know, I never thought I'd be rooming with someone who goes bump in the night."

The look on Derek's face clearly says 'I'm dorming with an insensitive moron and I'm seriously contemplating if I can get away with violent murder.' Which, fair.

"I mean, not that you go bump in the night! Or, well, you know, unless you're lucky, if you know what I mean. Which you—don't, or maybe you do and still want to kill me, and I really don't blame you for that because wow I'm coming off as a total asshole—can we start over? Hi. I'm Stiles. And I'm actually not a racist asshole, but to be fair you probably shouldn't be sitting around as a giant wolf —"

Derek slams his hand against Stiles' nightstand, which thankfully puts an end to his word vomit. Stiles glances at the nightstand. There's now a long crack down one side. He looks back at Derek's face. His features have smoothed out to a blank sort of calm that does nothing to soothe Stiles' rioting heart, but his eyes are burning a furious red. Sooo, he's dorming with a werewolf who is also a werewolf Alpha. Who hates him. With good reason.

Stiles winces and quietly says, "Sorry."

"I don't have to deal with this shit," Derek snarls, more beast than human, and storms out of the dorm. Still in just his pajama pants.

Stiles sinks down into his bed, covering his face with his hands. When he'd graduated high school he'd thought, college will be different. I'll get out of this small town and meet new people that don't know what a spaz I am and it will be better. Maybe I'll have friends instead of just people who I sit with at lunch.

He sighs into his hand and pulls his phone out of his pocket, opening a new text.

*can I go home yet?*

*I'M not even home yet. Go make some friends*
Stiles drops his phone. God, he’s so pathetic. His dad literally just dropped him off thirty minutes ago and Stiles is already texting him like a codependent freak. He's doing something wrong if even his father thinks he needs to socialize more.

_I'm kind of a terrible person_

His dad doesn't answer for a long moment, probably because he's driving and shouldn't be texting in the first place, Sheriff, but after ten minutes he gets: _what did you do this time_

Thanks, Dad. Stiles doesn't even bother responding, just sighs again and pushes himself out of his bed.

He spends the rest of the afternoon exploring Greenwitch, the small town surrounding Barnett College, filling out applications here and there because although he's got a scholarship, he also a) still has no friends and therefore has a lot of free time and b) needs casual spending money to pay for the tissues he'll need for all the crying he'll be doing during all that free time. Any half-formed daydreams he'd had about being BFFs with his new roommate are forlornly waved away. He wouldn't even blame the guy if he put in a transfer request.

He orders a cup of Starbucks coffee at the local Barnes & Noble, filling out his fifth application, when a girl pulls out the seat across from him. She drops a huge purse next to his backpack and nearly knocks over his coffee. She’s got great reflexes though, because she snatches it up before it can spill all over his half-filled application.

"You're from Beacon Hills, right?"

Stiles grins, brightening when he recognizes her. "Allison, hey."

"Yeah! Um, sorry, but." Allison chews on her lower lip, embarrassed.

"Stiles," he says wryly. He isn't surprised, not really. Even though he and Allison went to the same school for three years, she hung out in groups way, way out of his league. See: Lydia Martin.

He knows that both Lydia and Allison were attending Barnett College; after all, that was part of the reason why he decided to go here. To give himself some credit, though, it does have the best Paranormal Criminology program in the state. Attending the same school as Lydia is just an added benefit. If he clings to a stubborn little fantasy that Lydia, lonely and desperate for attention in this new world where she is no longer the top of the food chain goes flying into his arms—well, no one has to know but him.

"Right! Right. I knew that." When Stiles just lifts his eyebrows she goes a pretty pink. "Well, okay, no. But I'm hoping to change that? I mean, you have no idea how glad I am to see a familiar face."

He does, but he doesn't want to embarrass her further by pointing it out. Allison’s one of those preternaturally nice girls who blushes a thanks when you hold the door open for her and always has a smile for you when she passes you in the hall, even though you’ve maybe only said five words to her in three years. He likes her, thinks maybe he can even be friends with her. Plus, she’s best friends with Lydia, so.

“Yeah. I’m just, um.” He waves down at his application awkwardly. “Looking for a job?” He doesn’t mean for it to be a question, but it comes out uncertain, like he’s asking her if she needs a job.

“Wow, you’re moving fast. I need to get one too, but I guess I’m just being lazy.”
Stiles doesn’t really know what to say to that, so he just smiles at her. She smiles back. They continue to smile silently for a full minute, before Allison clears her throat and gets up. “Uh, so, I’m just going to get some coffee.”

“Great!” Stiles says, a little too enthusiastically.

“Yeah! So I’ll see you around?”

“Sure, yeah, of course.” He gives her a tight little wave, feeling like he just finished an extremely awkward first date, but without any of the benefits.

“Oh, wait! Let me at least get your number.” She digs around in her ridiculous purse before coming up with her iphone with a pleased, ‘ah!’ “Stii-les. Is that with an i or a y?”

He gives her his number and the correct spelling for his name, still off-balance. It doesn’t at all feel like she’s trying to pick him up, but Stiles has always been completely hopeless at reading these things.

“Bye, Stiles!” Allison beams at him and waves, tucking her hair behind one ear as she heads towards the exit, her massive purse tucked securely under one arm. Stiles never really noticed just how pretty Allison is, always too blinded by Lydia. He feels like he’s being disloyal to Lydia for noticing Allison’s beauty, but.

Stiles has always done a great job at deluding himself when it comes Lydia Martin. He’s held onto his crush for her all the way until senior year, even through his brief relationship with Malia, in junior year. He thinks he’ll always love Lydia, even if it is just from force of habit. But—but maybe he should try the whole dating thing again. He doesn’t necessarily have to break away from the ten year plan; he can just—play the field or something.

Stiles snorts into his coffee. Yeah. ‘Play the field.’ As if he has any game to speak of. He finishes his coffee and his application, handing it to the bored cashier who is drawing anime characters on a strip of receipt paper. He grins at her, dredging up some of this elusive ‘game.’

She lifts an eyebrow.

Stiles’ grin falters.

“Someone will be in contact with you shortly,” she says, and Stiles flees the scene.

Derek, thank god, isn’t in their dorm by the time Stiles gets back to their room. Stiles still feels like a major jackass for being unintentionally racist and knows he owes Derek a true apology, but he doesn’t think he can handle those murderous eyebrows twice in one day. He wonders if he should maybe leave a note or something, but it feels way too grade school to him so he just tells himself he’ll apologize next time he sees him. If he ever sees him again.

Derek isn’t there the next morning, either, and Stiles has the horrible suspicion that he has driven off his roommate within five minutes of knowing him. This dreadful thought lasts up until Stiles notices that Derek’s sheets are a tangled mess. Derek must have snuck in after Stiles fell asleep last night, and back out before he woke up this morning. He doesn’t blame Derek for avoiding him, he just wishes he’d stick around long enough for Stiles to apologize.

He waits around for most of the day just in case, futzing around on his laptop, before giving up and heading back to the Barnes & Noble to sulk over a cup of coffee. He got enough gift cards for his high school graduation that he figures he’s set for the next three years.
Stiles doesn’t know what he was thinking, expecting that he’d magically have a social life just because he’s in college. He knows better, has learned from years of experience that most people can’t handle Stiles’ brand of overly loyal friendship. So far, all he’s managed to do is make his new roommate hate him.

How sad. It’s the day before class begins and he’s spent it moping over his laptop and a cup of coffee. So much for college being different.

He doesn’t think Allison is ever going to text him and since he never asked her for her number, he expects that their friendship was over before it started. So he’s pleasantly surprised when he gets a text from an unknown number when he’s in the middle of his second cup of coffee and making himself increasingly sad.

*hey stiles! It's Allison. There's a party tonight at the frat house. Wanna come*

*YES! Where* Stiles types, then immediately deletes because he’s not *that* desperate. He really is, but he doesn’t need to come *off* that way.

*Sounds cool, where?* he sends instead.

*deke house at 10*

Stiles has no idea what a deke house is or where it could be, but he isn’t a master of Google for nothing. He fires off a quick *awesome* and then frantically searches Google for where a ‘deke house’ could possibly be in the Bay Area. Thankfully, Allison saves him from scrolling through roughly a million useless results by sending him the address.

The same bored cashier from yesterday is starting her shift and Stiles grins at her again. She rolls her eyes but smiles back at him. Stiles counts that as a win.

“Yum, watermelon.”

It turns out Deke stands for Delta Kappa Epsilon, some fraternity Stiles doesn’t even dream of joining. He snags a chunk of watermelon from the platter in the tiny kitchen, popping the whole thing into his mouth and then almost immediately spitting it right back out. It’s like he crunched into a cube of solid vodka, and not the good kind either. Only the sight of familiar strawberry blonde curls keeps him from making a jerk of himself.

“Ly—” he coughs into his fist, “Lydia.”

Lydia turns to him, lifting eyebrows over her solo cup. She takes her time sipping from her drink, not breaking eye contact. “Do I know you?”

One of the many meatheads surrounding her snorts a laugh. Stiles sighs and gives her a small smile. He’s not even surprised anymore. It took him half his life to realize that Lydia’s beautiful and smart and so wrapped up in her image that she’s happy to pretend she’s not as great as she really is. Last year he would have detailed their entire future together. Now he just shrugs and runs his fingers through his hair, messing it up even more. It still stings, but he’s, well. He’s used to it.

“Nah,” he says. “Must have thought you were someone else. Watermelon?”

He sees the exact moment her eyes go calculating, and he *knows* she knows who he is, but she takes a piece of watermelon and says nothing. He salutes her with his piece and grabs two more, winding his way into the thick of things. Where there’s a Lydia, there’s an Allison.
“Stiles!” Sure enough, Allison collides into him, grabbing one of his arms with both her hands. “I’m glad you made it!”

The music’s loud, some dubstep crap that’s making his insides flinch. He tries to jump with her to the music, but gives up pretty quickly. “I need more alcohol for this!”

She grins sympathetically at him and drags him towards the back. “Come on! There’s a keg back here.”

This is how Stiles ends up doing a keg stand, held up by Allison, some dude who smells like pot, one of Lydia’s meatheads and, surprisingly, Lydia herself, though she’s only holding one of his feet. When they set him down again his head is spinning slightly from all the blood rushing back down, but people are cheering and laughing and Stiles thinks that he might actually be getting the college experience. He’s handed a solo cup and he chugs that too, realizing too late that it’s tequila. Ugh. He grins weakly, saluting whoever handed it to him and heading back towards the house to get away from the crush of bodies.

He stumbles when he recognizes just who is leaning against the wall, subjecting the crowd to his moody eyebrows. Somehow, Derek didn’t strike him as the partying type. He is not surprised at all when he sees that he’s standing next to a gorgeous chick since Derek’s, well, Derek.

"Derek!" Stiles just barely manages to stop himself falling into him by grabbing onto his arm. He’s treated to a very pointed glare for daring to touch Derek’s werewolfy bad self, but he clings to his sleeve anyway. "Derek."

"What."

"Derek."

"What, Stiles?"

"I don't think we started off on the wrong foot. The right foot. I don't think we started off on the right foot. Or the left one."

So he might be drunk. Like, really drunk. That last shot of tequila did a number on him. He's still got the spins, which usually leads to some intense puking, but he's determined to set thing straight with the guy he'll be living with for a year.

Derek is starting to get all glarey again, possibly because Stiles has twisted his hand into his sleeve, staring up at him with big earnest eyes.

"Let go."

"You have to listen," Stiles insists, shaking Derek's arm. This just ratchets up the glaring.

"Let go before I tear off your arm."

Stiles pauses in his shaking because that's a little excessive. "Dude. Not buddies."

"We aren't 'buddies,' Stiles."

"That's what I'm saying! You need to listen."

Derek rolls his eyes, glancing at the stupidly hot girl beside him. She lifts her eyebrows and he just shrugs, turning back to Stiles.
"Well?"

"Well what?" Stiles asks. His mouth is starting to water.

"if you're just fucking around—"

"No! No. I wanted to," he swallows, "to—"

He lets go of Derek's arm and bolts into the house, one hand clamped over his mouth. He barrels past the girl reaching for the bathroom door, just barely making it to the toilet before he is violently sick. The girl politely closes the door behind him.

"Fuck."

He flushes the toilet and rolls onto his back on the bathroom floor, trying not to think about what he's lying on, and stares glumly at the ceiling. This is one of those unfortunate nights where he's barfing up his spleen and yet is completely aware of every agonizing moment of his existence.

“Sorry, Derek,” he says dryly to the ceiling. “I’m really good at talking, but I suck at saying what I really mean.”

A minute later the girl who shut the door for him walks into the bathroom and primly sits on the toilet. Stiles glances at her from under his arm, confirms she’s doing exactly what he thinks she’s doing, then covers his face again with a groan.

“Could you not have waited?” he asks.

“Nope,” she says cheerfully and flushes the toilet.

That is just awesome.

The first day of classes is just as bad as he thought it was going to be. He is hungover and exhausted, and he didn't have time to grab something to eat before Intro to Paranormal Criminal Justice. He manages to get to class five minutes before it starts and secures a seat in the middle of the classroom.

A minute later, Derek walks in.

He’s bright eyed and bushy tailed, not at all as if he’d spent half the night partying. Stiles knows for a fact that he didn’t get home until well into the a.m., since Stiles was awake when Derek slipped into his own bed last night. After the whole puking fiasco, Stiles stumbled back to their dorm, alone, and somehow feeling even sadder than he had that afternoon. He wasn’t as lonely—Allison really is a cool girl who willingly wants to hang out with him, but Derek’s persistent hatred makes him feel like a crappy human being. So he’d crawled into his bed and tried to sleep away the rest of the alcohol. His sour stomach kept him from getting a good night’s sleep and he was wide awake when Derek finally decided it was time for bed.

Derek frowns at him, which is a huge step up from his usual enraged scowl, but he take a seat on the other side of the forum. Stiles looks down at his desk. Huh. This isn’t exactly a popular class, but, well, Derek is the posterchild for the paranormal, so maybe it isn’t that surprising after all.

Derek is also in the other two classes Stiles has for the day. By Sociology of the Supernatural, he’s given in and taken the seat next to Stiles. Stiles definitely counts that as a win.

“Why are you in all these classes? Are you supernatural?” Derek asks when the class ends.
“Paranormal Criminology major,” Stiles says.

“Oh.” Derek slings his bookbag over his shoulder with one hand, even though it looks like he has half a library in there. “Me, too.”

This somehow doesn’t surprise Stiles at all. The same can’t be said about Derek, who is staring at him with open curiosity. It’s so disconcerting that Stiles starts babbling to hide his discomfort.

“My dad’s the sheriff of my hometown. Beacon Hills? Maybe you’ve heard of it. A lot of crap went down there a couple of years ago. Kanimas, wendigos, pixies, you name it.” He waves a hand expressively. “It was my dad’s idea. I kept getting in the middle of shit and he thought I should at least be paid to do what I was already doing.”

Derek says nothing. They walk for about two minutes in total silence before Stiles, never good at keeping his mouth shut, says, “What about you? Why Paranormal Criminology?”

“I’d be good at it.”

“That’s—god, that’s so true.” Stiles grins. Derek really would be the perfect spook cop. His grin slips. “Hey, you know, I just wanted to tell you that I really am sorry. I acted like a total jerk the other day and I want you to know that I’m not normally such a spaz. Well, alright, I totally am, but—I am sorry.”

“I know.” Stiles blinks up at him, but Derek is still staring straight ahead, face impassive. When Derek notices him gaping, he rolls his eyes. “I heard you last night.”

“You heard me—in the bathroom? What, did you have your ear pressed against the wall?”

“No, idiot, don’t you know anything about werewolves?” Derek taps one ear. “We have good hearing.”

Stiles narrows his eyes. “How good?”

“I was still outside when you apologized.”

“Jesus Christ!”

“Yeah.” Derek winces slightly. “It’s not always great.”

Stiles thinks about what he was doing right before he apologized and winces as well. “Uh, yeah. Gross.”

Derek abruptly seems to remember that he is supposed to hate Stiles, because suddenly he frowns and turns around, walking in the complete opposite direction and leaving Stiles with his mouth hanging half-open.

He had thought things were going pretty well.

Stiles gets the job at Barnes & Noble as a Bookseller. The manager took one look at him during the interview and said, “Well, you already spend most of your time here, anyway. Might as well get paid for it.” It’s shit pay, but he gets free coffee out of it and the hours are flexible. The cashier, Violet, is slowly warming up to him, but he bonds almost instantly with one of the other Booksellers, Isaac.

It’s good. Things are good. Maybe not as exciting as he was hoping, but he has friends and Things to Do on Friday Nights, which is good enough for him. Derek even sometimes sits next to him in class.
and doesn’t always bolt out of their dorm when Stiles is in it.

He falls into a routine. School, work, study, sometimes party. Even Lydia’s warming up to him, which would be awesome if he isn’t obviously a permanent resident of the friendzone. She’s dating the meathead who held him up at the keg stand and he’s actually a bigger jackass than Stiles realized, but Stiles isn’t about to complain about being the Friendzoned Nice Guy; he doesn’t need Violet to tell him that’s gross.

One drizzly, quiet morning in October, a girl dressed like a business woman and looks all of fifteen stalks up to the Information station, points right at him, and says, “YOU.”

Stiles looks over his shoulder.

“You’re perfect!”

Stiles looks back to the girl, eyebrows shooting up. “Me?”

“Yes, you! Wait, wait, how old are you?”

“Nineteen?”

The girl claps once, beaming at him. “Perfect, as long as you can legally prove it. You’re perfect.”

“Um, for what?”

“Modeling!”

Stiles’ eyebrows climb even higher. He glances at Isaac, who just shrugs. “Um,” he says, because, what. If he’s so perfect for modeling, why has he had all of one girlfriend his entire life?

“Come on, you can’t be that attached to this job,” the girl says, fishing through her purse. She slams a business card in front of him triumphantly. “Even if you are, it’s fine, we can work around your schedule. You’re good, too,” she points at Isaac, probably realizing she’s being a little rude, “but we don’t really take Betas.”

“Betas?” Stiles repeats, now really lost.

“Beta werewolf,” Isaac explains, the tips of his ears red and—oh. Stiles thinks he might be a crappy friend for not realizing that.

“So you’re not the smartest crayon in the box,” says the girl, fishing through her purse. She slams a business card in front of him triumphantly. “Even if you are, it’s fine, we can work around your schedule. You’re good, too,” she points at Isaac, probably realizing she’s being a little rude, “but we don’t really take Betas.”

“Betas?” Stiles repeats, now really lost.

“Beta werewolf,” Isaac explains, the tips of his ears red and—oh. Stiles thinks he might be a crappy friend for not realizing that.

“So you’re not the smartest crayon in the box,” says the girl, and it’s hilarious that she’s insulting his intelligence when she can’t even get her metaphors right. “But it’s okay, because you’ve got the perfect neck.”

“ Weird,” he says.

She waves dismissively at him and pushes the card forward, staring intently in his eyes. “Call me,” she orders. She continues to mug several seconds, then turns and just walks out, not even purchasing the book she has in her hands. Stiles is too stunned to go after her.

Isaac picks up the card. “Canid Publications,” he reads out loud. “Paige. No last name.”

“What’s going on?” Violet asks. She’s just come back from her break and is still wearing her sunglasses, a soda from the food court in one hand.

“Some lady just propositioned Stiles.” Isaac hands her the business card.
“She didn’t proposition me.”

Violet flips the card over, sipping from her drink. “There’s a website."

They crowd around one of the computers that’s supposed to be used for searching books, but that Stiles hacked into one slow Monday to access the internet. Violet types the address into Firefox.

“Stiles,” Violet chokes, when the pictures on the website load. “This is—”

“Oh my god close that right now!”

It’s porn. Well, it’s sort of porn. Gay sort of porn. Definitely Not Safe For Work. Isaac pushes Stiles out of the way to frantically exit out of the browser before their manager catches them looking at porn.

There’s a long, long moment of silence, and then Isaac and Violet crack up. Stiles drops his head on the counter, neck red hot.
When Stiles gets off work that afternoon, he spends a solid hour pretending like he's studying for Sociology for the Supernatural, before giving in and grabbing his laptop. Paige's business card is still crammed into his wallet. He pulls it out and flips it over, looking at the URL.

The pictures on CAPTIVE's homepage aren't quite porn, mostly just teasers with the repeated encouragement to sign up for only $9.99 a month! The site's clearly targeting werewolves, with scantily dressed men baring their necks in variations of sexy poses and touching themselves, sliding their hands down lithe bodies, bending over horizontal surfaces.

There's a starburst at the top right corner of the page, enticing the user to subscribe to their monthly magazine for additional EXCLUSIVE PICTURES, caps and everything.

Stiles chews on his bottom lip. According to the huge, bright red text in the middle of the page, there's a promotion going on, a free week's trial that doesn't even require a credit card.

It wouldn't hurt to join, right? He has at least three fake email addresses he could use to register, no one has to know. Especially since he's joining specifically in the name of research. After all, if he's going to take the job, he needs to know what he's getting into. Not that he's even considering calling Paige, but in case he did.

About twenty minutes surfing through the pictures and videos, he's starting to think that maybe his sexuality is a lot more fluid than he realized.

"What are you looking at?"

Stiles squawks and slams his laptop shut. Derek looks like he’s just come from the gym, face and hair damp. He uses the bottom of his shirt to wipe away some sweat from over his eye, stomach muscles flexing, and looking almost exactly like one of the Alphas from CAPTIVE’s website.

Stiles swallows. Derek freezes, head cocked to the side like a confused dog. He sniffs the air, and then looks really embarrassed.

Can Derek smell that he's—that he's sexually fluid?

"I'm—going to go," Derek says after a long, really uncomfortable moment. So, that's a yes.

"Yeah," Stiles says.

Derek spares him one last knowing glance, then backs out of the room. Stiles drops down on his bed with a groan, yanking his pillow over his head.

Stiles goes to the gym to work off the affect CAPTIVE had on his body, since there is no way he’s going to jerk off in the room he shares with a werewolf who has an exceptionally good sense of
smell. That pretty much put him off masturbating in their room, ever. He might never jerk off again. Maybe he’ll just work out whenever he’s feeling horny. At least then he would be in the best shape of his life after a week.

It takes five miles running at top speed before some of the humiliation finally fades away.

When he gets back from his shower, Derek is sitting at the small desk crammed at the foot of his bed, pulling out his Sociology of the Supernatural book from his bag.

"Uh," Stiles says.

"Have you started studying for the quiz?"

So. Derek's pretending like nothing happened. Stiles is all over that, though he might still be blushing.

They've never just hung out in their dorm together; Stiles either has work or plans with Allison or Isaac, and Derek does whatever Derek does. But Derek just looks at him expectantly, book flipped open to the section they're going to be quizzed on. Stiles goes to his bed, sitting on the edge.

"Yeah, a little," Stiles lies. But Derek is obviously desperately trying to act normal and being totally weird about it. Stiles grabs his own book from his cracked nightstand, if just to give him something to do with his hands. It’s Saturday. He hadn’t planned on studying until Sunday night. He ends up reading anyway, since Sociology of the Supernatural is one of his favorite subjects.

"You work out?" Derek asks, after they read in silence for five minutes.

"I'm majoring in Paranormal Criminology. Of course I work out."

"Me, too."

Stiles rolls his eyes. “I mean, obviously.”

Derek looks back down at his book. Stiles didn’t think it was physically possible, but Derek is totally awkward. This revelation has the mixed effect of making Stiles feel both relieved and uncomfortable: relieved because he isn’t the only one feeling weird, uncomfortable because—yeah.

“Just study, Stiles,” Derek says.

“Okay, Derek.”

“Party at Jackson’s tonight. You should come.”

Lydia has likely only accepted him into her circle of friends because he’s close with Allison, but he’ll take what he can get, even if it means he sometimes has to hang out with her meathead boyfriend, too. It’s Sunday afternoon and they are at Barnes & Noble, even though Stiles is not working today. Somehow, his place of employment is the new place to hang out. Whatever. At least Isaac and Violet can join them on their breaks.

“Sure,” Allison agrees for both of them, pushing a latte to Stiles.

The girls take out their phones and immediately start texting, but Stiles’ dad never let him have his phone out in company. He fiddles with his cup, uncomfortable in the silence. Checks his own phone. There’s no new texts, since he’s sitting across from the two people who text him most. He never realized that hanging out with girls could be so quiet.
“I got scouted by some modeling company,” Stiles says, apropos of nothing. When Allison and Lydia just stare at him over their phones, he clarifies, “For, uh, gay porn. Softcore porn.”

“What!” Allison yelps, and Lydia narrows her eyes at him and says, “I can see that.”

It’s Lydia’s turn to be stared at.

“What?” she asks, sipping her iced Frappuccino. “You have the look for it. Are you going to take it?”

Stiles decides to ignore the first part of that sentence to shrug at the second, hovering over his latte. "No. I don't know. Should I?"

"There's no actual fucking involved, is there?"

Stiles expects at least Allison to be a tiny bit scandalized, but she just looks at him expectantly with Lydia. He really needs to find new friends.

"No?" he says uncertainly. "At least, I don't think there is." He thinks about the pictures in CAPTIVE’s exclusive and says, "I think I can tell them I don't do full porn."

"Yet," Lydia says. Stiles balls up his straw’s wrapper and flicks it at her.

"So you're seriously thinking about doing this," Allison says.

Stiles doesn't answer, just sips his coffee.

"Are you gay?" Lydia asks, blunt and invasive as ever.

He wants to tell her it's none of her damn business, but he likes his balls where they are. Stiles isn't even sure he knows the answer to that anymore. He's pretty sure no one fully heterosexual would react the way he did to the pictures on CAPTIVE's site. He's also not sure how he feels about this revelation, just that there is a surprising lack of freaking out. Maybe he’s always known that he isn’t only into girls and is just now admitting it to himself. God, he’s already nineteen. Shouldn’t he have his sexuality figured out by now?

"Bisexual," Lydia decides. "You were hung up on me all those years, after all."

"You knew!" he gasps.

"Focus, Stiles," she snaps, as if him also maybe liking dudes automatically means he'll no longer like her. It at leasts opens up the playing field. Not that he's even sure which field he wants to play in.

“Are you, or are you not going to take the job?”

“God, Lydia,” Stiles snaps back, glaring at her. “Can I have like, five fucking seconds to think about it?”

“It’s a yes or no question, Stiles. Shouldn’t be that hard.”

“Whatever happened to ‘maybe’?""

‘Maybe’ is for the weak. Are you going to do it or not?”

He thinks about it. On one hand, extra money. On the other hand, porn.

“Maybe,” he says, and Lyda throws a crumpled napkin at his head.
When Stiles gets back from Jackson’s party that night, he’s seriously considering breaking his self-imposed ban. He sprawls out on the floor, considering the olfactory sensitivity of werewolves versus the numerous and varied benefits of jerking off.

Fuck it.

He reaches under his bed to grab the bottle of lube, a spur of the moment upgrade from lotion, and stumbles out of his dorm. Derek isn’t around, but Stiles has decided during his contemplation of werewolf noses that the smell of sex lingers in a small room, even to humans, and the last thing he wants to do is wave around a giant sign that says HEY GUESS WHAT I JUST DID. He shoves his hands into his pockets and ducks his head, feeling a lot he's about to commit some sort of illicit affair, and staggers to the communal bathrooms.

When Stiles flicks the light switch on, harsh white light floods the restroom, momentarily blinding him. He passes through the toilets and heads to the shower stall furthest away from the entrance, closing the curtain securely behind him. He drops his pants.

It’s weird, standing in a shower stall in a public bathroom with a hand wrapped around his dick, but. Desperate times. It isn’t weird enough to stop him, at least. It helps that he’s still a little drunk. He strokes himself quickly, wanting to get it over with before some guy decides he needs a night piss. He tries imagining Lydia, or one of the faceless girls he’s seen in porn. His mind keeps drifts to the guys from CAPTIVE. He groans, frustrated, and leans his head against the shower wall.

Stiles glances at the bottle of lube poking out from the pocket of his jeans. Before he can overthink it, he grabs it, squirting way too much into his palm. It feels so much better when he wraps his hand around his cock again, lube trickling down his balls. He thinks about the videos of the guys reaching back, groaning obscenely as they fuck themselves on their own fingers.

He plays with his balls indecisively, still stroking himself slowly, before reaching back, sliding fingers up the cleft of his ass. He rubs the pad of his forefinger against his entrance, not quite pushing in. Bites his lip. Slips his finger in to the first knuckle and jerks forward, totally unprepared for how invasive it feels. He stays completely still for over a minute, still biting hard on his lip, then moves his finger back out and, slowly, presses back in. Then his finger pushes completely in and he shudders, groaning into the wall. It’s still strange, but, God.

His mind flashes through what he remembers from CAPTIVE, picturing a large Alpha facefucking another man, hand tangled roughly in his hair, another Alpha rutting into a guy bent over a sink, Derek wiping his face with his shirt—

“Fuck!” Stiles shouts when his finger presses against something that sends white hot flashes up his spine, and he comes so hard that all the breath is punched out of him.

“Jesus Christ,” Stiles pants to the wall, blinking repeatedly, then silently freaks out and showers. Twice.
logistics behind it.

He pays the cab driver while triple checking the address, half hoping he got it wrong so he could just
go back to his dorm. The address on the door matches the one on the card, no matter how many
times he looks. He wipes his sweaty palms on his jeans. If anything, he could claim that he’s lost.

“Can I help you?”

There’s a girl standing at a large desk in what Stiles guesses is an office-slash-lobby, leaning over a
mess of papers but looking up at Stiles curiously. A graph is tacked on the wall behind her; when
Stiles peers closer at it, he sees that it’s a pie chart of CAPTIVE’s target audience. On the opposite
wall is a huge print of a grinning guy in nothing but a pair of boxer briefs, shimmying against a
towel. Next to it is, of all things, a potted plant.

“I’m looking for Paige,” he says, holding up her business card like a ticket of admission. “She, uh,
she owes me for a book.”

The girl gives him a slow once over and smirks. “I’m sure she does.” She makes a quick note on a
mock up and sidles around the table, holding out her hand. “I’m Braeden, Marketing Manager for
CAPTIVE.”

“Stiles,” Stiles says, shaking her hand.

She snorts. “Could you have picked a cheesier name?”

It takes him a moment to decipher her comment. Stiles. Styles. He shakes his head emphatically.
“No, Stiles is actually my name. Stiles Stilinski.”

He digs out his Student ID, determined to prove that he didn’t just think up a lame pseudonym
specific to the modeling industry, but she’s lost interest, already opening the door to the left of the
desk.

“Come with me.”

She leads him into a large, windowless room. Dominating the back wall is a four poster bed on top a
 giant white screen that’s hung from the ceiling, with what appears to be a large umbrella pointing at
it. It’s so out of place that Stiles doesn’t even notice the group of people sitting at a table until
Braeden says:

“Hey, Paige. Stiles here says you owe him money for a book.”

There are snacks on the table, but everyone’s too busy staring at Stiles as if he were naked. Actually,
that would probably be less weird here than demanding compensation for a book.

“Uh,” says Paige, blankly, before lighting up with recognition. “Oh! You’re the boy from Barnes &
Noble.”

“Yeah. Um, about the book—”

“Oh, right, I totally stole that,” Paige says, blushing slightly. She stands from the table, pulling a
small wallet from her back pocket. “How much does it cost?”

Stiles has no idea.

There’s silence for a beat, then Paige grins like a cat who just caught a particularly fat canary. “You
She claps, her grin getting even wider. “Awesome. Okay, this is great. Team, this is—Did you say your name is Stiles?”

“It’s my real name,” he says, doggedly, since it is. He waves his Student ID at her. “See? It says so on my Student ID.”

“And what a great name it is,” Paige says, linking her arm through his and leading him back towards the lobby. “Listen, we’re booked for shoots today, but I can squeeze you in tomorrow. Does that work?”

“I have two classes in the morning, but I’m free after one.”

“Great, perfect. Come by after class. Braeden here will work out all the technical details with you.” She claps him on the shoulder, still grinning brightly. “I’m glad you came, Stiles.”

“Me too,” he says. “I think.”

"There is no way I'm going to fit into these jeans," Stiles protests.

"Yes you will," Danny says.

If someone told Stiles that he would be spending his Thursday afternoon getting dressed for a gay softcore porn photoshoot a month ago, he would have laughed in their face. Or walked away. He’s in a dressing room with Danny, Paige, and a blonde who’s giving him dirty looks. She’s gorgeous. Danny is pretty gorgeous himself, and Stiles can admit that to himself, now that he’s had a finger up his ass while thinking about Derek.

Not going down that train of thought.

“Do you only hire pretty people?” Stiles hisses to Paige, who grins at him.

“What do you expect in this industry?”

Stiles picks up the jeans, peering doubtfully into them. They’re no larger inside than they are outside. He might as well just spray paint them on and call it a day.

"Do you think you're funny or something?" the blonde growls. Stiles frowns at her, then back at the jeans. His joke was pretty lame, maybe even cliche, but it’s not like he said it out loud.

"Stiles, this is Erica Reyes, our makeup artist," Paige says. “She's a Beta."

"Oh," Stiles says. There are a lot more werewolves out there than he realized. He's reevaluating his belief that there were no werewolves in Beacon Hills, since they seem to be everywhere. There always was something weird about Deputy Parrish. "What? Me? Funny? No. I'm not funny. Why?"

"Really. So you just thought it was a good idea to show up to a photoshoot with werewolves wearing a red hoodie?"

"It's my favorite sweater," Stiles says, lamely.

"Are you real? Like, seriously?"
“Drop your pants, Stilinski,” Danny orders, ignoring Erica’s disbelief. “Shirt comes off, too.”

Stiles shrugs off his hoodie and yanks his shirts over his head, pretending like he’s not basically doing a strip tease to a full audience. There’s a low whistle and Stiles rubs the back of his head, neck prickling with heat.

“Talk about false advertising,” Danny mutters to himself.

“I’m studying to be a cop,” Stiles says, defensively. “I work out.”

“No one’s complaining here,” Erica says, tone vastly different from when she was eviscerating him for his wardrobe choices.

He manages to squeeze himself into the jeans and is powdered and rouged before he’s shoved back out, towards the bed. He blinks into the lights pointing at him for a second, before turning to the floppy haired guy sitting—also topless—on the bed.

“Hi,” the guy says, smiling easily at Stiles. It takes Stiles a second to realize it's the guy from the print in the lobby.

All of a sudden, Stiles is flooded with crushing indecision. What the hell does he think he’s doing, pretending like he’s some sort of model? Stiles can barely walk down a flight of stairs without tripping over himself; how the hell is he supposed pull off the cheerful, comfortable grace this guy is practically exuding?

“I’m Scott,” the guy says, getting off the bed to hold a hand out to Stiles.

“I’m not gay,” Stiles tells Scott.

“Yeah you are!” Erica yells.

“I’m not completely gay,” Stiles corrects. He doesn’t need Erica defining his sexual identity, or outing him, or whatever, especially since he’s still trying to figure it all out himself.

“Cool,” Scott says, shrugging easily. “Me, neither.”

As it turns out, Stiles loves Scott.

He is nervous at first, confused when the people behind the cameras start snapping commands at each other and at lighting. But then Scott does a perfect impression of Elvis’s lip curl, a playful little snarl, and Stiles bursts out laughing.

Scott and Stiles aren’t able to get into the role of gay lovers; about five minutes into the shoot it’s obvious to everyone that they’re long lost brothers. The shoot devolves pretty rapidly after that. Mostly, they make faces and laugh, leaning on each other’s shoulders. By the end of the shoot, Stiles is convinced that there’s no way Paige will ask him to come back.

“Stiles,” Paige shouts, probably to tell him thanks, but no thanks, your check will be in the mail, “you were great!”

“What, really?”

“Of course! Listen, do you want to come back? I can email a schedule and you can let me know what works out for you.”

Stiles glances at Scott, who gives him two thumbs up. “Sure, yeah. Of course.”
“Awesome,” Paige says. “Let me just put together a contract for you and—” She bounces away, leaving Scott and Stiles staring after her.

“Oh my god, dude,” Stiles exhales, trembling from nervous adrenaline. He turns to Scott. “Can we be bros?”

“We already are,” Scott says. “Wanna play COD?”

Stiles’ life just got a million times better.

Stiles’ life sucks.

Things had been going so well with Derek lately, after their impromptu study session. He even witnessed a smile just the other day. Now Derek is sneering at him, lips curled back to show what pointy teeth he has.

"Dude, what?"

"Why do you smell like another Alpha?"

"God, just how good is your sense of smell, anyway?"

"Answer the question, Stiles."

Stiles rubs the back of his neck, feeling guilty for some reason. It's not as if he owes Derek an explanation. He’s not sure why he hasn’t told Derek about his new job, just that he can’t get the image of Derek staring at him in disgust when they first met out of his head.

"It's from my job."

"You only work with a Beta."

"Okay, kinda creepy, dude." Stiles slides a hand over his face. Werewolves, jeez. "And it really is from my job."

Derek narrows his eyes at him. "You’re not telling the truth, but you’re not really lying, either."

"No, I'm not." Stiles frowns. "How can you tell?"

“I can hear your heart beat."

“Okay, really creepy, dude.”

“That’s not what I—” Derek rolls his eyes, which at least makes him look less like he’s going to eat Stiles’ face off. “When someone lies, their heart sounds different. Double beat, skipped beat, an uptick.”

“Oh. Wow.” Stiles says, fascinated. “So, what if someone’s lying, but they really believe what they’re saying is true? Like, say I’m telling you I saw a UFO, only I haven’t, but I’ve convinced myself that I have—”

“Stiles.”

"God, is it your time of the month or something?" Stiles grumps.
Derek doesn't say anything.

"Oh. Oh, shit. It is, isn't it? It's the full moon tonight? Are you always this pissy during the full moon?"

"Is your new friend pissy?" Derek snarks.

"Not at all. Cool as a cucumber."

"Maybe you should go hang out at his place then."

It’s probably not the best idea to taunt an Alpha about his monthly condition, especially if he wants to convince Derek he’s not a racist asshole. “I just started working with him, okay? Is that going to be a problem, or something?”

“No,” Derek says, and Stiles doesn’t need to listen to Derek’s heart to know that he’s lying. “I’m going, don’t wait up.”

Stiles doesn’t. He does spend the next three hours researching full moons, lunar cycles, and werewolves, however.

throwbackshot

i did it

did what?

Then: STILES YOU DID IT????

Before Stiles can respond, his phone vibrates, Allison’s name appearing on the caller ID.

“You actually did it?!?!” Allison yells when he picks up. He holds the phone away from his ear, grinning in spite of himself.

“Yes?”

“Well? How was it? Was it awkward? I bet it was so awkward.”

“It really wasn’t.” Stiles drops down on his bed, idly highlighting a line in Introduction to Paranormal Law. “Did you know that most states require owners to disclose the presence of ghosts on their property if they want to sell? Even if they’re selling to beings who can’t see ghosts, like most humans and weres?”

“Yes, I—what? Stiles, stop deflecting!”

“I’m not. I’m studying.”

“Tell me about the photoshoot,” Allison hisses.

“It was fine,” Stiles says.

“Oh my God men. Hold on a second.” There’s shuffling on the other line, then the call goes echoey as Allison puts him on speaker.

“He did the shoot,” she tells whoever else is in the room.

“Shut up, really?” Lydia says. “How was it? Why didn’t you text me?”
“I don’t know what you guys want to hear,” Stiles says, flipping through his book. “They made me get into these really tight jeans and pose with another dude. I don’t know what they see in me; we couldn’t stop laughing."

“Laughing?” Lydia repeats, blankly.

“I didn’t think there would be much laughing involved,” Allison says.

“Well, there was. Actually, I really like the dude I did the shoot with.”

“Like-like?” Lydia asks, and Stiles can just hear her eyebrows waggling.

“That is so mature, Lydia. No, I don’t like-like Scott. Besides, he’s straight. Mostly straight, I think.”

“A straight guy doing gay porn,” Allison says, disbelievingly.

“It pays better. He usually does straight shoots, but will shoot with guys sometimes. Besides, he doesn’t do full out porn, just the softcore stuff.” He highlights a mustache onto some bigwig Paranormal Lawyer. “He goes to Barnett too, you know. Studying to be a vet or something.”

“You seem to know a lot about this guy considering you don’t like-like him,” Lydia says, suspiciously.

“We played Call of Duty.”

“Of course you did,” Lydia says, and then because Lydia is a terrible person, goes on to say, “Stiles, I want to go to your next shoot.”

“What, no!”

“Yes. I did some research about the porn industry—like you should have done, Mr. Google-fu—and if you really want to make the big bucks, you need a manager. That will be me, for a twenty per cent cut.”

“Lydia—” He drums his fingers on his book, scowling unseeingly at the text. He can’t exactly admit out loud that he isn’t doing this for the money, because then they’ll ask why he’s doing it, if not for the money, and he doesn’t have the answer to that. “This isn’t like a serious career, you know that, right?”

“Everything is serious, Stilinski,” Lydia says, seriously. “Have they sent you a contract yet? Forward it to me. When’s your next shoot?”

He doesn’t try to argue with her; when Lydia has decided something, she’s like an ox, plodding determinedly forward no matter what people throw at her to make her stop. Not that he would ever compare her to an ox out loud. Again, balls, happy where they are. And anyway, he’s not sure the term ox would accurately describe her, what with the unfair stigma that they’re slow. Lydia’s more like a determined beaver. Also not something he would say out loud, especially considering its connotations.

Besides, it might be nice having someone else around, helping him figure out exactly what the hell he’s doing with his life.

“I have a solo shoot Friday next week, one p.m.”

“Shit, I have class. Can you reschedule?”
“I’m free,” Allison chimes in.

“Perfect. You have an innocent face, you can be my mole. I’d skip, but it’s Calculus.”

“Oh my god,” Stiles says.

“Don’t worry Stiles, we have your back!” Allison says, happily.

“You say not to worry,” Stiles mutters despairingly. The door to his dorm clicks. “Shit, going now. Bye.”

He hangs up before either of them can protest just as Derek enters the room. Stiles quickly replays the end of the conversation in his head, hoping he didn’t say anything incriminating. Derek tosses his gym bag to the side and climbs straight into his bed, not even bothering to take off his shoes.

“Hey,” Stiles says. “You okay?”

Derek grunts and buries his head in his pillow.

“Good talk,” Stiles says.

Derek is sleeping.

This is the first time in the two months that they’ve lived together that Stiles has seen this unnatural phenomenon. He thinks about full moons, that they’ve lived together through two lunar cycles, that he doesn’t remember Derek staying in their room after the first one. He wonders what it means, if maybe Derek does like him. A little. Infinitesimally.

See Derek Hale in his natural territory, totally relaxed.

Stiles looks down at his book.

“Who’s this?” Paige asks, looking Allison over. “New model? I work strictly with CAPTIVE, sweetie, but I can put you in contact with Jennifer. She does shoots for Beast and WILD.”

“Beast and WILD?” Stiles asks, curious in spite himself.

“Our straight and lesbian publications.”

Allison ducks her head, pleased that she was mistaken for a model. “No, I’m just here with Stiles. Is that okay?”

Paige’s expression softens in the face of Allison’s earnest eyes. Sometimes, Stiles can’t help wonder if Allison is really as sweet as she makes herself out to be. He doesn’t think anyone that innocent can survive as Lydia’s best friend for three years without being horribly corrupted.

“Sure, as long as you can keep quiet. Girlfriend?”

“No, we’re just friends,” Stiles says, rocking on the balls of his feet. “I’m just going to get changed, yeah?” He jerks his thumb towards the dressing room and then just walks away before they can say anything.
The same jeans from his last shoot are folded on the vanity’s bench, along with a pair of boxer briefs that looks like they would have fit him five years ago. The dressing room’s empty for once, but he shimmies into the clothing as fast as he can just in case Erica or Paige decide to slam in, jumping to yank the jeans up his thighs. He exhales slowly through his nose, catching sight of himself in the mirror.

He looks ridiculous.

“Ready?” Erica asks, slamming into the room. Stiles nearly leaps out of his skin, grabbing his heart.

“Jesus, Erica. Has any of you ever heard of knocking?”

“If you’re worried about privacy, Stiles, you’re in the wrong line of work. Now sit down so I can put your face on.”

Stiles sits.

“You’ve got to relax, Stiles.” Matt sounds really angry for some reason, maybe because Stiles can’t stop fidgeting. “I can’t work with this.”

“Sorry,” Stiles says, shaking out his hands. Matt grunts in annoyance, but doesn’t say anything while Stiles bounces out his nerves. Last time, Matt at least tried to give Scott and Stiles directions. He’s oddly silent now. Maybe he’s pissed because Scott and Stiles failed so miserably at listening to him.

“You’re going to have to get a hard on, Stiles,” Paige says.

“No pressure or anything,” Stiles mutters. He can’t see Allison past the glare from the lights, but he desperately, desperately hopes that she got bored and decided to leave the country.

Okay, he can do this. He closes his eyes and pictures the other models on CAPTIVE’s website, trying to mimic their easy, sexy poses.

“You’re too stiff and you look ridiculous. Fuck, Stilinski, get your shit together or get out,” Matt shouts.

Stiles’ eyes snap open to glare at Matt. He didn’t realize the guy was such a prick. He holds his scowl for a moment longer, then drops his eyes.

He knows, he knows he shouldn’t, but Stiles thinks of Derek. He pictures the way he moves, muscles shifting under his Henley. He thinks about Derek’s forearms, the was his stomach flexed when he lifted his shirt, that one time he was naked.

“Good,” Matt says. “Now unbutton your jeans.”

It’s Derek’s hands that are slowly undoing the button, thumbs sliding over Stiles’ hips, dipping under the band of his boxer briefs, ghosting over his cock.

“You can take your jeans off, Stiles. Tilt your head more.”

Derek drags his jeans slowly down Stiles’ hips, hands skimming over his bare thighs. Stiles tilts his head to the side, baring his neck to give Derek more access. He steps out of his jeans, kicking them to the side.

“Okay, Stiles, look at the camera.”
Stiles looks at Derek from under his eyelashes, smirking, knowing exactly what he’s doing to Derek, thumbs hooked into the band of his underwear.

“Wow,” Paige breathes, snapping Stiles out right out of his little daydream. Stiles immediately goes bright red and stumbles back a step, flailing his arms out to keep himself from falling hard on his ass. Hard on. *Oh my god.*

Matt’s camera is still clicking. Stiles is going to kill him.

“It’s okay, it’s okay!” Paige says, over Erica and Danny’s laughter. “God, Stiles, that was fantastic. You’re a natural.”

He had a hard on in front of Allison. While *thinking about Derek.* Oh my god.

“Thanks,” Stiles says, voice is high and strangled. He yanks the jeans back on in a belated and useless attempt to preserve some modesty. Stiles will never, ever be able to look Allison or Derek in the eye, ever again.

He steps out from under the lights and quickly realizes that he at least doesn’t have to worry about Allison, thank god. Allison has her back to the set, sitting across from Scott, who is—grinning so dopily at her that Stiles laughs, a little unhinged.

“Hey!” Scott says brightly, holding a water bottle out to Stiles as he takes the seat next to Allison. “You did great.”

“No, you’re—okay, you’re right,” Scott says, beaming at Allison. She smiles shyly back, tucking her hair behind one ear.

“Oh,” Stiles says, looking between his two friends. “You guys really are perfect for each other, holy shit.”

Scott kicks Stiles under the table just as Allison elbows him. “No, I mean, you seriously are. You’re both adorable and happy and would make the cutest babies—” He’s talking a whole lot of nonsense, he knows, but he still feels like he’s going to expire from mortification.

“Okay, Stiles!” Allison elbows him again, a lot harder this time. “Moving a little fast, dude.”

“Yeah,” Scott says. “We haven’t even had our first date.”

“Oh! You mean, you want to go on a date with me—?”

“Ugh, okay, now you guys are just being gross.” Stiles stands up, taking a swig from his water. “I’m going to get out of these jeans before they squash my balls up into my body.”

“Stiles, disgusting!” Allison throws her bottle at him, but he bats it away, laughing. He really is happy for both of them, even if they are totally gross.

He makes it about halfway to the dressing room before Paige catches up to him, grabbing his arm to slow him down. “Stiles, I want to talk to you about your photoshoot—”

“Nope,” Stiles says, quickening his pace. It doesn’t matter that he just spent an hour in front of the camera in his underwear, there’s no *way* he’s going to talk in detail about what just happened.

“It’s important. I need to make sure you’re okay with—”
“We already went through this, Paige. Look at my contract.”

Paige narrows her eyes at him. “Fine,” she says, slowly. “So you don’t care where you appear.”

“As long as I don’t see my junk on a billboard, have at it.”

“Okay,” Paige says, letting go of his arm and putting her hands up. She’s grinning at him slyly and Stiles should care, but he really doesn’t.

The door isn’t even fully closed before he’s out of the strangling grip of the jeans, sighing with relief. He throws on his clothes and hurries back to the table. Scott’s already standing, leaning on one hand over Allison, who’s smiling up at him.

Stiles grabs her arm and pulls her out of her seat. “Come on, we’re going.”

“But—” Allison says, looking at Scott.

“We’re going to Scott’s place,” Stiles amends. “To play Call of Duty.”

“My keys are in my hoodie,” Scott says, happily. “See you in an hour.”
Chapter 3

Derek is stretched out on the bed, back propped against the headboard and feet crossed at the ankles. He’s grinning at Stiles in a way that lights up his whole face, bright and happy. It’s almost too much to handle, like looking into the sun. Stiles ducks his head and smiles back, crawling onto the foot of the bed. He kneels, unbuttoning the bottom of his shirt.

Derek scoots up the back of the bed, drawing his knees up to rest his wrists on. He’s still smiling, but it’s softer now. Stiles shrugs his shirt off, letting it drop to the floor. He gets on his hands and knees, crawling towards Derek. Derek’s eyelashes drop over warm, brown eyes—

Brown eyes?

“Okay Stiles, great, now take off Ethan’s belt.”

Stiles freezes.

Off set, there’s the sound of papers smacking against an arm. “Dammit, Matt, I told you not to say anything! He was in the zone!”

Stiles blinks into the light. The sound of voices hit Stiles as he comes back to himself. Danny and Erica are arguing loudly about makeup versus photoshop. Scott’s chatting on his phone, probably to Allison. He hears other people in the distance, but can’t identify them. Probably Braeden, negotiating with Ethan’s agent.

Paige is standing next to Matt, arms crossed and a stack of paper in one hand. “We’ve been giving you easy shoots, Stiles, but if you want to keep working here, you’re going to have to get intimate with other men. It’s part of the job, in case you forgot.”

“I know, I know,” Stiles says, running both his hands through his hair and nearly elbowing Ethan. In the distance, Erica squawks in outrage as he destroys all her handiwork. “Can we try again?”

“Just try to pretend you’re with a beautiful man,” Paige suggests. “Since, you know, you are.”

Stiles rolls his eyes at Ethan, who grins and shrugs self-deprecatingly. “You’ll get it,” Ethan says, encouragingly.

“He better,” Matt grumbles. “Okay, go!”

“You smell like an Alpha.”

Stiles snorts, dropping face first onto his bed. He does not want to deal with Derek’s weird moodiness right now. That was not an easy shoot. Stiles froze up two more times, once when he had to unzip Ethan’s pants, and again when he had to put his hands on Ethan’s crotch. It’s the first dick he’s touched that’s not his own, he did it in front of roomful of people. Not exactly how he imagined it going. In retrospect, he should have known better. It wasn’t long before Matt snapped and chewed him out, which was unpleasant for everyone.

“I told you, I work with one.”

“Different Alpha.”
“Yeah, you’re just gonna have to get used to that, Derek. I run into other werewolves sometimes. It happens.”

There’s silence from the other side of the room. Stiles pushes himself up onto his elbows to see that Derek is frowning at him, nose slightly scrunched.

“You didn’t just ‘run into’ one. You wouldn’t smell as bad if you did.”

“Ugh, get over it. It’s no big deal, dude.”

The annoyed look fades into a neutral expression. “Fine.”

“Fine?”

Derek shrugs, leaning against the wall. It’s oddly reminiscent of Stiles’ little fantasy earlier in the day, except with way more clothing. Stiles drops back down into his pillow to hide his suddenly hot cheeks.

“What are you doing do Halloween?”

“I dunno,” Stiles says, surprise buried into his pillow. It’s not often Derek asks him about plans, especially when he’s in a pissy mood. It’s an unexpected olive branch. “Probably head to some party. You?”

“Dance naked under the moon.”

Stiles rolls his head off the side of the bed, staring wide eyed at Derek. Derek’s face is perfectly composed; even his eyebrows are unassuming. “I think you just made a joke, but I can’t really tell.”

“It’s been known to happen.”

Stiles grins slowly, then laughs. “Jeez, you have hidden depths. Who knew?”

Derek shrugs, flipping a page in his book. It’s the little curl to Derek’s lips that prompts Stiles to say, “Hey, well, if for some reason your plans for dancing naked under the moon fall through, you should come to a party with me.”

“Yeah, okay.”

It’s funny how it never occurred to Stiles that things could be easier between him and Derek if he just spent time with him. If asking Derek to hang out prompts a smile like that every time, Derek is about to get a daily invitation.

“Woooo-OOOO!”

Stiles sips his beer, watching a naked guy charge past Deke House, followed by a group of equally naked people. He thinks he might have spotted Lydia towards the back, though there’s a pretty high chance that it’s wishful thinking.

It’s quickly becoming one of those bashes that will eventually be broken up by the cops. There is too much alcohol and not enough clothing. A couple of guys are having a conversation that is quickly devolving into a shouting match and will probably end with some broken teeth. Something large and made from glass shatters noisily from inside the house, followed by a furious screech from someone that sounds a lot like Jackson.
“Hey.”

Derek leans against the wall next to Stiles, loosely holding a full bottle of beer. He’s wearing a black hoodie that says “404 COSTUME NOT FOUND,” which is way cooler than Stiles’ devil horns. There is something oddly endearing about Derek in a hoodie. It makes him look younger, less like a convict hiding out on a college campus.

“There's a pizza place off of Third that's open all night,” Derek says. “Want to grab a slice?”

“You, my friend, are genius. Let’s blow this popsicle stand,” Stiles says, slinging an arm over Derek’s shoulders and leading him away from the house.

“Slang that died in the 1920s should remain dead, Stiles.”

“Shut up, I’m cool. Tell me more about this pizza place.”

Stiles feels Derek shrug from under his arm. “It’s pretty good. We go there sometimes after a full moon.”

Stiles’ arm slides off his shoulders. “We?” Derek probably has a werewolf girlfriend that he howls at the moon with. Stiles kicks a rock, shoving his hands in his pockets. He can howl at the moon, too.

“Me and my sister.”

“Oh,” Stiles says, brightening. “You have a sister? I didn’t know that.”

“Three. And a brother.”

“Wow. So you’re saying there’s a litter of you.”

Derek rolls his eyes. “Dog jokes aren’t funny, Stiles.”

“No, but seriously. It must have been nice growing up with such a large family. It’s just been me and my dad for years, now.”

Derek shrugs. “Yeah, it’s good. It got cramped sometimes, though. My uncle—” Derek cuts himself off, lips tightening at the corners.

“Hey, now, don’t do that,” Stiles says, shaking his arm lightly. “We don’t have to talk about anything you don't want to, it’s fine.”

“A lot happened a couple years ago,” Derek admits.

“That fucking sucks,” Stiles says, earnestly.

Derek shrugs, clenching his jaw and looking off in the distance. It’s an oddly familiar expression, though Stiles can’t figure out why. He’s never seen it on Derek’s face. It reminds him of—looking in the mirror in a hospital bathroom, years and years ago.

“No, I mean, it really sucks, Derek,” Stiles says, pulling on his coat sleeve and looking up at him with wide eyes. “You shouldn’t have to go through—a lot.”

Derek chuffs a small laugh, bumping his shoulder against Stiles’. Stiles takes that as invitation to throw an arm around him again, partially because he really wants to give Derek a hug but doesn’t want his throat torn out, and partially because he really needs the help staying upwards mobile.
“You’re drunk.”

“And it is awesome,” Stiles says. “Nooo inhibitions. No regrets. Yet. Maybe tomorrow morning.” Stiles turns to Derek, who is still smiling a little. They’re about the same height, which is—surprising, since Derek has such a big presence. “Man, you can’t get drunk, huh? Draaag.”

“Drag?”

“Shut up, I’m bringing it back.”

“Slang from the 80s should stay even more dead than slang from the 20s.”

“No.”

Derek laughs again, shaking his head slightly, and Stiles filled with a fond warmth for this man. Maybe he’s a little too warm. He drops his arm from Derek's shoulders and shoves his hands in his pockets before his body gets other, dangerous ideas.

"We can get drunk."

"You can?"

"There's alcohol for werewolves. Just didn't have any at the party."

Stiles stops, grabbing Derek's arm to force him to stop, too. "That's wrong. That should be a crime!"

"It's not a big deal, Stiles."

"Are you kidding me? Every party should be stocked up with werewolf alcohol! Do you have any idea how many werewolves there are around here?"

"Do you?"

"Exactly my point!" Stiles says.

"That doesn’t even make any sense,” Derek protests, but Stiles just hauls him forward, buoyed by a new goal.

“Come on, we need to find you some alcohol!"

It's a lot easier said than done, since although Derek can pass as a twenty-six year old, he's not legal on paper. It doesn’t help that all the cashiers take one look at Stiles and tell them to get the hell out. Stiles waits outside after the third attempt. Eventually, they come across a shady liquor store that overlooks Derek's lack of ID and sells him a bottle of something called Jim Bane.

"Talk about brand appropriation," Stiles says, taking the bottle from Derek when he exits the store to examine the label.

"Don't drink any."

"Greedy, much?"

"Go for it, then.” Derek shrugs. “But don’t complain to me when you go into cardiac arrest. And die. Painfully."

"...why don’t you take this back." Stiles hands the bottle back to Derek, who snorts.
"Come on, let's go back to the dorm."

"Psssh, quit being such a lamewolf. It's a beautiful night! Let's get some pizza and find a park."

"There are cops out everywhere tonight, Stiles."

"Live a little."

"We're studying to be cops."

"Look," Stiles says, grabbing on to Derek's arm. Distantly, he thinks he might be being overly tactile for Derek's taste, but it doesn't stop him from clumsily patting his shoulder. "We're never gonna be in college again. Unless we decide to go to grad school. Then we will. But since that's to be dete—det—not for sure, we need to have the full college experience now, which includes getting wasted and passing out on some random couch."

"I don't think there are going to be any couches in a park."

"That's not the point. The point is—the point is—"

Derek hands him a bottle of Jameson, probably to get him to shut up. Stiles looks up at him with stars in his eyes. "Derek. You are the best."

"Calm down, Stiles."

“Did you know that the full moon actually only lasts for a couple of seconds? It’s just mostly full.” Stiles waves his bottle at the moon as if to emphasize his point. It’s only half full, and mostly covered by clouds.

They’re lying head-to-head on damp grass in the middle of a park a couple blocks away from campus.

“Actually not the light of the moon that affects supernatural creatures, but rather where the moon is in conjunction with the earth and the sun. It’s why the phases of the moon affect different creatures differently. Did you know that a kanima gets its power from the new moon? We found that out the hard way back home. It paralyzed me. With goo."

Derek props himself up, hovering over Stiles like he's about to give him an upside down kiss. "You talk more than anyone I've met, ever. Aren’t you drunk? How are you doing this."

“It’s my only talent.”

Derek is close enough that Stiles can smell the whiskey on his breath. This close, Derek's eyes aren't just a strange, pale blue; there's a ring of brown bursting around his irises. Stiles bites his lip and Derek's eyes flick up. Just as Stiles thinks he's going to get his kiss, Derek tenses, head snapping up.

"Upsy daisy," Derek says, grabbing Stiles from under his armpits to haul him up.

"You can never make fun of my slang ever again," Stiles mutters, leaning against Derek's side to regain his equilibrium from being forced vertical. "Where are we going?"

"Someone's coming."

"Ohhh," Stiles says. He glances at Derek out of the corner of his eye, still leaning on him as they head back towards the dorms. "Hey, uh..."
"What?"

"It's nothing." Stiles says, turning away.

Probably he just imagined the almost-kiss, anyway.

Derek continues to scowl whenever Stiles comes back from a shoot, but lays off the snide comments. He's relaxed more since Halloween which—is really bad. It's one thing to have a small crush on the guy—he gets them all the time, has one Violet and Danny and his professor in Paranormal Law—it's completely another, really bad thing to get in as deep as he’s getting with Derek. Like, Lydia-level bad. And bound to end way worse than with Lydia, who at least decided to be his agent and managed to wrangle more money out of Paige without changing the terms of his contract. As far as he knows, at least.

Thanksgiving rolls around. Stiles goes back home, yells at the TV with his dad (not that he knows anything about football) and eats way too much turkey. It's nice to go home, especially since when he goes back to school it's to the panicky realization that finals are in under three weeks and he has two fifteen page papers due.

A week before his finals he's in the middle of an explosion of papers, notebooks, and open books, typing furiously on his laptop, when magazine lands with an aggressive smack on Stiles’ bed.

“What the fuck is this?”

Stiles deliberately sets his laptop to the side, picking up the magazine. His fingers are trembling slightly. He’s never asked to see any of the pictures, feeling an odd sort of secondhand embarrassment for his past self.

Apparently, he’s warranted a cover photo. So. That explains why his paycheck had a little extra in it. Probably he should have listened to Paige when she wanted to talk to him about his photoshoot. He spends an unproductive moment freaking out at the thought that his dad might see this, but reminds himself that CAPTIVE is one of those magazines wrapped in black plastic and shoved in the back shelves to protect the innocent eyes of unsuspecting fathers.

The picture isn’t even that scandalous. It’s made to look like he’s naked, but the photo cuts off at his hipbones. His head is tilted slightly to the side and he’s staring straight at the camera, smiling crookedly, eyes half-lidded.

“You read skin mags?” Stiles asks, in a bad attempt at deflection.

“I don’t,” Derek grits out. He doesn’t explain why he has the magazine and Stiles doesn’t press. Derek's really mad for some reason and Stiles is not willing to make it worse.

It’s the December issue. Stiles is at least glad that they didn’t do something cheesy for the cover, like make him take a photo with mistletoe over his dick. The did put a Santa hat on the A in CAPTIVE, though.

He flips through the magazine until he finds his shoot with Scott, and suddenly understands now why Paige asked him to return. Although Stiles and Scott are laughing in each shot, there is still a lot of touching involved in pretty much every picture. He thinks Danny worked some photoshop magic—it’s still pretty tame, but there is no way he was that close to Scott’s in the lip-curl photo, just a kiss away from his ear. They’ve interposed Stiles’ solo pictures in with his shoot with Scott, giving their playful shoot a more risqué feel. Stiles grudgingly realizes that he is, actually, a natural. Of all the things he was good at, it had to be modeling for gay skin mags.
“Are you really that pressed for money that you have to—” Derek jerks his hand towards the magazine and, no. Derek doesn’t get to shame him for this.

“It’s really none of your fucking business.” Stiles snaps the magazine shut, shoving himself off his bed.

“I’m a werewolf,” Derek snarls.

“So?”

“Don’t you see how offensive this is?”

“No.”

And he really doesn’t, but Derek’s sneering at him almost hatefully. It hurts. He’d thought that they were mostly friends, but Derek looks like he did that first day, like he wants to rip Stiles’ throat out.

“Have you ever even fucked a werewolf?” When Stiles just looks at him with wide eyes, Derek correctly interprets that as a ‘no’ and continues, practically snarling out his words. “You come in here, calling us creatures that go bump in the night and now, what, you’re doing werewolf porn? What are we, some sort of kink to you?”

It’s as if all the air is punched out of Stiles’ lungs. He staggers back a step, reeling. All this time he’d deluded himself into thinking that things were good between them, that they might even have kissed that night, but here Derek is, throwing something Stiles said months ago in his face. He should have known better.

“I said I was sorry.”

“Sorry,” Derek spits, mockingly.

“How do you want me to make this better then, Derek?” Stiles hisses, hurt and confused guilt making him lash out in defense. He knows he fucked up, but that was months ago and Derek’s fury is wrong and unfair and way too intense. It’s too much, like Stiles has betrayed him. “Should I fuck a werewolf?”

In a blink of the eye, Derek’s got him slammed up against the wall and about a foot off the ground, hands fisted into his shirt. Stiles flinches. He went too far—again—without even realizing it, and now Derek is going to kill him. At least he hasn’t shifted yet, though his eyes are flickering red as if he’s having trouble controlling himself.

Derek slams him against the wall one more time for good measure, then shoves away from him and storms out of their dorm. Stiles slides down the wall. He’s trembling all over, insides a mess of fury and confusion, along with a healthy dose of fear.

Fuck that. Stiles doesn’t have to put up with this shit. He blindly rips through his side of the room, shoving clothes and books into his duffel bag. He crumples most of his notes in his haste to shove all his class stuff in his bookbag. If Derek wants to be an unreasonable prick, he can do it without Stiles.

He makes it halfway down the street before he realizes he has no idea where he’s going, that he’s freezing, and that he forgot his shoes and a sensible coat. He can’t call Allison or Lydia; guys aren’t allowed in their dorm. He might be able to sneak in a couple of nights, but it isn’t a sustainable solution. Isaac is out—he still lives with his dad, and although Isaac insists that his dad treats him better now that he’s a werewolf, he doesn’t want to cause any problems between the two. He supposes he could call Violet, but—
“Stiles?” Scott says, picking up after the third ring.

“Yeah, hey man.”

“Is everything okay?”

Stiles laughs. It sounds funny, high and a little off. He hugs himself, tucking his duffel under one arm. “Not really.”

“What’s wrong? Do you need me to pick you up? Bail you out? Where’s the body? I know how to get rid of one, I’ve seen Breaking Bad—”

Stiles laughs for real. Fucking Scott. He really does love the guy.

“You didn’t actually kill anyone, did you? I was just kidding about that. If you did, you should really turn yourself in, Stiles.”

“I didn’t kill anyone, Scott.” Stiles rubs his hand down the side of his face. “Look, I got in a fight with my roommate—”

“You got in a fight with an Alpha?”

“Not a physical fight—wait, how do you know my roommate’s an Alpha?”

“Because you reek of him.”

“I don’t reek.”

“Never mind that! What happened?”

“I don’t even know,” Stiles sighs. “Look, is it cool if I crash at your place? Just for a little bit. I can pay you rent and everything.”

“Dude, of course. Don’t even worry about it.”

Stiles’ shoulders sag, tension seeping out of him. “Thanks, man,” he says, quietly.

Scott has a small apartment in Greenwich over a coffee shop. At five in the morning you can hear the owner open up shop, followed by a steady stream of customers announced by a ringing bell attached to the door. Stiles is going to throw that bell out the fucking window. He groans and drags his pillow over his head.

He manages to drift off again, only to awake to the sound of cereal clinking into an empty bowl what feels like ten minutes later.

“What time is it?” Stiles asks, pushing himself up to blink at Scott over the arm of the couch.

“Eight. You have a nine a.m., right?”

“Yeah.” Stiles yawns and stumbles off the couch, stretching the kinks in his back.

“You can have the bed, you know,” Scott says, around a mouthful of cereal.

Stiles thinks about it, then grimaces. “Probably not the best idea. Not if I ever want to go back to my dorm.”
“Maybe not,” Scott agrees, after considering it for a moment. “So what happened last night, anyway?”

Stiles takes the seat across from Scott, grabbing the box of Cheerios to pour into the bowl Scott pushed towards him. When Stiles finally arrived at Scott’s last night, he was miserable and half-frozen. Scott took one look at him and ushered him towards the couch, bundling him up in every spare blanket he could find in the apartment. Stiles had dropped off almost immediately.

Stiles pours the milk into his bowl, concentrating on stirring his cereal into the bowl. “He saw our shoot in CAPTIVE.”

“He doesn’t know about your job?”

Stiles shrugs. “It’s not that I’m ashamed of it, I just didn’t think he needed to know. We didn’t get along very well until recently, you know? And this is all really new to me.”

“Hey, I get it, man. Not everyone understands, clearly.”

“Yeah. So he gets crazy mad and—” Stiles pauses, not wanting to tell Scott about being slammed up against the wall. He hasn’t known Scott for very long, but he just knows that the dude’s majorly protective, and it sounds a lot worse than it actually is, all things considered. “—and things were said, loudly, and then he stormed off.”

“So he got jealous.”

"It's not like that."

"It's just that he sounds really possessive of you."

"He accused me of fetishizing werewolves."

"Sooo, he's an asshole."

"No...well, yeah, he really is. To his defense though, I might have given him a reason to think that? We didn't start off well, and I was a total asshole, too. I mean, I obviously don’t fetishize you guys, but—yeah. Like I said, we had a bad start."

"You don't need to defend him, Stiles."

"Yeah." Stiles says, focusing on eating his cereal so that he doesn’t have to talk anymore. Scott lets him eat in silence, flipping the box around so that he can read the back.

Thirty minutes before his class he’s still putzing around the kitchen, towel drying his bowl even though Scott has a dish rack. Eventually, Scott gets sick of it and shoves him out of the apartment, shouting after him that there’s no way he’s going to fail class because his roommate's an ass. Scott has a valid point, of course, but Stiles ditches his first class to get some coffee, anyway.

He loiters in the quad until the very last minute, slipping into his second class and taking a seat in the back. Derek is sitting on the other side of the classroom, but doesn’t even look up when Stiles walks in. Maybe he didn't notice Stiles sneaking in. Maybe he'll get through the whole class without Derek noticing him.

Maybe Derek is a werewolf and probably knows exactly where Stiles is at any given moment.

Stiles sighs and sinks further into his seat. It's going to be a long couple of weeks.
Stiles ends up so busy studying for finals and juggling his job at Barnes (Paige kindly didn't schedule any shoots during finals week) that he doesn't even think of his fight with Derek until he's well in the middle of his Paranormal Law final. His mind totally blanks out for nearly a full minute, and almost against his will, he looks to his left. Derek is bowed over his own desk, eyebrows furrowed in concentration as he puzzles through one of the questions.

He looks as good as ever, like he's the one stepping out of a magazine. Stiles wonders if Derek even misses him, which is so dumb because you have to like someone, in order to miss them.

As if he can feel Stiles looking (is that another werewolf thing?), he glances up, meeting Stiles' eyes. Stiles snaps his gaze back down to his paper, not wanting to see Derek's expression of disgust.

He spends the next two minutes chastising himself for letting his head get out of the game, and focuses back on his test.

Stiles doesn't bother requesting the full winter vacation off; Beacon Hills stopped being a quiet town years ago, and the crime rates are always the highest around Christmas and Winter Solstice. Both him and his father are able to swing a week and a half for Christmas, but that still gives Stiles two and a half weeks to loiter around Greenwitch when he's not working. Most of his friends went home for the holidays, including Scott. He doesn't even have any photoshoots lined up; Paige gave the entire team the month off.

This is how he finds himself spending an inordinate amount of time at Deke House after finals, watching way too many Christmas movies with Jackson, of all people. He ends up dragging Danny with him one night, since the poor guy is also stuck in town for the holidays and Stiles can only handle so much one-on-one time with Jackson.

Stiles has no idea why, but Danny takes an immediate shine to Jackson, which is just terrible because he always liked Danny. He wants to tell Danny to be careful, that Jackson is a horrible person and will say mean and awful things, but to his absolute shock, Jackson takes to Danny just as quickly as Danny took to him.

It is boggling and Stiles quickly (and weirdly) feels like a third wheel.

"I gotta grab some things from my dorm before I head back to Beacon Hills tomorrow," Stiles says, pushing himself up from the couch but pausing to watch Joe Pesci attempt to leap onto a ladder, only to slip off the last rung because of green goo.

"I always wondered why they bothered," Danny muses to himself as Pesci curses under his breath. "I would have cut my losses and hit up a different house. Seems like this kid is way more trouble than it's worth."

"Is that why you don't you smell like that Alpha anymore, Stilinski?" Jackson asks, ignoring Danny and shoving a handful of popcorn into his mouth. "He wise up and dump your sorry ass?"

"Oh my god is everyone a werewolf here?"

"I'm not," Danny said, raising a hand. "To be fair, Stiles, you really should have known."

"Yeah, Stiles," Jackson smirks.

"I'm leaving," Stiles grumbles, going to the door. "Jackson, if you cheat on Lydia with Danny I'll kill you dead, werewolf or not."
He shuts the door behind him, grinning vindictively at the no doubt awkward scene he left behind. It's a dick move, but he really doesn't care. Danny will forgive him and Jackson can choke on a popcorn kernel, for all Stiles cares.

He wraps his scarf tightly around the lower half of his face and shoves his hands into his pockets. California winter is a lot like a feral puppy: one moment, it's happy and full of warmth, the next, snarling and bitter. Sort of like Derek. Annd Stiles has officially slipped into the territory of pathetic.

He makes it back to their dorm before anything important freezes off, but it's a close call. Stiles pauses with his hand on the door to their room. It's unlikely Derek is still around—he's got a huge family that probably wants to see him, but Stiles isn't completely sure. He dithers for a minute, wondering if it would just be worth buying a new winter coat and shoes, but eventually bites the bullet and pushes open the door.

Derek is sleeping.

Well, it's more like he's passed out. He's a fucking wreck, like he's just been put through a woodchipper a la Fargo. Stiles take an unconscious step forward, before forcing himself to stop. There's a lot of blood on Derek and on his sheets, and his clothes would be better described as 'bloody remains,' but the plethora of visible skin is unmarked. Werewolf healing powers. Derek is one lucky bastard.

In spite of his better judgement, Stiles goes Derek’s side. He’s got one arm hanging over the side of his bed, knuckles brushing the carpet. Stiles reaches down to carefully take off one of Derek’s shoes.

“Stiles?”

Derek’s eyes are half-closed, still fuzzy with sleep. Stiles glances up at him, then takes off his other shoe. He pulls the blanket up, draping it over Derek’s shoulders, then goes to the closet to grab his coat and shoes, conscious of Derek’s eyes on him the entire time.

He closes the door softly behind him when he leaves.

Beacon Hills is as boring as ever, but Stiles has his dad and an Xbox, so he’s golden. They watch even more Christmas movies and Stiles bakes Snickerdoodles and temporarily relaxes his dad’s strict diet.

They exchange gifts over bacon sandwiches on Christmas morning. Stiles got his dad a watch and a small protection charm that he forces him to put on straight from the box. His dad gives him a new winter coat and a giftcard for gamestop. It’s a good Christmas, and if Stiles is slightly melancholy, well, no one has to know but himself.

“Hey, Dad,” Stiles says as his dad walks behind the couch. Stiles is half-heartedly playing Fall Out, trying not to wonder how Derek managed to get himself so injured.

“Stiles.” His dad sits on the other end of the couch. “How are you doing, son?”

Stiles glances at him out of the corner of his eye, not liking the way his father sounds. “I’m doing good,” he says, slowly.

“Yeah?” his dad says dubiously, picking up on Stiles’ wary tone. “Have you made any friends?”

His dad tried a much more discreet tactic on him in Thanksgiving, joking about how Stiles was probably out partying and doing way more illegal stuff than the sheriff would want to know about.
His attempts at prying failed, since Stiles just turned it into a joke as well. It looks like he’s trying a more direct approach, this time.

“Oh you know me, my planner is booked.” Actually, he does have a planner, bought specifically to track the full moon, and it is surprisingly booked. “I’ve been hanging out with Allison and Lydia a lot, and I’ve met some pretty cool people out here.”

“Lydia, she’s the girl you went to school with?”

“Yeah, but it’s not like that, Dad. We’re just friends.”

“Oh? No plans on asking her out?” his dad teases.

“Nope.”

“Well, you know there’s always an extra seat open for whenever you want to bring home a lucky girl.”

“And if I want to bring home a guy?”

Stiles fumbles the control and his character is viciously murdered by a weird blob with three faces. Why had he said that? He had not meant to say that. If—when he got his sexuality sorted out, he was definitely going to tell his dad, but he hadn’t planned on doing it like this, only half tuned in to the conversation.

“Seat’s still open.”

Stiles sags into the couch, exhaling slowly through his teeth.

“Stiles—”

His dad is look at him in this soft way that makes Stiles straighten. “No, Dad, don’t. It’s cool. We’re cool.”

The sheriff snorts quietly. “We’re cool. You know I love you if you like guys or girls, or both, or no one at all. It doesn’t matter to me, just as long as you’re happy.”

“Yeah, Dad.”

His dad clears his throat. “But you know that when you’re with guys—”

“Yeah Dad I know!” Stiles yelps quickly.

“—you still have to be careful. Just because you can’t get a guy pregnant, or—get pregnant—” His dad’s voice gets strangled by the end of the sentence, and he looks as if he’s about to go for the whiskey.

“Oh my god Dad stop please.”

“—doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t use protection.”

Stiles gives up on words, since they don’t seem to be working on his dad, anyway.

“So, is there a lucky guy?”

Stiles soberes immediately, picking up his controller and fiddling with the joysticks. “No.”
“Was there a lucky guy?”

Stiles sighs. “No.”

“Do you want there to be a lucky guy?”

“No, god, Dad!” Stiles snaps, then immediately feels bad. “It’s just—he—”

“I see,” his dad said, not seeing anything at all but still willing to be supportive. Stiles has the best dad in the entire world. “How are you with money?”

Stiles leaps at the out, so, so grateful that his dad exists. “I’m fine.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, remember? I got a job at Barnes & Noble.”

“And it pays you enough?”

It really doesn’t, but it helps that his paycheck is supplemented by posing suggestively for a camera. Not that he is ever, ever going to tell his dad about this little side job, no sir. “Yeah. I got a job as a supervisor.”

“Good,” his dad says proudly, which sends stab of guilt through Stiles’ stomach. He hates lying to his dad. “Well, you know if you need anything, you can call.”

“Thanks, Dad,” Stiles says, chewing on his lip. “Seriously. For everything. I love you.”

“Love you too, son.”
"Oh, I like this one," Lydia says, flipping the page to a solo shot of Stiles. She leans her chin on her hands, examining the photo. "Man, Stiles, had I known you were hiding this under all your layers, maybe I would have let you take me to prom."

“My favorite is still this one,” Allison says, flipping to a shot where Scott and Stiles are grinning at each other so that she can stare dreamily at Scott’s face.

“You and Scott are the actual worst,” Lydia says. “Thanks for that, Stiles.”

"Guys, I’m working. Do you want to get me fired?"

The problem with telling all of your friends that you're doing porn is that eventually, everyone will see you mostly naked and aroused. And since his friends include Lydia, that means that they will decide to examine this naked arousal at Stiles' place of employment, so that they don't actually have to pay for the magazine. Stiles decides it's time to pretend he's completely alone. He focuses on sorting the books to be put away by section, then he alphabetizes them, then he arranges them by color and size.

It's been two days since he's been back, but classes don't start for another week. Not for the first time, he wonders if he's going to have any classes with Derek. It's been nearly a month since they've really seen each other outside of class, aside from when Stiles walked in on him sleeping. He knows it isn't healthy to obsess about it, that his little crush needs to go the way of the lemmings, but even though they've only really hung out once, Derek has dug himself deep. But Derek hates him, so.

Stiles slams a book down, making his friends jump.

"Relax, Stiles,” Violet orders, leaning over the magazine with Lydia and Allison, the traitor. She flips to the shot where Scott’s playfully snarling at the camera. “This one’s cute.”

“I’m gonna go to the bathroom until my shift is over,” he says, jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

“Hey, you still have four hours left. Stiles, get back here!”

"You know," Danny says, popping a chip into his mouth. Stiles watches him enviously. He's always been in good shape, but after stuffing himself during the holidays and slacking off at working out for a month, Paige told him, in no uncertain terms, that he is not allowed near any junk food.

"Sometimes, Alphas will get weirdly protective of the guys they shoot with."

"Oh yeah?" Stiles asks, glancing around to see if Paige is nearby.

"Yeah. It's why we never double book. Not a great idea to get two Alphas worked up and stick them in a room together. It's okay for them to wait around for their next shoot, as long as they're not invested in whoever's shooting before them. There used to be some pretty nasty fights that would happen. Never any lasting damage, but not pretty to see."

"Interesting," Stiles says, deciding he's safe and grabbing a chip.
"Knock it off." Paige smacks the chip out of his hand, making Stiles jump. "Suit up. You and Scott are up next."

"Are you sure you're not a werewolf? How do you move so quietly?" Stiles asks, rubbing his hand as he heads to the dressing room.

"Think about what I said, Stiles!" Danny calls after him. Stiles waves his agreement, though he has no idea what Danny's talking about. To his defense, chips.

It isn't until ten minutes into the shoot that Stiles notices a familiar face creeping near the entrance. Derek's got his hands shoved in his pockets, but his relaxed stance is belied by the intensity of his glare.

Stiles scowls. What the fuck did Derek think he was doing, creeping around uninvited at his work?

"Focus, Stiles," Matt snaps. So much for holiday cheer and good will to all men.

Well, fine. If Derek's looking for a show, then fine. Stiles presses himself all up against Scott’s side and tilts his head back, exposing the length of his neck. Scott’s confused, but he leans down without asking any questions because Scott is the best. Just as Scott’s breath ghosts across his skin, Stiles is abruptly on the other side of the room, crushed tightly up against a wall of leather and rage.

Scott roars. Derek roars back. Stiles thinks he should probably get out of the way of crossfire, here.

“Woah, woah! Breakable human, here!” Stiles yelps, hands up in surrender. Derek growls, yanking him closer, claws pricking into his bare skin. Stiles freezes. He should probably be angry about being fought over like a piece of meat, but he’s too busy trying to not wet his pants.

There’s an explosion of noise in front of them, but Stiles focuses on the press of lips on his pulse point. He isn't worried that Derek is going to lose control of himself and bite through his jugular, but he still tilts his head further to the side, giving Derek more access. His heart is hammering against his ribcage, so hard that he can actually hear it.

"You never said anything about a possessive Alpha boyfriend, Stiles!" Paige shrieks. Stiles ignores her.

"Whatcha doin’, big guy?" Stiles murmurs. He really wants to shout, to demand to know what the fuck Derek is thinking, but. There are teeth on his neck. Pointy teeth.

Derek has both his arms wrapped tightly around Stiles’ waist, one hand spread wide over his bare stomach and one at his collarbone. If Stiles doesn’t know how much Derek hates him, he really would think he’s acting like a possessive boyfriend.

"You know that I'm not just someone's property."

"I know," Derek says, voice rumbling deep from his chest that shouldn't be such a turn on considering Derek is more likely to kill him than fuck him, but really, really is. "It's just—you smell like him."

Stiles thinks he now understands what Danny was trying to tell him about werewolves and possessiveness, though in retrospect he'd only been half-listening and had thought that Scott might sneer at Ethan or something. He never even considered Derek.

"Why don't you let me finish my shoot with Scott, Derek, and we can talk after."
“No,” Derek growls.

“I’m not going to not do my job because you’re being a territorial asshole,” Stiles hisses, because he’s pissed and might have a death wish.

“No,” Derek says.

“Not all of us are loaded, dude. I need this paycheck. Besides, I like my job, no matter what you think. And I’m not fucking doing this because I have some objectifying kink. I’m doing it because I’m good at it.”


“So then why don’t you just go back to the dorm and let me do my fucking job?”

Derek’s grip tightens, but Stiles squirms until he can twist around in his arms to face him, putting his hands on his shoulders. Derek’s half-shifted and glaring, but he looks confused, too. Like he’s not exactly sure what he’s doing here and maybe feels guilty. Probably about being a giant dickhead.

“I’m doing this photoshoot.”

“Fine,” Derek says, expression smoothing out. He’s still fuzzy around the edges, but is calm. Decisive. “I’ll do it with you.”

“What? No!”

“Excuse me!” Paige snaps, coming up from behind Derek. Stiles has to hand it to her; girl’s got chutzpah. “You can’t just waltz in here and expect to be a model, mister. I don’t care if you’re some Very Important Alpha, you—oh.”

Derek’s turned to face her, keeping himself between her and Stiles (protecting him from a threat?) and, of course, subjecting her to the full glory of his unshifted face. Stiles has never seen Paige flustered before, didn’t even know it was possible considering all the hot naked men she’s around all the time, but she actually blushes.

“Okay, so you’re hot. Like, really attractive. Christ, Stiles, where have you been hiding this guy?”

"Paige, no."

"Don't be ridiculous, he's perfect!"

This is probably the only industry where a guy can burst into the building, grab someone, roar at some people, and walk out with a job. Werewolves, jeez.

Paige considers Stiles from over Derek's shoulder, then walks up to him, grabs his arm (despite Derek's low growl), and hauls him a short distance away that will do squat to prevent werewolf super-hearing.

"Stiles, you don’t have to do this.” She bites her lip, concerned. “Is he hurting you?”

“No,” Stiles says, firmly. Stiles is pissed, he’s getting more pissed by the minute, but he isn’t about to let Paige think that Derek’s abusing Stiles, wall-slamming notwithstanding. Derek’s a rough dude, but it’s not the same. They’re not even in a relationship, and Derek’s not some asshole who beats his significant other to make himself feel powerful.

“Well, what’s the problem then?” Paige asks, putting her hands on her hips. From over her shoulder,
Stiles can see that Derek hasn’t moved from where they left him, even though Scott is edging towards him. He’s watching Stiles, waiting for his answer.

“It’s just—”

“If you really don’t want to, Stiles—”

Derek turns away, looking at the floor.

“I’ll do it,” Stiles says, mostly to Derek, if only to get him to stop looking like that. He’s pissed, but he’s tired of whatever he and Derek are doing. “But you and me, big guy, we’re going to have some words.”

They end up postponing for a couple days anyway, since Paige still needs to get legal to write up Derek’s contract. Stiles goes back to Scott’s place, feeling guilty about ruining their shoot.

“No worries,” Scott says, cheerfully. “I have another shoot with Kira tomorrow, anyway. But dude, are you sure everything’s going to be okay with you and Derek? I mean, should you be here?”

“Derek’s a prick.”

“No argument here.”

“He can stew in it.”

“Is he, you know.” Scott does a complicated hand gesture at him and Stiles screws up his face.

“No. God, no. I have way too much self-respect to date Derek.”

Scott points at him. “You’re lying.”

Stiles doesn’t say anything, since he’s lying about having self-respect, not about the dating thing. Well, okay, he’s also lying about the dating thing, not that Derek wants to date him. He doesn’t think. Ugh, he’s confusing himself.

“It’s just,” Scott continues, “things were intense between you guys.”

“Derek’s an intense kind of guy.”

“True,” Scott says, slowly. He opens his mouth like he wants to continue arguing, but thankfully shrugs and grabs an Xbox One controller. “COD?”

“Hell yes.”

“Okay, Derek, can you look less like you want murder Stiles?”

Stiles is straddling Derek’s hips. He’s naked, save for a g-string to be edited out later. He’d self-consciously made himself really clean for this shoot, not wanting to offend any delicate werewolf noses. Derek’s jeans are unbuttoned and Stiles can feel Derek’s interest in the position, the hard length of him pressed up beneath Stiles’ balls, but Derek’s eyes are wide and his lips are pulled back in a soundless snarl. He looks like a cornered predator, which is pretty hot, but not exactly what they’re trying to go for. Derek is supposed to be the one in control, not Stiles.

“This was your idea,” Stiles says.
“I know,” Derek grits out.

“We don’t have to do this.”

“Shut up, Stiles.”

“You know,” Stiles says, trailing a finger down Derek’s stomach, because even though he knows how this script is supposed to go, this is fulfilling like, three of his fantasies. “I’m going to be doing shoots like this with other Alphas.” Stiles’ finger stops right above the line of hair trailing down to disappear under Derek’s black boxer briefs. Derek’s hands are clenched in tight fists, blood trickling from his palms.

“In fact,” Stiles says, rolling his hips slightly. “If you can’t do this shoot, maybe I’ll do it with someone else. Maybe Scott will—”

Derek surges up, crushing his lips against Stiles’. Derek doesn’t so much kiss him as he devours him, one hand tangling roughly in Stiles’ hair to pull his head back, exposing the long line of his neck. Stiles whimpers, pressing both his hands against Derek’s stomach, and grinds down.

There’s complete silence in the room save for the sound of Matt clicking away. Derek pulls back to press his lips against Stiles’ shoulder, tracking Matt as he moves behind Stiles. He slides the hand tangled in Stiles’ hair down, pressing it against his lower back. Stiles bites his lip, trying to regain some composure before he does something unforgivable, like blow his load all over Derek’s chest.

“No,” Derek growls, into Stiles’ neck.

“Okay,” Stiles breathes, not even sure what he’s agreeing to anymore.

That night, he grabs his duffel still packed from Christmas from Scott’s and goes back to their dorm. He had planned on returning that weekend before class started again, anyway. As fun as it’s been, he is really in no condition to stay with Scott. Besides, he really misses having his own bed.

Case in point. Stiles stretches, loving the way this cheap, shitty mattress feels under his back. It’s not as comfortable as his bed back home, but it’s a major step up from Scott’s shitty couch. After he’s managed to twist his sheets into the mess he usually likes it in, he stares up at the ceiling, chewing hard at the corner of his mouth.

Derek is just on the other side of the room, but Stiles’ skin is still buzzing from the shoot. There is no way Derek doesn’t know what’s going on with Stiles’ body, not with his super-werewolf senses. Derek can definitely hear how Stiles’ breath is coming out in short pants. He can smell the way the low burn in Stiles’ belly has bled into his bones, all the way to the tips of his fingers and down to his toes. Maybe he even feels the heat that makes Stiles twist in his bed, tangling the sheets around his ankles, sees the flush of arousal on his cheeks, his neck, down his chest.

He hasn’t been this turned on in years, and he can’t even escape to the bathrooms to jerk off. It’s only eleven and most people are still up, getting ready for parties or bed or to have sex or any number of things Stiles won’t be doing tonight. And Derek hasn’t left, even though he has to know what Stiles is probably going to do. It doesn’t matter. Stiles has sunk so low in Derek’s eyes that this one more humiliation is just a drop in the big pool that is Derek’s hate.

One foot slides across across the cool sheets, legs falling open. He turns his face to the wall, even though it’s dark in their room, even though Derek can hear every small movement Stiles makes, can probably taste the arousal thick in the air. He slides the pad of his thumb over the top of his pajama bottoms, moving slowly, shyly, even though all he wants to do is take himself in hand and roughly
Derek is so still. Stiles can’t even hear him breathing, can’t hear the familiar shift of blankets as Derek settles down to sleep. He pushes his pajama pants down, choking back a small whimper when the elastic band catches on the sensitive head of his cock. He slides his thumb over the juncture of hip, teasing himself, but still not quite able to take that last, necessary step.

There’s a quiet hiss of breath from across the room and, wow. So maybe Stiles has a little bit of an exhibition kink. It’s that small noise that gives him the courage to finally wrap one hand around himself, and he can’t stop the groan this time. It’s too dry. He wants to grab his lube or spit on his hand but he’s committed now, slowly sliding his hand back up, twisting his wrist. It feels like he’s putting on a show for Derek, rolling his hips with each tortuous slide of his hand. He pants into his shoulder, open mouthed, eyes falling closed.

He’s back at the photoshoot, Derek a hot line of muscle pressed against him, so close to being in him, mouthing kisses along the length of his neck, the searing kiss. He thinks about what would have happened if they weren’t at the shoot, that it’s Derek’s hand wrapped around him—

The bed dips and Stiles’ eyes fly open. Derek’s hovering over him, hands bracketing the sides of his face, eyes a red burn in the dark. Stiles’s back arches and he shakes apart, coming into his hand, onto his belly, Derek’s name spilling out of his mouth. The sheets tear on either side of his head.

“D-Der—”

His skin is still buzzing, not quite ready to be done even though there’s a large predator staring down at him and he’s already come. Hell, it’s making him even more crazy, desperate for Derek to do something, anything.

“Please,” he begs. “Derek, please.”

And then Derek is sliding down his body and—and licking his stomach, sweeping broad stripes across his abs, cleaning him and fuck, he just came but his cock is already pulsing.

“Fuck!” he—okay, he sort of sobs—when Derek drags his tongue over the head of Stiles’ cock. Stiles grabs his hair, not sure if he wants to yank him away or push him back down. “Please—”

Stiles doesn’t even know what he’s begging for, but Derek takes it as a plea to move further down, to swipe his tongue into the cleft of Stiles’ ass. He’s never even thought of this before; sure, he’s seen it in porn, but he’s never considered someone doing it to him, and, god, that’s probably all he’s ever going to think of ever again. He pushes himself up the bed, not exactly trying to get away but unable to handle how intense it is. So this is what it’s like to be eaten by the big bad wolf. He’d laugh, but he’s too busy cursing into his pillow.

“I fucking hate you,” Derek growls into his hip as Stiles gasps and whimpers beneath him, completely undone. Stiles scrabbles at his shoulders, trying to pull him up, needing to be closer, anything. Derek slides up his body, pressing his mouth against Stiles’ neck. He’s still in his pajama bottoms, but Stiles can feel how hard he is through the thin fabric, can feel his arms trembling as he braces himself on his forearms over Stiles. “You’re such an asshole, thinking you’re so much better than me. You’re driving me insane—”

“Off,” Stiles demands, yanking at Derek’s pajamas. “Get these off, now, get them off—”

Derek growls, an inhuman rumble deep in his chest as he practically rips his pants off. Stiles ruts up into him, crying out when they finally press together, rolling into him until Derek pins Stiles down
into the bed, working one hand between them to wrap them both into a tight grip and Stiles is gone, biting into Derek’s shoulder, dry sobs muffled into desperate whimpers into Derek’s skin. It should be strange. It is strange, knowing that there’s another man’s cock sliding against his, but it’s also really, really good. All he can do is hold on, hands splayed over Derek’s shoulders as Derek roughly jerks them off. It’s too much, too hard. His second orgasm is torn out of him, ripping him into tiny pieces.

He thinks he might have blacked out for a second and when he comes to, it’s to Derek’s spilling onto him with a bitten off curse. For a long moment, they’re frozen together, and then Derek’s rolling off him, splaying on his side with one leg thrown over Stiles’, although the bed is too small for the both of them.

“Fuck,” Derek says, to the ceiling.

“Do you even know what you’re doing?” Lydia demands, hands on her hips.

Stiles glances down at the stack of books at his feet, then back to Lydia. “I’m pretty sure I’m alphabetizing books.

It’s early Tuesday morning. Stiles had left Derek sleeping on his bed to silently freak out in the showers for ten minutes, before going back to their dorm to get ready for work. Derek watched him as he got dressed but didn’t say a single word, not even when Stiles left.

“I mean, idiot, do you know what you’re doing with Derek,” Lydia says.

The book Stiles is holding drops from suddenly nerveless fingers. He gapes at her, mouth half-open. “That’s not possible,” he says. “You can’t know about that. You don’t even know him.”

“Oh, goddamnit. He knew he shouldn’t have introduced Danny and Jackson to each other. This must be revenge for his snarky comment about Jackson cheating on Lydia. He wonders if the comment hit too close to home, if Danny’s sinking low enough to sic Lydia on him.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Stiles says primly, picking up another book.

“Do you even like him? Does he even like you, or is this just some sort of weird territorial werewolf thing?”

Stiles has no idea. He knows that he likes Derek, but. They haven’t exactly had time to “talk about their feelings,” considering they just had sex yesterday. Stiles did catch Derek staring at him last night, looking just as confused as Stiles feels.

“Oh, Stiles,” Lydia sighs, placing a hand on his arm. “Have you talked to him? You were so mad at him for so long.”

“I—” Stiles swallows, staring down at the book. He doesn’t even know its title, for some reason unable to focus on the letters. He can’t tell Lydia that he’s too afraid of what Derek might say. If he doesn’t bring it up, Derek can’t tell him that it’s all a mistake.

“Talk to him,” Lydia says. “You can’t keep going on like this.”

“Yeah,” Stiles says, blindly shoving the book into the shelves. He thinks it might start with a K even
“Why did you get so pissed off about my photoshoot with Scott, Derek?”

“You’re going to ask me this right now.”

To be fair, Derek has a point. They’re sprawled out on a couch, both shirtless, and staring intently at each other’s eyes. Derek has one hand curled against Stiles’ neck. It might be weird, had Derek not been so damn good at staring, and if he didn’t have such pretty eyes.

“When else?”

Derek doesn’t roll his eyes because he’s—unsurprisingly—great at being a model, considering how much crap he gave Stiles for his profession of choice, but it’s a close call. “I don’t know, one of the many other hours of the day we see each other?”

For once, Stiles doesn’t say anything at all, just watches at him expectantly.

“I didn’t like seeing another Alpha’s hands all over you.” Derek says, ducking his head to kiss Stiles’ neck. Stiles knows better. Derek is totally hiding his face. That—doesn’t actually answer the question of whether or not Derek’s just acting like this because he feels like his territory’s being threatened.

“Stiles, stop scowling,” Matt demands. “Look like you’re enjoying it, not like you’re hoping Derek’s a minute man.”

“Okay,” Stiles says, when Derek shifts up so that he can glare at first Matt, then Stiles. Stiles glares back. “If you’re going to bullshit me, at least tell me what happened to you before Christmas. It’s driving me up the wall.”

“I’m not bullshitting you.”

“What’s the matter with you lately, huh?” Stiles snaps, but he rubs his hands up and down Derek’s back, trying to calm him down. Mostly because Derek’s lying on top of him, and Stiles doesn’t want to get caught up in the crossfire.

“I don’t fucking know,” Derek says, and that’s probably the most honest thing he’s ever said to Stiles. “I was attacked by a djinn.”

Immediately, images of friendly blue dudes with goatees popped into Stiles’ mind, even though he knows Disney got about everything wrong. “That’s why you’re acting like a prick?”

“No, idiot. That’s what happened to me before Christmas. I was attacked by a djinn.”

Stiles’ brow clears. “Oh,” he says, interested. “I thought genies were good.”

“Djinn. You watch too much Disney,” Derek says, rolling his eyes. “They’re like any other creature—some are good, some are bad. I met a bad one.”
“How? Was he just like, getting some coffee and decided he didn’t like your face?”

“She. And no, our old family doctor asked for some help. He works at the vet in town.”

Stiles bites his lip. Derek narrows his eyes.

“Don’t you fucking dare, Stiles.”

“But you set it up so perfectly!” Stiles laughs.

“I don’t care. Dog jokes aren’t funny.”

“Okay, Stiles, can you put your hands down the back of Derek’s jeans?”

They both jump. Stiles has no idea how, but he completely forgot they were in the middle of a photoshoot.

“Oh, sure,” Stiles says, uncomfortable again. They’re no longer mad, but somehow that just makes it more awkward. Stiles slides his hand down Derek’s lower back until his fingers are pressed just over where Derek’s back curves into his ass. Stiles swallows. Derek presses closer, nosing along the side of Stiles’ neck.

One of these days, Stiles thinks, hysterically, he really is going to embarrass himself, really bad, and then he is never going to be able to come back here again.

“So, uh, a djinn, huh?” Stiles asks, voice high.

Derek rolls his hips, because he is a terrible, terrible person. Stiles gives a shivery little groan, then immediately goes bright red. Derek grins toothily.

The resulting picture generates thousands of hits within hours of its launch on CAPTIVE’s website.

Derek and Stiles stand side by side at the door to their dorm. Stiles shifts his feet and looks at his bed. It’s late; they ended up going to dinner with the team after the shoot, but Stiles is still—

Stiles is still wearing the g-string. It’s uncomfortable, and probably presumptuous, but.

“Um, do you want to—”

“Yes.

Derek grabs him by the arm yanks him into the dorm, slamming the door behind him.

Monday is the first day of classes. It turns out Derek and Stiles only have two classes together this semester, which, considering how much they now see each other, might be a good thing. Derek still makes a point of sitting next to Stiles in both the classes.

Within a half an hour of Paranormal Criminal Investigation, Stiles is shifting restlessly in his seat. He had been so excited for this class, since research and investigation had played a huge role in his involvement with the paranormal in Beacon Hills, but the professor is boring as fuck. He grabs his pen and starts clicking. When that results in glares from nearby classmates, he doodles on his syllabus. This entertains him for about five minutes, and then he’s back to clicking.

Derek puts a hand on his knee. Everything stops, including Stiles’ heart.
“Put the pen down,” Derek murmurs. Stiles puts the pen down.

By the time Stiles gets back to their dorm, he’s a wired mess and has a headache from hell. He thinks maybe he forgot to take his Adderall, which sucks, but he can’t remember, which sucks even worse. He doesn’t want to risk ODing, which means he has to wait until tomorrow morning until he can feel grounded again.

“Why are you here?” he snaps, when he sees Derek sitting on his bed.

Derek lifts an eyebrow. “I live here.”

“Yeah, well, you’re usually not around in the afternoons.”

“I am today.”

“Great.”

“What is your problem, Stiles?” Derek growls, narrowing his eyes.

“My problem? My problem?” It’s like all the frustration and anger comes crashing into him at once. “I’m not the one with the problem here, dude. You’re the one who goes around slamming people into walls and hijacking their work. Just because you think I fetishize you—”

“Are you going to throw that in my face every time we talk?”

Stiles clenches his fists, practically vibrating with anger. He needs an outlet. Sex is a great outlet, but Stiles can barely handle being in the same room with Derek right now.

"I'm sorry," Derek says, quietly. "I'm sorry, Stiles. I only said that because I was mad. I wasn't thinking. You just kept coming into our dorm, bringing in the smell of other werewolves. It started not just smelling like my territory."

Oh. Crap. Stiles deflates slightly. He hadn't even thought of that. He walks to Derek's bed, sitting on the edge of it drumming his fingers on the sheets. Derek catches his hand, stilling it.

"And then I saw those pictures of you with that other Alpha and I—" He clenches his mouth shut, jaw spasming. "—I didn't like it."

"Why?"

This is the crux of the matter. Did Derek see Stiles as an extension of his territory? If that's the case, Stiles can't do this anymore.

Derek glances down at their hands, then back up at Stiles, lifting an eyebrow.

"You're going to have to spell it out to me. Us stupid humans can't figure out what you werewolves mean."

“Because,” Derek grits out, “you should only smell like me.”

Stiles draws back, making Derek instinctively pull him closer. This is exactly what he was worried about.

“What? Stiles, what did I say?"

“What are we even doing?” Stiles demands, trying to stand from the bed, but Derek won’t let him
“Do you even like me, or is this some sort of werewolf thing?”

It’s Derek’s turn to pull back, face shuttering off. “Everything I do is going to be a werewolf thing, because I’m a werewolf.”

“That’s not what I mean!” Stiles sits on the edge of his bed, raking his fingers through his hair. “This all started because you felt like the other Alphas were—encroaching on your territory, or something. I need to know if you’re just doing this because you think I’m your territory, or if we actually have—something—here.”

There is a long, long moment of silence. Every minute that passes by, Stiles gets a little tenser, until finally he’s surging up and off the bed. He doesn’t get far. Derek catches his wrist, yanking him back down.

“God, you really are an idiot,” Derek barks. “I don’t know where you get your dumbass ideas, or if you just think of them yourself, but it’s fucking offensive. I don’t know how many different ways I have to tell you this before it gets through your thick skull—people aren’t property. I’ve never seen you as territory or—or whatever you’ve got going on in your weird brain. Okay?”

“Okay,” Stiles says.

“I’m going to sleep,” Derek snaps, flipping over onto his side to turn his back on Stiles.

Derek is still a tense line of anger several minutes later. Stiles tentatively reaches over, running his fingers over the swirls of Derek’s tattoo. He wonders if they’re always going to hurt each other like this. His past relationship had been easy—he and Malia never fought even once—but it was also missing something for both of them. Stiles wasn’t as invested as Malia was, and Malia needed someone as devoted to her as she was to them. Their resulting breakup had been amicable; they still text once in awhile, but Stiles doesn’t particularly miss her.

Whatever Stiles has going on with Derek is exhausting. Every new step forward is a battle that is just as likely to lead them back to beginning. But when Derek touches him, every particle of Stiles’ being sings out, unsettled and flustered and so, so right. Whatever mess of a relationship Stiles has with Derek—and he still isn’t even sure if it is a relationship—Stiles is willing to fight every single one of those battles.

“I only wanted to know because I really like you,” Stiles says, sliding his hand down lower to rest on Derek’s hip. “I just didn’t know if you liked me too.”

Derek sighs, rolling over on his back again. He wraps an arm around Stiles and pulls him back down. “That’s because you’re an idiot.”

"He stinks," Ethan says, waving one hand in front of his face. "I'm not going to shoot with him."

"Rude!" Stiles says.

“I mean, you kinda do,” Scott says.

“You don’t even have a shoot today, what are you doing here?”

Scott shrugs. “Allison’s got class and is hanging out with Lydia later. I thought I’d bug you.”

“Demoted to second best.”
“Psh.” Scott rolls his eyes. “I know for a fact that Derek has class until nine, so you’re going to be moping around all evening.”

“How do you people know these things?”

“I’m dating Allison, who’s best friends with Lydia,” Scott shrugs, “who knows everything. I think she’s planted Danny and Jackson as her moles.”

“You know Jackson?”

“Of course I do. He’s that Beta from Deke House.”

“I need new friends. Ones that don’t know each other well enough to spy on me. Ones who don’t want to spy on me.”

“You love us,” Scott says, happily.

“You’ve done other shoots with guys who’ve slept with Alphas,” Paige is saying to Ethan, one hand wrapped so tightly around his wrist her knuckles are white. “What’s the problem?”

“Yeah, but none smelled like this. No offense, Stiles.”

“Plenty taken.” Stiles folds his arms. “Can someone please explain?”

“You smell like Derek. Like, a lot,” Ethan says. “Like in a way that says ‘back off’.”

“We just talked about how I don’t belong to him,” Stiles says, rolling his eyes. “I’ll talk to him about not making me, uh, smell.”

“No, it’s not like that,” Scott says, forehead wrinkling. “It’s more like—he’s telling other werewolves how much he likes you, which is a lot. And that everyone else needs to back off because it’s an exclusive sort of thing.”

“Oh,” Stiles says, mouth snapping shut. “You know, it would be really nice if people told me these things.”

“I literally just did exactly that,” Scott says.

“Come on,” Stiles says, grabbing a protesting Ethan and dragging him over to the bed. “Man up already.”

“Ugh, fine.”

They spend the next hour being yelled at by Matt; Stiles tries to look intimate, but it’s hard since Ethan keeps running away.

“So,” Stiles says, leaning against the doorway with his hands in his pockets. “A little werebirdy told me that we’re exclusive.”

“There are no such things as werebirds.”

“You don’t know that. Answer the q.”

Derek shrugs. “You’re not fucking anyone else. I’m not either. By definition, that’s exclusive.”
“Yeah,” Stiles says, not even bothering to ask Derek how he knows Stiles isn’t sleeping with someone else. He figures it has something to do with the way he smells, since everyone keeps talking about how he reeks of Derek. “Want to fuck?”

Derek sets his book to the side, resting his hands at his sides. He doesn’t have to say anything.

“No, I mean, do you want to fuck. Me. Do you want to fuck me.”

Derek’s eyes get really wide at that and it would be funny if Stiles’ hands weren’t trembling. He kneels at the foot of Derek’s bed, playing with the end of his shirt a little indecisively, before pulling it off. Derek watches him, still wide eyed.

“Stiles, are you sure?”

“Do you not want to?” Stiles asks, getting a little wide eyed himself. “I mean, I have lube and condoms. Was that presumptuous? That was probably presumptuous. If you don’t want to—”

Derek grabs him by his shoulders and kisses him, bruisingly hard. They don’t kiss very often; usually, their mouths are busy elsewhere. Stiles melts into it, sliding his arms around Derek’s neck. He’s always liked kissing and Derek is damn good at it.

“I want to.”

Stiles ends up on his knees with his face pressed into his pillow, Derek rubbing his hands up and down his sides. He’s blushing; it’s embarrassing, but Derek is pressing these small little kisses on Stiles’ lower back. Stiles thought it would be rough and quick, but Derek’s taking his time, touching Stiles everywhere until his entire body is vibrating with need.

Derek presses one finger in and Stiles buries his face in his pillow, biting back a noise. He’s incorporated fingering into his masturbation routine, but since he gets to jerk off like, once a week, it’s still fairly new.

“Shh,” Derek murmurs, comfortingly, which is just weird enough that Stiles lifts his head, looking over his shoulder at Derek. Derek lowers his eyebrows. “Shut up.”

“Oh yeah, Derek, that’s so sexy, telling me to shut UP—” The last word goes high when Derek pushes another finger in. Stiles drops his head back onto the pillow as Derek fucks into him, spreading his fingers. He rocks back against Derek’s hand, wanting to touch himself but not trusting his balance enough to attempt it.

“I don’t understand how you can talk so much,” Derek says, strained, “even during sex.”

“You need to shut up,” Stiles says, “and fuck me.”

Derek removes his hand and Stiles gasps at the sudden emptiness, pressing back demandingly. But Derek stills him, grabbing his hip with one hand.

“You okay?” Derek asks.

“Damnit, Derek!” Stiles snarls, unable to handle his gentleness. “If you don’t fuck me, I’m going to do it myself! With—–with, I don’t know, with somethi—oh.”

Derek pushes into him, a little more roughly than Stiles had anticipated, what with all the soft touches. They remain completely still for a solid minute, Derek leaning down to pant into his shoulder. Stiles pushes back and Derek groans, grabbing at him.
“Wait,” Stiles says, pushing Derek off him and twisting around. Derek looks confused and maybe a little offended, but Stiles just pushes him down on the bed and crawls on top of him. Stiles grabs Derek’s dick and slides down on it, closing his eyes for a second. He sees the moment that Derek realizes Stiles is emulating their first photoshoot, eyes huge and pupils blown so wide that his eyes are almost completely black.

He’s never done anything like this before, but it’s not hard to find a rhythm, fucking down onto Derek’s dick. Derek grabs his hips, taking control and Stiles lets him, pressing his hands down on Derek’s chest and just watching as Derek bares his teeth, eyes half shut.

“Yeah,” Stiles says. “Fuck, Derek, you don’t know how often I’ve thought about this—”

It’s the right thing to say, because suddenly Derek’s really fucking into him, so hard and fast and god. **God.**

Afterwards, Derek knots the top of the condom and lobs it towards the garbage can, punching the air when he makes it in. Stiles just stares at him, overwhelmed, then plasters himself across Derek’s chest. They’re both sweaty and gross and it’s so goddamn perfect that Stiles thinks he might die.

“Why did you come to the studio, Derek?” Stiles asks, breaking the comfortable silence. “I mean, the first time.”

It’s the last thing that’s been really bothering Stiles. Derek slides one hand down Stiles’ stomach, watching his own fingers. He doesn’t speak for a moment, too absorbed with drawing a finger across Stiles’ abs. It’s kind of gross, but Stiles is too focused on getting an answer to protest.

“Derek?”

“You never came back.”

“Yeah, but you could have just talked to me after class. Or texted me.”

“Classes didn’t start for a week and I don’t have your phone number.”

Stiles props himself up on one elbow, frowning down at Derek. “Oh my god, you’re right. We live together and we’re doing—this—and I totally haven’t given you my digits.”

Derek shrugs. “Give them to me later.”

“But, so, you decided to just come visit me at work?”

“You never came back,” Derek repeats, eyebrows a low vee. “I had no way of contacting you. You refused to sit next to me during class, and then you left.”

“I went home for winter break,” Stiles explains, almost apologetically.

“I know that,” Derek snaps. “I’m not an idiot.”

“I think that’s debatable.”

Derek cuffs him lightly across the back of his head. “I needed to talk to you and—I don’t know. Paige’s business card was on your nightstand so I thought I’d drop by, see if we could grab some coffee. Then I saw you bare your neck to that other Alpha,” Derek snarls and Stiles pets his side until his expression smooths out again.

“I like you best,” Stiles says, which earns him a quick grin, as if Derek’s not sure he likes that there
are enough Alphas around for there to be a “favorite,” even if that happens to be him. “So, uh, are we’re dating? I know we’re exclusive and all, but are we like, boyfriends? Even though we’ve never actually been on a real date.”

“We went on a date.”

“Excuse me, I would know if we went on a date,” Stiles says, pushing himself up to frown down at Derek. Derek frowns back, but it’s exaggerated, and Stiles grins again. “No, but seriously—wait. Derek, wait. Was that a date? Did we go on a date on Halloween?”

Derek’s face goes completely blank.

“Are we dating, Derek?”

Derek’s face hardens slightly. “I’m not in this for just a casual fuck, if that’s what you’re asking. So, you tell me. Are we dating, Stiles?”

“Yeah.” Stiles ducks his head, huge smile breaking out across his face. “God, yeah.”

“Great,” Derek sighs, but he’s grinning too. “I’m dating a moron.”

“Yep! And trust me when I say that you’re stuck with me now, bub. Really stuck with me. Like, octopus-levels of stuck. You are so stuck with me that—”

Derek kisses him, probably to shut him up. It works.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!