Summary

Harvey sometimes moonlights as a Star Trek BNF. Mike might have an attitude problem on the internet. TiberiusGhost is strangely compelling, for a recluse who never goes to meetups, and Harvey's finding this kid Photohead vaguely familiar...

Notes

Written on a prompt for the Suits meme: Mike and Harvey have a secret guilty internet pleasure that they both have alter-egos for, and they meet on this site and automatically become rivals. They end up figuring out who the other is and their rivalry spills over into real life and turns into UST.

DISCLAIMER: I know a bit about Star Trek but nothing about the fandom. All names are fake and not meant to represent real people. Anything I say about Trek fandom is made up.
photohead would like to chat.

photohead: Okay, I have an important question.
ella_pants: No, photo, I won't marry you.
photohead: Goddammit.
ella_pants: You're so easy. What's up?
photohead: What do you think fandom reaction would be if I got into, say Star Trek fandom?
ella_pants: Photo, what is fandom's reaction when you do anything? Half of them won't care and the other half will wet themselves.
photohead: you're not helping.
ella_pants: stop being a wet blanket, then. You care too much.
where did this come from, anyway?
photohead: My boss.
ella_pants: ...
Your boss is in fandom?
photohead: No. I mean I don't think so, but he's one of those normal-people-with-quirks. Except not normal in any way.
Anyway I think he's a trekkie.
ella_pants: trekker. I know you only do that to tick me off.
photohead: Worked on him, too! :D
ella_pants: So you want to write in Trek fandom?
photohead: I don't know. I have thoughts I wish to share.
ella_pants: that usually goes well for you. /sarcasm
I didn't think your boss was the DVD-loaning-out sort.
photohead: He's not, omg. But he has a thing for Kirk, and I'd never actually seen any of them so.
ella_pants: You watched them to impress him, didn't you?
photohead: Only a little!
...and now I can't figure out how to bring it up in conversation.
But the point is I want to write in the fandom. Is this going to be "photo's an intrusive asshole who thinks he's never wrong" all over again?
ella_pants: oh, probably. Fuck 'em.
Can I give you a quick primer?
photohead: fire away.
ella_pants: It's an old fandom.
photohead: I'm coming from BSG.
ella_pants: You dabbled in BSG. You're coming from White Collar, for chrissakes.
photohead: What's wrong with that?
ella_pants: It's USA Network.
photohead: Again...
ella_pants: Oh nevermind.
Look, okay, the big fans in Trek right now are
Kirkboot -- Reboot fan, Voice of the Newbies
D_lilah -- metacommentary mostly, does edgy weird shit in fanfic
TiberiusGhost -- ultimate BNF, been in the fandom forever
Strictly speaking, Mike didn't have time for fandom anymore.

The days at Pearson Hardman were long and didn't always end on Friday night. He had a whole stack of briefs at his elbow that Harvey wanted proofed for Monday, and he should be working on those because he fully expected Harvey would call on Sunday morning and expect them to be done.

He needed some way to come down from the week, from the work. Pot wasn't an option anymore. Drinking was, but the hangovers took up too much precious time. Television had been an option until he'd whipped through most of what he'd downloaded. Even Star Trek hadn't lasted him that long, though he supposed if he wanted to watch all the spinoffs he could just sit down on the couch and never get up again.

Fandom was a good escape. Writing always had been. He could do it for short periods of time, it didn't cause hangovers, and it kept him in touch with some kind of humanity beyond the dubiously-human people he worked with every day. He'd worked hard to keep up his blog after Harvey hired him, because if he didn't at least check in, people worried about him. Which was nice, kind of.

But he hadn't written much since starting work, and he really missed it.

He stared at the blinking GoogleDocs cursor. He wanted to write something light to read, but a little more literary than just porn. No AUs for his first time out, he'd made that mistake when he was a newbie on the fringes of Harry Potter fandom.

Well, write what you know, he supposed.

Also it really pissed people off when he wrote convincing OCs, and he liked coming into a fandom with just a little attitude.

Title: Koete Maru
Author: photohead
Rating: Explicit (eventually)
Summary: Federation legal counsel can't help Kirk or Spock when they're imprisoned on a formerly
peaceful planet undergoing First Contact evaluation. The Koete Maru, on the other hand...

Notes: Blendin' up TOS and Reboot. Enjoy that.

Ti G. (tiberiusghost) wrote,

**Subject: The Past Is A Foreign Country**

I don't do maudlin and you guys know (or should) that I don't do friendmemes or lovefests or any of the other so-called bonding bullshit that some people use to substitute for actual interaction in fandom. I won't apologize for that because I'm not sorry. What I am is a grown-up. That's right, you heard me.

That being said, there is an appropriate time for reflection, and context is important, and history provides context.

Twenty-three years ago I came to fandom because I liked stories, and I liked making up stories about other stories, and also because life was reasonably hellish. Those of you who were around then, and there are a couple, probably know what a relief it was to be treated like an adult around here.

Sidebar. It's a surreal thing to consider that people who were graduate students and interns and college kids when I was a teenager are now, off the cuff: Head of Surgery at a hospital in Montreal, Professor of Geology at UPenn, CEO of a management consulting firm, several librarians and high school teachers, and one underachieving but personally fulfilled dog walker (you know I love you, Mary). Almost as surreal as my own job, which right now comes with a corner-office view that would give the more delicate among you a nosebleed.

The point is, twenty-three years ago I got four good years out of fandom before my life outside the internet took a couple of really violently jarring turns, and ten years ago I came back as a lurker because the jarring was over but the intensity wasn't, and three years ago when I finally found myself interested in writing again and with enough spare time to manage it, here you all were. I'm glad to be a part of this, and grateful to be such a big part of it.

I've now been tiberiusghost for over half my life, in various forms from zine subscription to usenet flamewars to livejournal and AO3.

That's very weird.

(35 Comments on: The Past Is A Foreign Country by tiberiusghost) (Post A Comment)

stomper123
(Local) (Link)

Did you just reveal something about your personal life? *shockface*

Totally OT but
kkiekker
(Local) (Link)

Ti have you seen Koete Maru yet? You were the first person I thought of when I read it.

Yes, that is Totally OT
tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)
Why do people keep linking me to this? I'm in fandom. Yes, I've seen it.

(220 Comments on: Koete Maru by photohead) (Post A Comment)

notadoctor
(Local) (Link)

I can't tell you how pleased I am you're writing in this fandom, Photo. And omg eee Kirk/Spock. Was that a hint of past Kirk/McCoy too?

kkiekker
(Local) (Link)

YOU ARE A GOD AMONG FANS.

sure_lock
(Local) (Link)

I can't believe I like an OC this much. A whole team of OCs. Neat spin on the Kobayashi Maru, too. Does Koete have any special meaning?

photohead
(Local) (Link)

It means "beyond". It's supposed to be both just the name of a ship and a sort of reference to how you have to move past the inevitable endgame in Kobayashi Maru and think about ethical and moral ramifications of it.

benjamin_dover
(Local) (Link)

I told you if you used it for porn I'd know.

But it's okay, it's good porn, so you are forgiven.

photohead
(Local) (Link)

I can't believe you just said that.

Oh man Ben you are such a stalker.

Also, "ben dover"? Real subtle. I knew you secretly liked being called Ben.

benjamin_dover
(Local) (Link)

Lunch today?

photohead
(Local) (Link)

You're paying.

kkiekker
OMG you guys know each other?

Harvey got the eighteenth link to that stupid Koete Maru fic while he was in a meeting with opposing counsel, and it made him maybe a little more vicious in negotiations than he otherwise would have been. The net result was positive, anyway: his client's settlement went up by ten percent before they were through.

It wasn't that Photohead was a bad writer, or even that he was overrated, as the anons on the meme liked to moan about. And Harvey had twice the number of readers, so he wasn't concerned about that.

It was just that the Kobayashi Maru was his thing, something he'd written about a lot, and this Photohead guy had just barged in and written the perfect fic about it. The perfect literary meditation on the futility of the no-win scenario.

Harvey wanted to have written that story. Now, no matter if he addressed Kobayashi Maru again, Photohead's fic would be the defining one against which all others were compared. He had, ironically, put Harvey into a Kobayashi Maru of his own.

He wanted to know who this guy was and what the hell he was doing writing in Harvey's fandom. The last time Photohead had come to his attention it had been some wank or other about Cylons, Harvey couldn't be bothered to look up the specifics. On the other hand, Photohead didn't seem to lock anything in his blog, from his bitchery about his job (the lawyer in him cringed at that kind of potential defamation) to his porn habits.

"Harvey, you keep snorting like some kind of penned bull," Donna said over the intercom in his office. "What are you reading? Because if it's Bob Loblaw's Law Blog again --"

Harvey closed the lid of his laptop. He didn't think Donna could access his computer without him noticing, but with her you never knew. He made very careful to keep his professional life separate from fandom -- different email addresses, a PO Box for zine mailings and other fannish stuff, an IP blocker so that nothing he said could be traced back to the Pearson Hardman servers -- but Donna did have access to his bank account, and there was no way she hadn't seen the occasional incriminating purchase.

"Touchy," Donna observed, grinning at him through the glass.

"I have a nemesis," Harvey said.

"Do tell."

"It's private."

"A private nemesis? Is this like a Hark A Vagrant thing?"

Harvey played dumb. "A what?"

His email beeped.

To: h.specter@pearsonahardman.com
From: donna@pearsonhardman.com
"No," Harvey said.

Clearly, however, reading Photohead's blog (which was enragingly well-written and kind of funny, actually) wasn't doing anything for his temper.

Time to tap fandom gossip, then.

The basement of the building where Pearson Hardman had its offices had a really good restaurant, with a fancy French name that nobody remembered; it was universally known to the occupants of the building as The Pit.

Ben texted *Meet you in the Pit* to his phone just after Mike told him on Livejournal that he was paying, and Mike took a moment to meditate on the nature of electronic communication, the changing cultural views of privacy in the modern era, and whether he wanted fries or tater tots with the chicken sandwich he was going to get.

"So," Mike said, when he caught up with Ben, who was waiting for him outside the Pit. "You're a trekkie."

"It's trekker, and no I'm not," Ben replied.

"You were reading my porn."

"You were writing porn on a laptop I gave you. Of course I read it," Ben replied, unconcerned. "And if there's anyone in the country who doesn't know who Kirk and Spock are, they're definitely not on the internet, so it's not like it was a hardship."

"You like the slash, huh?"

Ben shrugged. "No reasonable offer declined. So do you."

"Yeah, don't think I'm putting out just because you're paying," Mike told him, settling in at one of the tables.

"Don't think I'm paying just because you told me I'm paying," Ben replied.

"You asked me to lunch."

Ben sat back and looked at him narrowly. "You really don't have any shame at all about writing porn on the internet, do you?"

"Should I?" Mike asked, studying the single-page menu. "Anyone who's going to try and shame me about it had to have found it somehow. Nobody trips over Google and ends up reading about Kirk sodomizing Spock, so they have no moral high ground to stand on." He glanced up at Ben. "But you are a Trekkie, aren't you?"

"Trekker!"

"I knew it."
Ben looked discontented. "I might occasionally read the odd story."

"Good. I could use a road map of fandom. They're brutalizing me on the anon memes, and apparently I've pissed off a BNF just by existing."

"I got news for you. With 1500 readers, you are one."

"Stalker," Mike said, smiling. "There's BNFs and BNFs. What stick did TiberiusGhost get up his ass? I've seen the links, every time someone mentions Koete Maru he gets pissy."

"Nobody likes it when the new kid swans into fandom and starts showboating, Michael."

"Yeah, let's be mean to the new kid, Ben." Mike set his menu aside. "It's no big deal, I've dealt with worse. I work for Harvey Specter. I'm just saying, if I have to wear my grownup pants and not whine about him picking on me, he should have to wear his grownup pants and not pick on me."

"Fandom suffers a devastating shortage of grownup pants," Ben said, and then looked mortified as the waiter behind him asked, "Are you ready to order?"

tiberiusghost would like to chat.

ella_pants: Ti! Hi, this is a surprise, I didn't think you chatted.
tiberiusghost: I'm on invisible. I pop up visible, eight million people ping me. What is this photohead fuckery?
ella_pants: Wow, straight to the point. What makes you think I know?
tiberiusghost: You do know him, and you're always on the fringes of the fuckery.
ella_pants: You're an asshole.
Wait, did you stalk his journal?
Oh my god you're SUCH an asshole.
tiberiusghost: Research is research.
You comment there all the time.
ella_pants: Yeah and I totally warned him about you.
tiberiusghost: So what's his deal?
ella_pants: you know what, Ti? Screw you and your weird fannish insecurity. He's just a dude.
tiberiusghost: He has 1500 followers.
ella_pants: Aw, are you feeling threatened?
The fandom doesn't actually revolve around you.
tiberiusghost: If I weren't a gentleman I'd call you a bitch. :P
da_pants: If I weren't a bitch I'd be oh so scared. :P
tiberiusghost: Seriously, though, who is he?
da_pants: What do you want me to tell you? Look him up on fanlore or something.
He wrote one trek fic, calm down.
tiberiusghost: and it's all anyone is talking about.
da_pants: What did you think of it?
tiberiusghost: LOL
No.
da_pants: You thought it was hot.
tiberiusghost: I'm in fandom. Traditionally we think anything with cocks involved is hot.
da_pants: What actually is it that you want to know, Ti?
**tiberiusghost:** I want to know if he thinks this is his fandom now, and if he's planning to write more, so I can brace myself for when a bunch of idiots keep linking me.

**ella_pants:** Jerk.
He's not planning a military campaign.
He saw the show, he had stuff he wanted to say.

**tiberiusghost:** Nobody just casually decides to watch the entire run of TOS.

**ella_pants:** Ask him yourself. He had his reasons.

**tiberiusghost:** What kind of dark and terrible reasons are they that you can't tell me?

**ella_pants:** You're seriously a lawyer? Like, one who goes to court? Because I hope you're better in front of a judge than you are in chat.

**tiberiusghost:** Irrelevant, your honor.

**ella_pants:** I'm not telling, and I have work to do. Go stalk him on google.

*ella_pants has signed off.*

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**42 Comments on: Untitled Post by tiberiusghost** (Post A Comment)

**A word.**

**photohead**
(Local) (Link)

Hi Ti,

I realize this isn't a relevant place to put this but your email isn't listed, so it's your own fault it's public. My hand to God, if you ever step up on one of my friends like that again I actually will deliberately gun for you.

Kisses,
Photohead

**That was a few words.**

**tiberiusghost**
(Local) (Link)

How terrifying. Let me guess, you'll write more porn?

**re: That was a few words**

**kkiekker**
(Local) (Link)

FYI, PH, none of us would object if that were the outcome.

**re: That was a few words**

**photohead**
(Local) (Link)

You're not even sorry, are you?

**re: That was a few words**

**tiberiusghost**
(Local) (Link)
Not even that I got caught. I had a source and used it. She's a big girl and she held her own just fine.

re: That was a few words
photohead
(Local) (Link)

She's not a source, she's a friend, and if you want to stalk me you should man the hell up and come at me directly.

re: That was a few words
tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)

I wasn't stalking you, pipsqueak. You should be so lucky.

STFU BOTH OF YOU
ella_pants
(Local) (Link)

OH MY GOD PHOTO WHY DID YOU DO THIS.

Both of you shut the hell up right now or I'll kick your asses as if you actually were the seventh-grade dicks fighting over a girl that you're acting like. Photo, I did not intend for you to come rampaging along in Ti's journal. Ti, if you call me a source again you'll regret it.

Don't think I can't destroy you both.

This thread has been screened.

Mike was a boundless, enthusiastic optimist who liked to think the best of people and was compulsively drawn to care for them. It wasn't like he wasn't aware of this fact. He knew he also had a little trouble letting go when people were assholes, and that was a character flaw he wouldn't have minded Harvey trying to fix, like Harvey tried to fix everything else he saw as a 'flaw' in Mike's character.

But it wasn't looking like it was going to happen today.

His little tussle with TiberiusGhost had landed him in hot water with Ella, who clearly had expected him to LOL with her at TiberiusGhosts's insecurity when she gave him the vague details of their conversation. Instead he'd gone, okay, a little crazy on the guy. He would have done it for any of his friends, but maybe he would have been a little less public about it with someone other than TiberiusGhost, who just got under his skin. Stomping around fandom like he owned it, stalking Mike just because he'd written one good Trek fanfic.

So Mike was sitting at home, when he could be out getting laid (he bet a dork like TiberiusGhost never got laid), and re-reading TiberiusGhost's old work, mentally throwing down all kinds of slams and insults about it. Which even he knew wasn't exactly fair, because the guy was a brilliant writer and most the badly-written stuff in his archive was ten years old or more.

But that was why he was doing it in the privacy of his own home and head, rather than putting it on his blog (Ella would kill him) or going out to a bar with Ben to complain about it. He had no trouble talking about fandom in public, but Ben got squirmy and embarrassed and anyway going to a bar to rant about his internet enemies would just be sad.
Not that this wasn't somewhat sad anyway, he thought, as he got up to get himself a beer.

The thing was, you could say that TiberiusGhost had written every cliche in fandom, but it wouldn't be precisely true. He'd invented some of them, even in Trek fandom, which was a billion years old. Even the ones he hadn't invented -- the old standby plots that everyone tried their hand at sooner or later -- he'd done...differently.

There was something arrogantly confident in his stories that set Mike's teeth on edge, and at the same time got under his skin and reminded him that he might not like the arrogance but it was earned. TiberiusGhost's Kirk was slick, charming, and powerful without coming off as sleazy, in a way the actual canon character didn't always manage. His other characters were dead-on portrayals, not the caricatures some writers turned them into, but Mike had to give the guy this, he'd actually improved on James T. Kirk.

He hadn't yet settled back into the couch when the phone rang; Mike tilted his head, then rummaged furiously in the heap of clothes on the end of his couch for it. He hadn't programmed a specific ring into his phone for Harvey, for two reasons: one, Harvey would have mocked him, and two, there was a certain demanding sound to the ring, Mike was sure of it. His phone knew when it was Harvey.

"Harvey, hey," he said, answering on the third ring and dropping into the couch.

"Are you at home?" Harvey asked.

"Yeah, why?"

"Did you take the Johnson & Levings contract home with you?"

"Yes, Harvey." Mike rolled his eyes.

"I can tell when you're rolling your eyes."

Man was spooky.

"You said to have them proofed by noon tomorrow, I thought I'd get a jump and I can proof just as well here."

"I want them on my desk at eight tomorrow -- proofed or not," Harvey said, over Mike's noise of protest. "Their rep just called, we need to add a new section after paragraph fifteen."

"I can do that. What do they need?"

There was a laugh down the line. "Nice try, puppy. This is a multi-million-dollar deal, they want the master's touch."

"Harveeeey."

"Are you whining?" Harvey asked. "Did you just whine at me?"

"Yeah, I'm practicing for the temper tantrum I plan to throw next time I'm in court. Don't you have a digital copy?"

"Do you have some kind of objection to being in the office by eight tomorrow?" Harvey asked, then rolled on before Mike could continue. "The draft was drawn up by their consultant, you're holding a fax of the only copy we have, and getting anything digital out of Johnson & Levings is like pulling
"Not good enough to write it but too good to retype it myself? I'm moving up in the world," Mike said drily.

"We don't bill you out for your stenography skills."

"How do you always manage to make my billable hours sound vaguely like you're my pimp?"

"You should be so lucky," Harvey said. "Eight o'clock, contract is on my desk, got it?"

"Yes, sir," Mike muttered, because Harvey had hung up without waiting for a reply. Mike groaned, pulled the Johnson & Levings contract out of his bag, and began to work. If he was going to get them to Harvey by eight, he was damn well going to have them proofed by then.

Half an hour later he gave himself a five minute break, because suddenly there was a story that he needed to write and he wanted to remind himself to do it. He leaned over, tapped out a few notes on his laptop, and then went back to proofing, which took no little amount of willpower.

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Title: Orion Is Listening
Author: photohead
Rating: Explicit
Summary: The Serpent writhes / Orion is listening / Gold against blue / His sword is glistening
Notes: How's that for the worst summary ever? (Title and Summary from "Peace on Earth" by William Carlos Williams.)

( "There's more to it than doing as you're told, Spock." )

(29 Comments on: Orion Is Listening by photohead) (Post A Comment)

Harvey had to admit, though it pained him and it wasn't something he would admit outside the privacy of his mind, that Photohead had a certain amount of class. Anyone else, having tussled with Harvey the way Photohead had, would probably have gunned for him anyway: written a parody of his work, or outwritten a plot he'd done. He suspected Photohead had that kind of ability.

Instead he'd written something so wholly unrelated to TiberiusGhost that Harvey couldn't find fault with his behavior, and so wholly relevant to Harvey's life -- not that Photohead could know that -- that Harvey was downright confused.

He read it over once, stopped to consider it, and then read it again. It wasn't particularly long, or perhaps explicit enough to warrant the adult rating from someone less cautious than Photohead. It was just a small, perfect story. About, apparently, Harvey's life. Or at least, the part of it where he once had a crappy mentor and might also, now, be one.

"You look like your stock portfolio just crashed," Mike said, from the bench across the hall. They were sitting in the courthouse, waiting for the jury to come back in one of Harvey's rare criminal defense cases. Mike was finishing off a food-cart hamburger; Harvey never ate while he was awaiting a verdict. He gave Mike a raised eyebrow. "You know. Stormcloud Harvey. Grr," Mike said, and made a face.

"If you ever make that face again you're fired," Harvey said. Mike shrugged and took another bite.
"Bad news?" he asked, around a mouthful of food.

"Chew or talk, not both," Harvey said, looking back down at his phone.

"Yes, Mom," Mike sing-songed, but he swallowed before he spoke again. "Seriously, you look grumpy."

"Remember the many times we've talked about you caring?"

"Fine. I just think you should know, if you wish to unburden yourself, I'm here for you, Harvey," Mike said. He leaned forward and gave Harvey an earnest, puppydog look for two or three seconds. Harvey didn't twitch or move; Mike broke first, laughing, and Harvey allowed himself to smile.

"Mr. Specter?" a clerk asked, leaning through a doorway. "They jury has reached a verdict."

Mike, excited to hear his first ever criminal trial verdict, shot to his feet; Harvey caught him by the elbow and stopped him from bounding inside.

"Mustard," he said, pointing to his own mouth. Mike raised his hand to wipe his mouth with his wrist, and Harvey caught his other arm, released the first one, and pressed a handkerchief into his hand.

"You're class all the way," he said to Mike, as the other man dabbed mustard off his face. "That's dry-clean-only linen. I want it back."

They won, of course.

Harvey made a date with his client to sue the city for wrongful arrest and defamation, then called a cab and made Mike get in on the street side and took them both back to Pearson Hardman. And once he'd seen Mike off to his cubicle, he stopped at Donna's desk, where she was packing up for the day.

"Are you hovering for a reason?" she asked, putting her phone in her purse.

"Do I suck as a mentor?" Harvey asked.

"Your insecurity is amusing," she replied, still not looking up at him as she switched off her computer monitor.

"Seriously."

"You did. You're getting better," she assured him.

"But I sucked."

Donna looked up from her bag, cocked her hip and rested a hand on it. "Fortunately, Mike's a resilient little ball of putty. He probably didn't notice. And if he did, nobody on this Earth is more likely to forgive you than Mike Ross. Bless his heart," she added, in the tone of voice that told him "Bless his heart" actually meant "He's kind of slow". Harvey had nostalgic memories of when Donna used to bless his heart.

Still. Getting better was not satisfactory. Harvey made a discontented noise.

"I know you want to be universally revered, but there's a learning curve," Donna said, patting his arm. "You're doing fine."
"It's not like they teach classes about this," he pointed out.

"What brought this on?" she asked, shouldering her purse.

"Something I read," Harvey replied.

"Well, stop reading corporate inspirational propaganda and try the funny pages instead," she said, patted his cheek, and departed. Harvey scowled, and went into his office to sulk.

And, eventually, to write.

photohead would like to chat.

photohead: I broke a promise to myself.
ella_pants: Sooner or later we all crave Funyuns, Photo. Sometimes these things just happen.
photohead: One, that's gross. Two, I'm serious.
ella_pants: What did you do?
photohead: I filled a prompt on the kinkmeme.
ella_pants: Given you just wrote thinly-veiled daddy kink, I think you're okay.
photohead: It wasn't daddy kink! Why does everyone think it was daddy kink?
ella_pants: Because it was daddy kink, baby. It's okay, everyone's a little twisted inside.
photohead: It was power-imbalance mentorship kink.
ella_pants: You keep telling yourself that. What's the big? I thought you liked anon-filling on the kink meme. You like their little screams when they find out it's you.
photohead: I filled for Kkiekker.
ella_pants: Which one is she?
photohead: The superfan who thinks TiberiusGhost created the world in five days? She's the one who leaves really long rambling prompts that are half about her personal life.
ella_pants: Ohhhhhh Photo. You didn't. It's like feeding wildlife! You're only encouraging people.
photohead: I can't help it! People always do really awful fills for her!
ella_pants: because her prompts are really awful! Oh my god, which one did you fill It wasn't the wingfic, was it?
photohead: What do you have against wingfic? No, it wasn't the wingfic. It was the one about drunk threesomes. I did Kirk/Sulu/Uhura.
ella_pants: You are a strange, strange boy. You know the last time someone wrote an all-human threesome there was species wank.
photohead: Are you shitting me.
ella_pants: Fandom ruins everything. Even threesomes.
photohead: Am I going to get specieswanked if I post the fill I wrote for the second most obnoxious person in the entire fandom?
ella_pants: You have got to stop ragging on Ti. Seriously, at some point you're going to do it in public and he will destroy you.
photohead: Bring it. I've been practicing my witty retorts, I'll break him in half.
ella_pants: Don't do it, Photo. My nerves can't take murdering you both. So has she responded to your fill?
photohead: Not yet. I'm nearly dreading it.
ella_pants: Catty.
photohead: I'm a bad person.
ella_pants: That's why you're my favorite!
photohead: Not TiberiusGhost?
ella_pants: Oh my god, seriously.

 ella_pants has signed off.

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**Title:** The Engine  
**Rating:** PG-13  
**Fandom:** TOS  
**Author:** tiberiusghost  
**Summary:** Growing up in 23rd century Scotland is a lot like growing up in a theme park based on a scrap yard.

(Read more)

(74 Comments on: The Engine by tiberiusghost) (Post A Comment)

sure_lock  
(Local) (Link)  
OMG steampunk Star Trek. STEAM TREK.

stomper123  
(Local) (Link)  
I really like the way you handled Scotty as a young man.

notadoctor  
(Local) (Link)  
LOLING ENDLESSLY that is so how Scotland will go

TiberiusGhost  
I don't pretend to speak for the future of Scotland but it's good to know my last visit to Glasgow wasn't entirely wasted.

Great story but...  
kkeikker  
(Local) (Link)  
I don't think you can have ever been to Scotland, Ti.

Re: Great story but...  
tiberiusghost  
(Local) (Link)  
Not in the 23rd century, no.

Re: Great story but...  
kkeikker
What I mean is, I know you're American, but it's just not culturally the same in Scotland. I've spent a lot of time there (you know I'm English) and things are very different from the way they are in America.

**Re: Great story but...**

*ti*berius*Ghost*

No, I knew what you meant. The point remains: 23rd century.

**Re: Great story but...**

*kkeikker*

We're an old country, Ti. Things don't change that much.

**Re: Great story but...**

*ti*berius*ghost*

I'm pretty sure when the nuclear winter hits in 2053, Scotland will be just as affected as the rest of us.

**Re: Great story but...**

*kkeikker*

You mean 2079? :)

(Encounter at Farpoint)

**Re: Great story but...**

*ti*berius*Ghost*

I mean 2053.

(First Contact.)

---

**Title:** What's Good Here?

**Author:** photohead

**Rating:** Explicit. So, so explicit.

**Summary:** Shore leave, inadvisable drinks with subordinates, and the allure of exercising a little command privilege. (Kirk/Uhura/Sulu)

**Notes:** Written for a prompt on the kinkmeme by Kkiekker.

*(Never drink with your crew.)*

*(230 Comments on: What's Good Here? by photohead) (Post A Comment)*

photohead: Okay, first of all, you were right about specieswank.

ella_pants: Told you.
photohead: I just ignore it. They can duke it out among themselves. Secondly, however, did you see this thread?
ella_pants: OH NO SHE DIDN'T

Thanks but... 
kkeikker
(Local) (Link)

...did you have to include Uhura?

Um.
photohead
(Local) (Link)

You didn't say no het or anything. I mean you just requested Kirk goes drinking with his crew and has a threesome with Sulu involved.

Re: Um.
kkeikker
(Local) (Link)

I was thinking maybe Spock or McCoy.

Re: Um.
photohead
(Local) (Link)

Well, it's one of life's little surprises!

Honestly, I'm sorry, you just didn't say no women in the prompt, so I didn't figure you cared.

Re: Um.
kkeikker
(Local) (Link)

I just think girl parts are kind of gross.

Re: Um.
photohead
(Local) (Link)

But...aren't you a woman? I mean if you aren't I'm sorry, but I thought you'd like a story from the woman's point of view where two men...you know...

Re: Um.
kkeikker
(Local) (Link)

No, I am a woman, I just don't like to read about them. Thanks for trying, though.

You are a crazy person.
tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)
You are crazy. You are *crazy*. I don't even like Photo and I know this is a fantastic story and you are a *crazy*, ungrateful bad prompter. YOU ARE CRAZY.

**Re: You are a crazy person.**

*photohead*

(Local) (Link)

Wooooow, two wanks in one post. I'm impressed with myself. Kk, I'm sorry you didn't like that part of the story, I won't make that mistake again.

Ti, I know I got all up in your face on your journal but I'm going to lock this down now before you cause an international fannish incident.

*This thread has been frozen.*

---

**To:** tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
**From:** photohead@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Crazy people

Look, I know I didn't seem very grateful on the post, and I know you think I'm some punk invading your fandom or whatever your deal is, but I appreciate you calling Kkiekker on her bullshit. I guess nobody else was going to do it and I never feel like I can.

So anyway, sorry I had to freeze the thread, but I did let you get the last word.

And thanks for what you said about my story. I'm glad you liked it.

PH

**To:** photohead@gmail.com  
**From:** tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: Crazy people

She's so crazy. Someone had to tell her because apparently she didn't know. Fandom makes people crazy.

You don't suck.

---

**To:** ben_dover@gmail.com  
**From:** photohead@gmail.com  
**Subject:** FW: Re: Crazy People

Ben, what the fuck do I even do with this?

**To:** photohead@gmail.com  
**From:** tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Crazy people

*She's so crazy. Someone had to tell her because apparently she didn't know. Fandom makes people*
You don't suck.

To: photohead@gmail.com
From: ben_dover@gmail.com
Subject: Re: FW: Crazy People

Don't call me Ben.

How should I know? I guess you could be flattered a BNF noticed you, or maybe print out a copy for your hope chest or something.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com
From: photohead@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Crazy People

Wow, Ti, you've got a mean backhand.

I liked The Engine too, you know. I just didn't think you wanted me commenting on it.

To: photohead@gmail.com
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Crazy People

Thanks. I get a lot of practice.

Comment wherever you want, whatever, I don't care.

Mike did actually print out a portion of what he'd taken to calling the Crazyperson Wank, though not any of Ti's emails as Ben had suggested. He isolated his conversation with Kk and Ti's response, printed it all, and hung it on his fridge, because it was just so satisfying to look at. He still thought Ti was an arrogant jerk and had no business picking fights in other peoples' journals, but he found it difficult to care. It was nice to have someone stand up and say the stuff you didn't feel you could.

Anyway, Mike had a reputation as fandom's nice guy, and Ti had a reputation as fandom's brat, so it all worked out.

It had been a good week -- along with Ti stomping on Kkeikker, Harvey had been in a good mood for most of it, Louis had been out sick three days, and Mike had earned (oh, how he had earned) a Saturday off to lounge around his apartment and not even think about having to go in to work.

He loved his job. He just felt five days a week was sufficient to demonstrate that love.

Things were humming on the internet, too, just busy enough to be interesting. Ti was getting shit all over from the anon memes for picking on Kk, but Mike knew better than to dive into that mess, and he was willing to bet Ti did too. Hell, the way Ti acted, he might be one of the anons. There was a certain poetry in anonymously giving yourself a hard time, and Mike thought Ti wasn't above that
kind of thing.

Anyway, seeing Ti's blaring YOU ARE A CRAZY PERSON as he made breakfast was a great way to start the day, even if Mike was still pissed he'd pestered Ella, and Ti was apparently still pissed Mike had called him out on it in public.

His phone dinged -- text from Harvey. Mike cringed.

HS: Where are you?

No point in delaying the inevitable. He tapped back, Home, weeping about how you're about to give me work on a Saturday. Where are you?

HS: Two blocks from you. Where's a good place to get breakfast around here?

Mike blinked.

MR: What?
HS: Seriously, on textmessage?
MR: Why are you bringing me work in person?
HS: I'm not, I went for a run.
MR: TO WILLIAMSBURG?
HS: It's not that far. If your next text is directions to a cafe rather than mindless blather, I might actually let you come have breakfast with me.
MR: Buzz me when you get here, I'll come down and show you.
HS: Now you're learning.

His buzzer went a minute later, while he was struggling into a shirt; he tossed his bag over his shoulder, locked his door, and clattered down the stairs. Outside, Harvey was standing in a hoodie and track pants, which was revelation enough in itself.

"I didn't think you even knew how to sweat," Mike said, studying him.

"You think I look this good naturally? I'm flattered," Harvey replied. "And a little worried that you haven't yet internalized the correlation between hard work and being awesome. Breakfast, rookie."

Mike led them a few blocks down and across the street to an argentinian place that he knew did breakfast empanadas, and then watched in half-amazement as Harvey ate three of them in a sitting.

"Protein-loading," Harvey said, when he caught Mike giving his third empanada a skeptical look. "I have to run back, you know."

"Any particular reason you aimed for Williamsburg?" Mike inquired.

"Why, am I on your turf or something? What's the gang colors around here?"

"For someone with a runner's high you're wound pretty tight," Mike said. "Just curious, that's all."

"I had a whim," Harvey said. "Interrogate me further and you're buying breakfast."

"Fine, I'll live in ignorance," Mike said, holding up his hands. "This is your plan for your day off? Harassing your underling and eating empanadas?"

Harvey shrugged. "Works for me. You got plans?" he added, taking another bite.

"Rolling around in the fact I don't have to proof briefs for another thirty-six hours. Maybe go to a
movie."

That earned him a grin, and then Harvey was taking cash out of a zip-pocket in his hoodie, laying enough down on the table to cover both his breakfast and Mike's.

"See you Monday," he said as they left, and took off running with a long, easy lope -- but not in a direct path for the bridge back to Manhattan.

Mike watched him go. Interesting.

---

Ti G. (tiberiusghost) wrote,

Subject: Cops and Superheroes are my favorite

I ran down to Desert Island this morning -- I have a standing order with Midtown Comics for my weekly fix, but I heard Desert Island is cooler and the people are potentially less surly, or at any rate less like caricatures of comic book store owners. You haven't lived until you've walked into a comic book store in a three-piece suit and watched the clerks eyeball you. They're used to me now, but sometimes I think they think I'm cosplaying Clark Kent.

Which, let's face it, would be pretty awesome.

Anyway, I had breakfast in Brooklyn and hit up Desert Island, which has the best storefront I've encountered in a long time. It didn't strike me as particularly extraordinary in terms of selection or anything, but there's definitely a hipster vibe absent from Midtown and a lot of indy books and selfpubs. Which is great and all but I'm a shallow person, and I like my Marvel and DC.

On the advice of my PA, She Who is Never Wrong (I'm required to say that; she'll kick my ass if I don't) I also stopped at the second-hand media place on the way back from Brooklyn and picked up the first two seasons of White Collar. I wrapped a couple of things up on Friday so I had the weekend off, and I blew through the first season. I don't normally go for USA shows, but I might make an exception.

The Goddess thought I'd appreciate the fashion and I can't say she's wrong, though I'm a little ambivalent about how much we're supposed to root for the con man. Not that I don't enjoy a light lie myself every now and then, but I spent a few years in the DA's office and I know what scumbuckets these guys usually are in person. They don't have a moral code, not like Neal's anyway, and I don't like to see assholes heroified. I like that there's this upstanding guy handling him, but...he's getting a whole lot less upstanding as the story unfolds.

I get it, I do. But man, some of the crap they pull in this show, too, it's not the illegality of it but the sheer lack of grip of how our legal system works. It's not unusual, I suppose, just much more blatant than usual.

But I will consider it. I may have things to write.

Mostly about the clothes. God damn those are some hot suits.

(82 Comments on: Cops and superheroes are my favorite, by tiberiusghost) (Post A Comment)

photohead
(Local) (Link)

Oh you're coming into my fandom now? Is this revenge?
I'm not coming into your fandom, I'm looking around in a new fandom that you just happen to be a part of and thinking of making it mine. Don't worry, I'm a mostly benevolent overlord. I will rule you wisely.

And I maintain, as an Attorney at LOL, that scene where Neal poses as a doctor would never hold up in court.

Speaking as a fellow Attorney at LOL, trust me, you don't need a law degree to figure that one out. You don't think -- and this is just a suggestion -- that you are maybe 100% missing the point of the scene?

Which was?

(You're a lawyer? Jesus, kid, I fear for the establishment.)

Neal Caffrey in scrubs.

(Fuck off, I'm a great lawyer.)

I suppose there are worse places to explore your budding sexual crisis than fandom.

Who's in a crisis? He's pretty, I'm bi, you're insecure.

Excuse me? Are you the only man in fandom allowed to like dick?

Sorry, your accounts of your manwhoretastic exploits fooled me into thinking you liked chasing anything in heels.
They don't have to be in heels, as long as they're in Prada. Stalker.

Not Potatohead (photohead) wrote,

**Subject:**

Do you think there's varying degrees of suspension of disbelief? Like, the sheer ability? Maybe it's like art or something, some people have a natural talent for it. I keep getting in arguments with the guy who sits next to me about TV, because he can't suspend his disbelief. Neither can certain other people I've spoken to recently, but a baby lawyer and a Trekkie are hardly a diverse sample population.

I mean, mostly it seems to me that if something gets in the way of an awesome story, you should throw it out. I'm not saying make *everything* up. I'm just saying, if most of the people watching a cop show don't know how arrest procedure works, I don't see why it has to be accurate if it interferes with the awesome. Some people are totally cool with this, and some are just like...it's like they take joy from savaging people over the slightest little detail. I guess that's fun for them but I can't really see how.

Anyway it's just something I was thinking about.

(22 Comments on: No Subject by photohead) (Post A Comment)

tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)

I do not think it's wrong to demand a modicum of accuracy and research from people being paid zillions of dollars to entertain me.

Also, it's Trekker.

photohead
(Local) (Link)

You have got to let go of the idea that television should be based in reality. Television is there to gratify our need for stories, and stories should be told, they shouldn't just happen like real life does.

I totally don't care that most of the law on TV is bullshit. I treat it like an AU and the magnificence of our protagonists pwning the shit out of everyone makes me happy.

tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)

My god, you'd be a dream to go up against in court. You're like an adorable kitten I could crush without even making any effort. I bet you're a public defender. You scream idealism.

photohead
(Local) (Link)

I work for one of the best private firms in the city. What do you do, chase ambulances?
Which city, Mayberry?

At the moment I'm in a meeting with a client who brings in about four million a year. He's one of my lesser clients, which is why I can reply to this while we're meeting.

photohead
(Local) (Link)

I had to Google Mayberry. You're dating yourself, Ti.

tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)

Well, nobody else measures up to my high standards.

photohead
(Local) (Link)

A gift for you.

tiberiusghost
(Local) (Link)

Victory sex and dating are two very different things. I don't expect you to understand that.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com
From: photohead@gmail.com
Subject: Lurker.

Ella tells me you lurk on chat. You want to chat tonight?

To: photohead@gmail.com
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com
Subject: Loser.

Why?

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com
From: photohead@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Loser.

Defensive much?

I'm watching XMFC. I thought you might enjoy co-mocking with me. I'm sure you have a copy,
because you are a nerd for comic books and it shows.

OH SNAP WHO'S THE LOSER NOW?

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Loser.

I could be convinced. I do love mocking you.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Loser.

With me. Mocking WITH me.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Loser.

Potato, potato.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Loser.

You're supposed to spell it phonetically. Now you're just calling me a potato.

Scratch it, anyway. I just got loaded up with work, looks like another late night. I'll ping you sometime. Please set your away message to "Manwhoretastic exploits" when you go out, so I know you care.

The anon memes (there were three Harvey's grudgingousies hung out in; he wondered if it was all the same person, and if so could they please find something better to do) had spent approximately eighteen hours delightedly dissecting his behavior around Photohead before getting bored. One of them kept trying to bring up how strange it was they'd stopped sniping at each other so fast, with the nasty implication that Photohead was some kind of sockpuppet Ti was using to drum up attention, but even a meme got tired of old news pretty quickly. Anyway, these days they weren't half as nasty as they used to be.

Harvey didn't, per se, have anything against the memes -- he hung out in them himself sometimes -- but he'd long ago grown used to the heckling, followed by the fickle indifference. Honestly, it was just like sleeping with Scotty, only without the orgasms.

The thing was, Ti was a part of him but not all of him, and he knew they were...different sometimes.
It was strange. But Harvey, who was an all-time champion grudge holder, didn't need to be such a bitter, stubborn douche online; Harvey Specter and TiberiusGhost were both assholes, but Harvey was politic where Ti was impulsive, and Ti was forgiving where Harvey, well, wasn't. Sometimes one was a good break from the other.

Ultimately, mostly, it meant that Photohead had been a rude dick on his journal, once, but Ti didn't have to cling to first impressions. In every subsequent interaction, over the course of months now, he'd been at least fun, if not always pleasant or respectful. Harvey liked fun.

It sometimes seemed like the day wasn't complete anymore if he hadn't traded a few barbs with Photohead. PH seemed just as eager, or why else would he keep bounding back for more? He reminded Harvey of Mike in a way: never backing down, scrappy to the end. Much more sophisticated than Mike, of course, who showed zero interest in any of the philosophical things Photohead talked about, but it seemed that -- Harvey or Ti -- he couldn't stop picking up scrappy little strays like Mike and Photohead and Ella.

For the first time in a long time, he found himself wondering. He never let himself wonder because he kept his online life and his brickspace life very separate, and he did everyone else the same courtesy. He didn't meet people from the internet, didn't go to cons (okay, once in a long while, always incognito), didn't do phones or photographs or personal details. In return, he didn't demand any of those things from anyone else, either. Didn't think about what friends and readers looked like or did in their off time. It was safer that way.

But now here he was.

Wondering.

"Man, whatever that look is, I really hope I didn't put it there," Mike's voice broke into his thoughts, and he glanced up.

"What look?"

"You look like you're trying to decide whether to take over the world this afternoon or just go play golf," Mike replied, fidgeting in his office, why was the man always fidgeting? "And I have briefs for you," he added, tossing Harvey a flashdrive. "May I now go get my ass kicked by Louis for not finishing the research he gave me before proofing your briefs?"

"You may," Harvey said magnanimously. "Talk to Donna on your way out about the research."

He watched, through the glass, as Mike leaned on Donna's desk, giving her the smile he reserved only for her. Harvey had a smile like that; it paid to be bright, pleasant, and adoring to the admins. He could see their conversation playing out, even if it wasn't the specifics.

I passed your email about the research for Louis down to the Research Department. They think you're pretty funny so they filled your request.

I thought Research didn't do last-minute requests!

They're mercurial and wise. Your research is in your mailbox. Read it, give it to Louis, answer his stupid questions designed to prove you didn't do it yourself. Tomorrow thou shalt make them an offering of doughnuts and coffee.

Well, Mike had to learn how to woo Research, and anyway he deserved a break from Louis's constant beration.
Harvey went back to work, went through the briefs Mike had left, and at the end of the day checked his gmail account one last time before leaving.

---

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Loser.

Scratch the scratching. The work got done earlier than expected. Still up for XMFC? Sevenish?

---

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Loser

You will need alcohol. See you then.

---

**photohead would like to chat.**

**photohead:** I am a sad, sad man.  
**ella_pants:** Pathetic sad or depressed sad?  
**photohead:** Both?  
**ella_pants:** Photo. Did you smoke up again?  
**photohead:** No, believe me, after the last time boss kicked my ass, no more pot. Ever. Even when I no longer work for him.  
**ella_pants:** Well, self-loathing for non-drug-related reasons is new.  
**photohead:** How many people do you think have a crush on Ti?  
**ella_pants:** Oh my god what.  
**photohead:** round estimate.  
**ella_pants:** stalkery erotomania crush, stalkery but ultimately harmless crush, ordinary crush, or brain crush but not actually interested in him outside his fic?  
**photohead:** whoa. Um.  
**ella_pants:** don't strain yourself.  
**photohead:** I think I might be one of the masses.  
**ella_pants:** I figured you were going in that direction.  
**photohead:** We just got done chatting. Ugh, he's such a dick sometimes, and yet. Apparently he's my type.  
**ella_pants:** You do have exquisitely bad taste in men. I remember your crush on Han Solo. He will only treat you badly, Peeh. He shot first.  
**photohead:** You are so unfeeling.  
**ella_pants:** I'm sorry, bb.  
**photohead:** What should I do?  
**ella_pants:** Nothing. You'll get over it eventually. Probably good, too. He's paranoid and doesn't do meets and even if he did, like you said, he can be a dick. Enjoy having your crush and when it fades, look fondly upon it as a youthful pecadillo.  
**photohead:** I am doomed to be alone forever. All I do is work and write fanfic.
ella_pants: You know if I liked boys you'd be my one and only.
photohead: Somehow, that's not as reassuring as it was meant to be.
ella_pants: Maybe you should come to a con sometime. You're not exactly un-famous yourself. I bet you could find someone like snap at one of these things.
photohead: I might be hideous and awkward in person.
ella_pants: Boy, if you can't find someone to love you for your brain in fandom...
photohead: Maybe.
I'm going to go drink some more and mourn my social life.
ella_pants: Some more?
photohead: Ti and I started doing shots every time there was a cut scene where Xavier and Magneto could concievably have had sex.
ella_pants: You're in trouble, huh.
photohead: oh yeah. Night, Ella.

photohead has signed off.

Secret Post #2034

Warning: Some secrets are NOT worksafe and may contain SPOILERS.

01. Star Trek (TOS)

To: photohead@gmail.com
From: livejournal-support@livejournal.com
Subject: TiberiusGhost has friended you.

Hi photohead,

tiberiusghost has friended your journal. Your public entries will be displayed on tiberiusghost's Friendslist Page.

--
Livejournal Team

photohead would like to chat
 ella_pants has signed off. She will see your message when she signs on.

---

**Secret Post #2038**

**Warning:** Some secrets are NOT worksafe and may contain SPOILERS.

13. Iron Man

The fact that we don't have casual Friday at my workplace doesn't bother me. I wear this:

![Suit](image)

Over these:

![Boxer Shorts](image)

And spend all day pretending I'm Iron Man.

---

**Title:** End of the Game  
**Rating:** R  
**Fandom:** XMFC (...what?)  
**Author:** tiberiusghost  
**Summary:** In every education there is one lesson in losing. It's not about learning to lose; it's about learning what you do when you know you will.

([Read more](#))

([98 Comments on: End of the Game by tiberiusghost](#)) ([Post A Comment](#))
Jesus Christ was Ti trying to kill him.

First, friending him, which had sent half his fandom friends into some kind of weird fit of envy and made the other half absolutely positive they were dating. Mike wasn't actually sure Ti even liked him; he suspected Ti was conducting some kind of survey on how the other half lived. Possibly it was a social experiment.

And now the porn.

Fandom was saturated with porn. Everyone talked about it, nobody seemed to care much, it was like anonymously swapping personal sex tapes sometimes. Tell a person on the street that you wrote porn and they'd give you the side-eye. Tell a person on the internet that you wrote porn and they'd just ask if you had it thoroughly beta-read first.

So in the first place, the porn was in no way about him, it was just porn, people made porn all the time, Ti made porn all the time, Mike made porn sometimes, it was what the internet was for. In the second place, there was no reason to feel guilty about getting off to it. It was porn. That was what porn was for.

But it was Ti's porn. More than that, he'd clearly started working on it, the ideas for it, while they'd been watching the movie. More than that, because it was Ti, he'd worked the Kobayashi Maru into it -- not directly, but the idea of the no-win situation. What the characters in his mind apparently did, in a no-win situation, was fuck each other brainless.

Mike could get behind that, he totally could, but he'd come home from a really long day and checked his friendslist and there was new porn posted, porn from Ti, and it was so stupidly hot he was getting hard sitting on his couch in his sweatpants with his laptop balanced precariously on his knees.

He was not going to jerk off to porn written by a guy he was currently having daydreams about. (Over lunch, Mike had taken a few minutes to wonder if Ti worked in Manhattan, if maybe he was one of the people walking outside or even in that very restaurant, and Harvey had said, "Mike, are you fantasizing you're the prettiest princess again?")

He wasn't going to do it. He was a better person than that. He was a rising young star in a large powerful law firm, he'd kicked a very enjoyable drug habit, and he had self-control. He'd finish reading the story and leave a nice, analytical comment, or failing that a mocking, hilarious one.

He turned back to the laptop.

Jesus, could someone even do that with their tongue?

With a groan of self-recrimination, he shut the laptop (he was mostly done anyway, nothing left but the epilogue, which was pretty likely not to be sexy) and set it aside on the coffee table, scooting down into the cushions a little. He edged his sweats down around his thighs and tipped his head back against the arm of the couch, wrapping a hand lightly around his dick.

Just this once. Maybe then he'd get over it.

He didn't want to picture Ti as he got himself off, but who knew what crazy things sex chemicals did to the brain? Mike's brain was strange at the best of times, all random links and sudden epiphanies, information processed and returned, reduced, revised. It did things he didn't want it to do sometimes, especially during sex, when he was holding onto rationality with a very loose grip at any rate.

His fingers tightened, stroking harder as he tried to picture Ti. A lawyer, so maybe -- a suit, shiny
shoes, expensive details (silver watch, leather wallet). A successful one, slick and grinning, someone...

He groaned, because a little part of him knew this was fully out of control but the rest of him shivered at the idea, shoulders twitching, hips jerking with a new wash of pleasure. Someone like Harvey, who Mike had never ever \textit{ever} allowed himself to think about during sex. He arched, stretching, switching back and forth between the idea of Ti (asshole, overblown loudmouth funny dorky Ti) sucking him down and Harvey (asshole, powerful demanding dickhead, in-control Harvey) with his hand where Mike's was, face flushed but impassive as he jerked him off.

Ti would be good at it, he was sure. Confident and sensual, like his writing. Harvey -- hah, if Harvey had ever fucked a guy, Mike would be surprised. He might not rise to the occasional bait Mike had heard about his sexuality (lawyers were such douchebags) but he was hypermasculine, obsessed with image, and it wasn't likely he'd ever actually --

Oh but if he did --

Mike could show him a thing or two, get him down off that high horse, revel in Harvey for once being the inexperienced one.

Mike licked his lips, bucked and came hard, panting.

And he even let himself enjoy the afterglow for two full minutes before reality crashed in.

Guilt rolled through him first -- probably not as much as he should feel, but enough to make him sigh and reach behind him for the tissue box sitting on the end table. Cleaned up and decent again, guilt was replaced with the knowledge that he really should be working. He got a beer from the fridge and settled back in with some contracts Harvey had given him to look over.

He probably should not mention to Harvey that he always proofed better after an orgasm. That was probably workplace harassment of some kind.

Mike glanced at the laptop, shook his head, and kept reading.

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\textbf{Secret Post #2040}

\textbf{Warning:} Some secrets are NOT worksafe and may contain SPOILERS.

12.

\textbf{fscom}
(Local) (Link)

12. i42.tinypic.com/2j3k506.jpg

\textbf{Anonymous}
(Local) (Link)
Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
Okay I'll bite, who are they?

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
Isn't TiG straight?

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
TiG is a girl.

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
Seriously, grudgey, shut the fuck up.

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
OHAI TIBERIUSGHOST.

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
Nonny, those are the icons for TiberiusGhost and Photohead. Star Trek and White Collar fandoms respectively.

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
Wait, Photohead writes in White Collar? I thought he was new. I thought he was like sixteen. Is he even legal?

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
IN BEFORE AGE OF CONSENT WANK

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
These secrets always weird me out. Nobody needs to know you think two total strangers should fuck, OP.

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)
Wait, they're not fucking? Ti talks to Photo like they're fucking.
The benefit of leading a secret double life was that sometimes you got to feel a little bit like a superhero with an alter ego.

The problem with leading a secret double life was that sometimes things of equal urgency happened to both of you at the same time and there was in reality only one of you to deal with all of it.

Harvey got an email from one of his readers about the Fandomsecret someone had posted about him and Photo while he was in the middle of flirting his way into the hot bartender's pants. She had to go pay attention to some douche at the end of the bar, so he checked his phone; clicked the link in the email, waited an interminable amount of time for the page to load, and then stared down at it in dismay.

"Booty call?" the bartender asked, returning to lean on the bar across from him.

"Now, would I answer a booty call when I have yet to convince you I'm worthy of your affections?" he asked, clicking the phone shut.

"She might be more fun than me."

"Well, then I'll keep her as a backup plan," he said, and watched jealousy flit through her face. Called it right. "In the meantime, you haven't told me when you get off yet."

His phone rang. They both looked down at it.

"Persistent booty call?" she asked. He frowned.

"Work," he said.

"Cockblock."

"That's up to you," he replied, and she laughed. "Sorry, I need to take this."

"I'm off in five minutes."

"Then it'll be a four-minute phone call," Harvey said, tossing a credit card onto the bar. "Ring me up, gorgeous?"

"Anytime," she said, and Harvey answered the phone with an irritated, "Specter."

"Mr. Specter, this Lila from EvenTech," a female voice said on the other end of the line. EvenTech was their screening service; anyone calling Pearson Hardman after nine pm got EvenTech, who made the call as to whether a client could get through to one of the partners. "I have John Dekan on the line."

Harvey rubbed his eyes. Motherfucker. "Is he calling from lockup?"

"Yes, Mr. Specter."

"Put him through," Harvey sighed. The bartender returned with his card and receipt, giving him a lush smile; he collected them and started making for the door.

"Harvey?" Dekan said, hesitantly. He was slurring, which was impressive given he'd only said Harvey's name.
"Mr. Dekan," Harvey replied. "Need me to come down?"

"I swear I'm sober, you know how the fucking cops are."

"Yes, Mr. Dekan," Harvey said patiently.

"Only -- they're trying to blame this dumb chick on me..."

"What?" Harvey asked, stopping just outside the door to the bar. There went his lovely evening of flirting, drinks, and athletic sex (followed by damage control to Ti's reputation while his bed partner slept it off).

"They're saying I hit this bitch, but she stepped in front of the car against the light, my hand to god, and now they're fixing the breathalyzer -- "

"Mr. Dekan, don't say anything else until I get there," Harvey said. "Sit tight and I'll come down."

"Thanks, Harvey, I know I can always depend on you," Dekan said. "I'm at the Midtown North Precinct."

"I'll be there soon. Midtown North Police Precinct," Harvey added, to the cabdriver who'd stopped for him. "Just keep your mouth shut."

He hung up and sat back, moving from annoyed to furious. Dekan was a pain in the ass, and now he'd hit some woman, probably while drunk, and that elevated him from guy Jessica made me bail out of his last DUI to asshole I no longer have any intention of representing in any way, ever.

Neither Harvey nor Jessica liked that Dekan had a tendency to get behind the wheel drunk, but when they took him on from his old firm he hadn't had a DUI in two years. Before that he'd had a lot, but...

Harvey had bailed Dekan out twice before: once when he was too drunk to get into his car and had been arrested for causing affray, and once in rural New Jersey where he was driving on the back roads. That should have been it, he should have put a stop to this then, but...well, he and Jessica both knew the value of Dekan's business, and it had been a one-time slip, he'd thought (Dekan claimed it was a frame-up). He'd pled him out with a suspended license, which he hoped would be the end of it, because it wasn't like the guy wasn't rich enough to call a cab or hire a driver.

Apparently he'd been wrong, and now someone had been hurt, and that not only pissed Harvey off, it injured his professional pride.

But you couldn't just dump a guy whose company brought in millions of dollars for the firm. He had to handle this with finesse, had to figure out how to keep Dekan International without keeping John Dekan.

He flipped the phone open again and called Mike.

Gentling Mike through this case was going to be an even bigger pain in his ass, because he could imagine how Mike was going to view it all. Still, he needed the kid's help on this one.

And...well, it wouldn't be a half bad test, either.

So, resolved: dump John Dekan, put up with Mike, yell at the internet.

_Hell of a life you've got here, Harvey._
Ti G. (tiberiusghost) wrote,

**Subject: Let's Not And Say We Did**

Can we not do this anymore?

Can you guys not put your noses into my private life? Can you not have fantasies that I'm sleeping with someone I'm not? Or if you do, actually, feel the fuck free, I don't give a shit, but can you not post banners about it to fandomsecrets?

I don't even care whether it's good *manners* or not, you guys figure that out, and I'm not creeped out by it. But can we not? Because totally unrelated to the maker of that secret, all the people with nothing better to do in their lives go into a frenzy and I don't need that bullshit at ten o'clock at night when I'm trying to get laid.

As a matter of fact, if people absolutely can't resist discussing my private life in public, can we not defend me either? I'm a big boy and believe me, nothing you can say on the internet is going to be as bad as shit people have said to my face. And that's people who *like* me. So some of you can call me a dick or say I'm over-reacting but if you do that, can the rest of you not jump in anonymously and tell them to fuck off? Then they just think it's me.

I mean really, most of you are rational adults and the rest of you should be in bed by ten pm.

So can we not?

(452 Comments on: Let's Not And Say We Did by tiberiusghost) (Post A Comment)

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
**Subject: Wow.**

"452 Comments on: Let's Not And Say We Did"

Was that your idea of damage control?

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
**Subject: Re: Wow.**

Jesus, look at them wank. It's almost awe-inspiring.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
**Subject: Re: Wow.**

Yeah, I don't think you did yourself any favors.
tiberiusghost would like to chat.

tiberiusghost: Are you ready to screencap a once in a lifetime occurrence?
photohead: Oh, this ought to be good.
tiberiusghost: I'm so, so sorry you got pulled into that. There. I said I'm sorry. You have proof.
photohead: Strangely anticlimactic. Much appreciated. Also totally unnecessary.
tiberiusghost: I can't believe someone would do that.
photohead: Yeah, no, that was weird, but you know I don't pay attention to that stuff, right?
tiberiusghost: Don't tell me nobody linked you. Besides, it's been all over my journal, little remarks about it. I should have stomped it sooner.
photohead: Seriously, it's fine. I'm making a concerted effort to care less about what other people think of me.
tiberiusghost: How's that going for you?
photohead: Well, I started out by trying not to knee-jerk react in rage. You should try it, it's kind of awesome.
tiberiusghost: The journal is a safety valve. It's the one place I CAN knee-jerk react in rage. You're right. It's just the internet. It doesn't matter.
photohead: Except when it makes you rage.
tiberiusghost: God, I'm exhausted.
photohead: It's late, you should sleep. I promise the wank will still be there in the morning. You might make fandom_wank. I don't know, is this unfunnybusiness? It's never JUST the internet, Ti.
tiberiusghost: I know.
photohead: Well, I did my duty as a good influence and told you to get some rest. If you want to stay up and talk about it, I'm prepared to do my duty as a bad influence.
tiberiusghost: No, I'm going. I have court in the morning.
photohead: Me too! I can't sleep, I'm excited.
tiberiusghost: Bossman let you off the leash?
photohead: No, but watching him's almost as good. Good luck, right?
tiberiusghost: Good litigators don't need luck.
photohead: You ruin everything that is nice in the world.
tiberiusghost: Goodnight, Photo.

photohead has signed off.

Not Potatohead (photohead) wrote,

Subject: Morals Are Not Wall Paintings

I got reamed out by my boss at work today. Again.

And I can't whine at work, so I might as well here. The rules are just...different. Trying doesn't count
for anything unless you win, and actually giving a damn about the client or even the morality of what we do is just...out the window. We have so much power and I really think it's wrong to hire that out to the highest bidder.

Which probably makes me a socialist. Fuck. I don't just want to be good at what I do, I want what I do to be good. I don't think we should defend the indefensible just because the company the indefensible owns has us on retainer. I don't think that's right.

And I don't know how my boss can be so apathetic about right and wrong and so unapologetic about it. He might actually get this guy off the hook for near-manslaughter. I mean, it's admirable that he doesn't care if people think he's a jerk, but at the end of the day he's being a giant jerk.

(12 Comments on: Morals Are Not Wall Paintings by photohead) (Post A Comment)

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
Subject: I saw your post.  

How pissy are you going to get if I give you some professional advice?  
Ti

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post  

Probably pretty pissy, unless your professional advice is about how we shouldn't defend slimeballs.  
PH

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post  

Fine, I've decided I don't actually care if you get your panties in a twist.  
Look, I don't know the particulars of your case but I'm pretty sure if I've been reading you right, you're an associate. You know you don't have any say in anything, you know you're the lowest rung on the ladder, right?

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post  

Wow, man, that's some great advice.
Shut up and listen to me, dickhead. You've got two problems: one, your boss is on your ass constantly, and two, he's doing something you think is immoral. Though not legally unethical, because you're not that sloppy in your phraseology.

I can't do anything about the second problem except remind you that you are, yes, the lowest rung, and you're expected to shut up and take it, because even now there are times I have to shut up and take it. But I can let you in on a secret about your boss, which is that he wouldn't be such an asshole to you if he didn't think you could handle it. I speak from experience: if he didn't respect your abilities you wouldn't have made it this far.

He's hard on you because the world we work in is full of assholes, so you need to get used to it. When he leaves you high and dry without help it's because someday you're going to be out there alone without a safety net and you need to know how that feels while you still have one. When you're working on solo projects I can guarantee you that they're not important enough you can't fail. That's why he gives you unimportant projects.

And from the sound of it you rarely fail, so calm the fuck down, get over yourself, and have a good long look at whether he's screwing you around or whether he's actually teaching you to stand on your own two feet.

You can't know that.

Well, I don't know your boss, but it's what I do to my associate.

He fucking hates your guts then.
I can live with that. If he doesn't eventually realize I'm doing him a favor, he's a lot dumber than I think he is.

I like him. He's smart, like you, and he's going to be an incredible lawyer. But in this business nothing gets handed to you, and his brains count for zip if he can't play the game. It's my job to teach him the game. If he throws in the towel, that's on him. If he fails because he wasn't prepared enough, that's on me.

And I don't fail.

But it isn't easy, okay? It isn't easy when he clearly hates me, and it isn't easy figuring out how to get the lessons he needs to learn through his head without traumatizing him for life.

Cut your boss some slack. It's a hard goddamn job. The more he likes you, the harder it is. And as obnoxious as you can be, you little pissant, it's very hard not to like you, so I can only imagine you don't make his life easy. If he likes you half as much as I like my associate, it's hard on him, too.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post

You don't mention him on your journal.

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post

There's a lot I don't mention on the journal. In his case, it's not my place to talk about him. Just because he screws up sometimes doesn't mean I need to give him an audience for it he's not aware of. I'm protective of him. I'm sure your boss looks out for you too. And if he doesn't, you need a new boss.

To: photohead@gmail.com  
From: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post

Photo?

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com  
From: photohead@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: I saw your post

Sorry. I had to work late. Things happened.

Maybe you're right. About the looking-out-for-me.
Of course I'm right.

Good things?

Strange things. Sorry, just, sorry. I don't want to talk about this anymore.

Up to you. Catch you on the journal.

It was three in the morning, three days after Harvey bailed Dekan out of jail, and Mike looked like Harvey felt.

"I can't believe you did that," he said, dumping sugar into his coffee in the all-night diner. He'd found it while Harvey was busy securing temporary transference papers until they could draw up real ones, which they'd have to do in the morning -- and they should be getting some sleep, but Mike was visibly too keyed up to do it and Harvey needed food.

The kid had deep bruised circles under red eyes, and little lines of tension at the corners of his mouth. Harvey caught his own reflection in the glass of the diner's window -- he looked all right, he thought, but the same lines of tension were just barely visible at the edges of his eyes.

"I told you to trust me," he said, taking a swallow of orange juice. It was almost breakfast time, so it totally counted.

"You couldn't tell me what you were going to do?" Mike demanded wearily.

"Not until I was confident you could hold a poker face, no," Harvey answered. "You did good in there, maybe next time I'll let you in on it."

"Gee, thanks," Mike drawled.

"What are you all up my ass for? First you're pissed you think I'm going to get some guy off a DUI charge where he put a woman in the hospital, now you're pissed I'm getting him thrown out of his own company. Make up your mind," Harvey chided.

"I'm pissed you didn't let me help. You didn't even think I was worth telling your game plan to."
"Did I not just explain to you about the poker face?" Harvey said.

Mike rested his face in his hands. Harvey sipped his juice and waited for a) his food to arrive and b) Mike to ask.

B) happened first.

"Okay, tell me what you did," he said, through his palms. "I know you went out for drinks with Dekan. You told me you were going. That's why we had the whole..."

"Shouting match, yes, I remember," Harvey replied. "Dekan's a spiralling alcoholic. Nobody just goes out for drinks with him, especially not two nights after bailing him out for a DUI. I think the word bender probably applies."

"And?"

"And I had a police officer I happened to make the acquaintance of waiting for him two blocks away."

"You let him drive drunk."

"Well, according to him, it heightens his reflexes," Harvey said, making a face. Mike snorted. "I let him drive drunk for two blocks at midnight, so that my officer friend could pull him over. He called me again. I called you, and then I called his son."

"Dekan Junior's never cared about the DUIs before."

"He's never been around for one before; I needed to change that. He loves his dad, that's not a crime. Injudicious in this case, but..." Harvey shrugged. Mike raised his head from his hands, watching him. "He's never seen the guy in the drunk tank until tonight. People sometimes need to see things for themselves, Mike. If his dad got behind the wheel like that...then the other times he probably did too. It wasn't some cop frame-up, it wasn't some conspiracy, his dad's a drunk and he tries to drive that way. This was never about John Dekan. This was about Dekan International being a major client of ours. Now I'm going to plead Dekan into a treatment facility, his company's not going to fire us with his son at the helm, his son trusts me and likes me for being honest, and there's going to be a very large, very discreet settlement to the woman he hurt. Everyone wins."

Mike gave him a wry look. "Except your poor associate, who's going to draw up ownership transfer papers on an hour of sleep."

"Listen, I know you knew something was up when we walked in to see Dekan. You played it off like a champ. So next time, I know I can trust you not to give away my plans."

"You already knew that."

"Not under pressure, not this kind of plan. Sorry, rookie, them's the breaks."

"Better luck next time?"

"Something like that." Harvey's food arrived and he picked up one of the chicken wings, biting into it with relish.

"Chicken and waffles?" Mike asked.

"Declasse?"
"Surprising, that's all."

"I had to drink with Dekan. Fixing the hangover before it happens."

"Are you drunk?" Mike asked.

"No. And I wasn't. But he likes shitty booze, and I had to have a few, and now it's starting to wear off. Have a waffle."

"I'm not hungry."

"Eat the god damned waffle, Mike, you look like a waif I found in a box on a streetcorner."

Mike, looking rebellious, took the waffle and bit into it. "I'm still pissed at you."

"That's because -- "

"But," Mike interrupted, and Harvey gave him a measured look. Good; kid was showing some guts. "I think this just proves you are not the heartless asshole everyone thinks you are."

"Don't let it get out," Harvey warned, around a mouthful of chicken. He swallowed and set down the wing-bone while Mike absently tore into the waffle. "Look, I don't especially care that people think I'm an ass, because a lot of the time I am, and yeah, I've defended some dickheads who didn't deserve defending. But I'm not going to let a bigger ass get away with this kind of thing out of sheer venal greed. Next time, if you want me to tell you the truth, try trusting me to do the right thing. You think you've earned my trust? Try proving I've earned yours."

"What was I supposed to think?"

Harvey gave him a level stare. "Gee, Harvey isn't normally the kind of guy who'd throw a DUI victim under a bus just to save his own ass. Maybe there's something more going on here. I'm going to give him a few days to figure something out before I assume the worst." He took another bite of chicken. "I want the outline for the transfer contract on my desk by ten, and then I want you to go home and get some sleep. I'll draft the text myself."

"Louis's head will explode."

"I'll handle Louis."

Mike gave him an odd look, but he dug in his pocket and counted out enough cash for his coffee. "I should get to work."

"Yes, you should," Harvey said. That earned him an odd little smile. "Ten o'clock."

"Got it," Mike said, and left Harvey to his breakfast, such as it was.

Not Potatohead (photohead) wrote:

**Subject: Fic: Master Class**

This week has been sucktastic and awesome by turns, or I would have posted this sooner. I got inspired by a stray thought last weekend, and now you get fic. Surely there's something wrong with that system, but I suppose a well-written story is its own reward.

**Title: Master Class**
Summary: Neal always works better when he's relaxed. He's going to have to talk Peter through this the first time, but he doesn't mind that either.

Notes: Handjobs! Also I may have discovered that I have an inexperience kink.

(Neal hated accounting.)

(25 Comments on: Fic: Master Class by photohead) (Post A Comment)

Photohead would like to chat.

Photohead: Hey lurker.
Hey.
hey.
Hey.

Hey I know you're there
HEY I KNOW YOU'RE THERE

Tiberiusghost: Jesus Christ, I was getting a beer, what is wrong with you?

Photohead: I have no patience or impulse control.

Tiberiusghost: Well, big of you to admit it. What do you want, I'm a very busy man.

Photohead: No you're not, I just saw you comment on my fic.

Tiberiusghost: What, you want self-esteem building praise in person now?

Photohead: Well, I never say no.

No I just wanted to chat. Why are you home on a Saturday night? Shouldn't you be out conquering the female population of Manhattan?

Tiberiusghost: I thought I'd stay in.

Photohead: Well, that's no reason at all. Seriously, beer and internet porn? Sad.

Tiberiusghost: If we're going to get into who's the more pathetic man here, I'd like to point out that I'm home reading porn, you're home producing it.

Photohead: Touchy. This week suck for you too?

Tiberiusghost: Not entirely. Just mostly.

Photohead: Well, then I'm glad my porn could distract.

Tiberiusghost: It's not that distracting.

Photohead: OH SNAP.

BRB, beer actually sounds pretty good.

k, back.

Hey, so what other drinking games do you know?

Tiberiusghost: I spent three years at law school learning them. It'd be easier to list the ones I don't know.

Are you going to pester me all evening?

Photohead: I am now. Drink, pester Ti, drink...you might as well surrender.

You want to watch something? We could watch TOS, if you want.
Or that one where the DS9 crew gets sent back in time to TOS.

Tiberiusghost: I've told you before that DS9 doesn't exist.

Photohead: What is your beef, anyway? It's good storytelling.

Tiberiusghost: It's not Star Trek if the ship doesn't move.

Photohead: It moved in the pilot!
tiberiusghost: It didn't move, it drifted.
photohead: Sometimes the Enterprise drifts.
tiberiusghost: Well it never intends to.
photohead: DS9 drifted with intent, I think that makes a strong case.
tiberiusghost: Are we seriously arguing about this?
photohead: You started it.
tiberiusghost: You mentioned DS9.
photohead: Is this where I call you a poopyhead?
    Ti?
tiberiusghost: brb, I LOLed and now there's beer everywhere
    Do you work at being so lame you're amusing, or is it a natural gift?
photohead: I'm not backing down from this, DS9 is totally Star Trek. It's thoughtful, politically
    aware Star Trek!
tiberiusghost: You are wrong in every possible way.
photohead: If that's your best argument I so have you beat.
tiberiusghost: I can't argue with something that's just 100% wrong. Its wrongness is self-evident.
photohead: I think I win.
tiberiusghost: You do not win.
photohead: I think I do.
    Your silence only encourages me.
tiberiusghost: Fine. We'll settle this like men.
    Geek Trivia Night, Hipsterbar, Thursday, 8 o'clock.
photohead: Pain sticks at dawn?
    Wait, what?
tiberiusghost: You heard me. Geek Trivia Night, Hipsterbar, 8pm. I know you live in NYC.
    Unless you're willing to admit defeat now.
photohead: Seriously?
    I mean, you don't do meetups.
tiberiusghost: I'm willing to make an exception in order to wipe the floor with you.
    In or out, Photo?
photohead: In. Definitely in.
    Are you sure?
tiberiusghost: I'm there most weeks, incognito. Keep your mouth shut and there won't be a problem.
    Have you ever been?
photohead: No, but I know the bar.
    I'll keep quiet.
    So...okay now it's awkward. TOS?
tiberiusghost: I haven't seen the new White Collar.
    XMFC rules. Shots ever ytime there's a cut scene where they could have fucked.
photohead: Oh man, why do you hate your liver. How many have you already had?
    File's open.
tiberiusghost: how many shots in a bottle of beer?
    File's open.
photohead: twelve.
tiberiusghost: Then 34 or so. Switching to whiskey.
photohead: You're going to be so sorry.
tiberiusghost: Undoubtedly.
    three, two, one
    Go
Harvey knew better. He knew better.

Meets were a terrible idea. He'd done one, back when he was in college, and it had been the most awkward experience ever. He wasn't even well-known then and it had still been nothing but strange. He'd been younger than almost everyone, he hadn't known what to say in person, and he'd been shy about discussing fandom in a public place. It just went badly, and it could do nothing but go...more badly now that he was...who he was.

Photo must be right. He must hate his liver.

He couldn't blame the beer fully for the suggestion that they meet. He'd sat there for almost a minute, wondering if he should, wondering if he was being stupid. He went to Geek Trivia all the time and that was fine, less awkward because it wasn't just fanfic writers but all flavors of geek and he sort of...blended in. But inviting someone he knew --

The thing was, it had been such a good opening. And he wanted to meet Photo. That hadn't happened in a really long time.

He liked Photo's work and he liked that he was deeply unimpressed with Ti's fame. It would be nice to know someone who understood both halves of the life: being a fan, being a lawyer. Not just any lawyer, but if Photo wasn't boasting (and he didn't seem the type) a lawyer who moved in the same circles as Harvey, maybe even worked at one of the other firms Pearson Hardman did business with.

He hadn't meant to get quite as plastered afterward, but Photo was right, it was awkward. Doing shot after shot (because really, who was anyone kidding about Neal and Peter?) had calmed his nerves and then kind of almost made him forget the huge mistake he'd just made.

He could back out, not show up to Geek Trivia or not introduce himself when he did, but even online he was not going to get branded a coward.

So. He was going to meet Photohead.

He probably should have mentioned something about what he looked like or would be wearing.

To: tiberiusghost@gmail.com
From: photohead@gmail.com
Subject: way too drunk for this

You ahte my liver too, don't you.

Meetup on thurs I will be in a suit coming from work. Shouldn't be many suits there. Blond, scrawny, drinking shinerbock. possibly still hungover from tonight.

You?
Subject: way too hung over for this

Well, my whole body hates me this morning so your liver has its revenge.

Brown hair, older than you. Jeans and a t-shirt, laughing at your pretentious beer choices. I'll find you.

photohead would like to chat

photohead: HAVING A CRISIS HERE GET ON CHAT
ella_pants: FFS WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM
Ten emails in the last two minutes!
photohead: i'm very drunk. Some of those weren't intentional
Intentional
ella_pants: Oh lord.
photohead: you can keep a secret
At least you better keep this one
ella_pants: I love how your punctuation just goes away when you're hammered. What's the secret?
Because I already know about the panty thing.
photohead: how d you know about that?
ella_pants: I have my ways.
photohead: no, no nono
im meeting ti on thursday.
ella_pants: Are you hallucinating?
photohead: I srsly thought i was.
LOOK
photohead: Seriously?
I mean, you don't do meetups.
tiberiusghost: I'm willing to make an exception in order to wipe the floor with you.
In or out, Photo?
photohead: In. Definitely in.
Are you sure?
tiberiusghost: I'm there most weeks, incognito. Keep your mouth shut and there won't be a problem.
ella_pants: Way to keep your mouth shut, Peeh.
photohead: shut hup, shut up, what do i do
ella_pants: shower, shave, wear something nice.
photohead: YOU ARE N O HELP ATALL.
rls. Ella i mean.
You have to come with me.
ella_pants: I'm really really sure Ti is probably not going to be a fan of me doing that.
photohead: You have to/ you can save me if it all goes to shit.
ella_pants: I'm in Philadelphia, Photo. I'm giving an exam Thursday morning.
photohead: PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE
PLEASE PLEASE
ella_pants: As much as I would like to meet Ti, I think it's a bad idea.
photohead: I HAVE A PLAN
sorry capslock
say yes, i'll tell you the plan tomorrow
i have to go pass out now
"I need you to come to Geek Trivia with me," Harvey said on Wednesday morning, and Donna looked up at him and smiled.

"No," she replied, and went back to her typing.

"Donna."

"The socially awkward ones stare at my boobs and people ask me if I'm cosplaying Amy Pond and I don't even know who that is," Donna said. "I'm never going to Geek Trivia with you again."

"That was one time!"

"Which is why I never went back. Harvey, I am not a geek, I do not know trivia, why are you asking me?"

Harvey looked around and leaned in. "I'm meeting someone there and I want you there in case he's a serial killer and tries to murder me and eat my lungs."

Donna blinked at her computer screen. "You want me to be your bodyguard?"

"Backup. Wingman."

"Bodyguard."

"Fine."

"Harvey, have you met you? You could put almost anyone at Geek Trivia in a headlock -- "

Harvey could see her pause and rewind. This was why he'd spent two days debating asking her.

"He?" she asked.

"He's a friend."

"From the internet."

"Technically he's from New York."

"Is he a sex friend? A chat sex friend?"

"No!"

"Not yet, you mean."

"Donna."

She looked up at him again, and he put on his best adorable begging face. Even Donna had a hard time resisting the adorable begging face. It was all in the eyes.

"You will pay my bar tab, you will put anyone who looks at me wrong in a headlock, you will explain to me who Amy Pond is, and you will buy me lunch for a week," she ordered.
"Done," Harvey said. "She's the companion of a time-traveling alien who flies around in a phone booth. Science Fiction not Superhero, television not comics."

"Is she evil?"

"No, she's fun and hot. If anyone asks you about Jean Grey, she's less fun, more hot, comics not television."

"Okay. You can go back to pretending to be a grownup now."

In all honesty, he felt he'd gotten off pretty lightly.

When Ella got off the subway near Hipsterbar on Thursday night, Mike was waiting just past the turnstiles. He suspected it was her; New York had a lot of pierced, tattooed women with tasteful purple hair, but very few of them wore XKCD shirts. Still, he couldn't be a hundred percent positive, and there was a moment of fan-meet awkwardness while they squinted at each other and made half-smiles of greeting.

"Photo?" Ella finally asked.

"Oh thank god, I didn't want to go first," he said, and she laughed and hugged him.

"It's so good to meet you! Jesus, you didn't tell me you were nine years old," she added. "You're cute. You must get carded constantly."

"Yes, thank you," he said, rolling his eyes. "Can I take your bag?"

"It's fine, just overnight stuff," she said, slinging an arm around his waist as they left the station. "I still get to crash on your couch even if Ti's gorgeous and wants to fuck you, right?"

"Jesus, say it a little louder!"

She gave him an innocent look. "Sorry. I have no personal barriers."

"No kidding, stop grabbing my ass."

"Aw, but I've been waiting to grab your ass for months," she said, adjusting her arm nonetheless. "So I need to go over our plan again."

"It's cunning."

"I know!"

"We split up inside Hipsterbar. I'm meeting Ti at 8, he says he'll find me. You just keep an eye out. If I need you to call me so I can pretend to be called away to work, I'll text you."

"And if things go well, I'll come briefly introduce myself before he takes you home."

Mike sighed. "Somehow I really think that's not going to happen."

"That's because you're a depressive cynic and your only redeeming quality is the amount of porn you write." She grinned at him. "Breathe, baby, you'll be fine, and afterward we can stay up late braiding each other's hair and dissecting the whole night."

He hugged her sideways, arm around her shoulders. "Thank you for coming, I didn't know anyone
"My pleasure. So it's almost eight now -- never mind," she cut herself off, clearly about to ask where this Hipsterbar place was. Under a nearby awning, a guy in a Star Trek shirt was smoking a cigarette with a storm trooper. "Oh man, this is gonna be cool."

"This is gonna be the direct opposite of cool," Mike said, staring at the bar.

Once they got inside, however, it was actually kind of fun. Apparently Geek Trivia had started as an ironic hipster thing, but then the true geeks had found out about it and invaded, and now it appeared people in skinny jeans knew better than to come to Hipsterbar on Thursday nights. There were a ton of fans in costume, and Mike was pretty sure he heard someone speaking Klingon. The drink specials were all named after golden-age SciFi authors.

He left Ella in a booth near the front of the bar and worked his way past it to the huddle of tables at the back, clustered around the Trivia Night stage. He snagged the last table out from under the ass of Mal Reynolds, got a dirty look from a handful of -- vampires? maybe? maybe just goths -- and checked his phone. 7:59, and he had a text from Ella, who he'd only given his number to that morning.

**EP:** Stop checking your phone, you look desperate.
**MR:** I am desperate.
**EP:** Put it awaaaaaaay omg.

Mike sighed and tucked the phone (it was now 8:02) back into his pocket. He sipped his beer, tried not to look like a sad lonely man hoping to get some Princess Leia play, and was reaching for his phone again when he caught sight of a familiar face at the bar.

Harvey.

Or possibly Harvey's good twin?

He was standing at the bar, hair ruffled out of its usual slick part and hanging over his forehead. He was out of his suit, too, slumming it in a pair of jeans and a grey t-shirt. It made him look younger, made him blend in more. When he turned, Mike caught a glimpse of print on the front of his shirt: **STARK INDUSTRIES: Building for a better tomorrow, today!**

Too late he looked back up at Harvey's face and realized he'd been spotted. Harvey pushed through the crowd towards him and Mike stayed, frozen like prey.

"Nice shirt," he said, when Harvey was close enough to hear.

"Nice face," Harvey replied, which didn't make any sense, and settled on the stool across the table from him. "What, I'm not allowed a night out without you following me?"

"I didn't peg this for your crowd," Mike said, hoping he could get rid of him quickly. "Then again, I didn't peg you for someone who likes comic books."

"Iron Man is awesome, shut up," Harvey informed him calmly.

"Sure thing." Mike rolled his eyes.

"Hey, I'm not the one stalking his boss."

"I'm not stalking you, I'm here to -- " Mike broke off, then peered at Harvey suspiciously. "That was
"No, that was genuine concern that you're about to Single White Female me."

"You can't get out of it now," Mike pointed at him. "What are you doing here?"

Harvey looked disdainful. "Trivia Night," he said, as if it should be obvious.

"Geek trivia night!"

"So?" Harvey, as always, looked completely at home -- here at Geek Trivia Night, with a bottle of beer and an Iron Man t-shirt that was actually kind of tight, Mike was noticing. "I'm about to wipe the floor with the competition."

"I'm competing!" Mike blurted.

"You're competing in Geek Trivia Night," Harvey repeated, skeptical.

"It was a bet. Kind of."

"You really need to stop making bets with douchebags," Harvey replied.

"He's not a douchebag! And you need to leave so he knows I'm not here as part of your team or whatever. I can't explain it, okay, it's a really long story but he was all "Let's settle this like men, at trivia night" and I couldn't...why are you staring at me?" Mike asked nervously.

Harvey was studying him now, face a careful blank, eyebrows drawn in slightly.

"You're wearing a suit," he observed.

"Yeah, I came from work, not all of us got to go home at six. Didn't have time to change," Mike replied, and took a sip of his Shiner.

"You're Photohead," Harvey said.

Mike did a double take, an actual double take, something he'd never done in his life before. He looked at Harvey, looked away as he started to respond, then let the words actually register and snapped his head back to face Harvey.

"You're Photohead," Harvey repeated, more confidently this time.

"Oh my God," Mike said. "Oh, my God, no. I mean. Yes. But no. This isn't -- you're -- "

Harvey covered his mouth with a broad hand, quickly.

"Don't blow my cover," he hissed.

Mike was about to reply when someone called Harvey! and Harvey stiffened.

"I think I have to go put someone in a headlock," he said. "Stay there. If you move you're fired."

And he was gone again.

Mike blinked. He wasn't sure that had really just happened.

Then he took out his phone and frantically texted Ella.
When Harvey reached Donna, a round-faced, impressively pierced young woman was standing next to her with a middle-aged man in a headlock.

"What do you say?" she asked the man, who gurgled.

"Sorry!"

"That's right you say sorry," the woman said. Harvey stared, momentarily distracted from oh fuck, oh fuck Mike's Photohead, oh fuck I've read Mike's porn, oh fuck Mike's read my porn by the scene unfolding in front of him.

"Sorry Harvey, false alarm," Donna said, beaming. The woman next to her released the man, who scuttled out the front door of the bar. "I made a friend!"

Donna's new friend had purple hair, a tattoo on her neck, and shirt reading STAND BACK: I'M GOING TO TRY SCIENCE.

"I'm buying her a beer and you're paying," Donna added. "Run along, go on your date."

Harvey swallowed against the oh fuck. "You can go if you want."

Donna looked at him thoughtfully.

"You're hiding something."

"Yes, but it's private and personal, hence the hiding," he replied. "Go. Please. Leave."

"No," she said.

"You want me to put him in a headlock too?" the purple-haired woman asked.

"I'm tempted," Donna said.

Harvey looked around in desperation.

"Okay, fine, but just so you know, if you feel a strong urge to leave, you should follow it," he said. "I'm going to..." he pointed to the back of the bar, and then started to push his way through the crowd. As he walked away he heard the girl say Is he always that awkward? and Donna reply, No, he just knows when he's beat.

Mike was sitting at the same table, in much the same position, but his beer was empty. Harvey sat down, took a long sip from his own beer, and regarded Mike critically.

"I have literally no idea how to react to this," Mike said. "I have no context. This doesn't happen in TV shows or movies."

"Technically there's an Avengers arc where -- " Harvey started, then pinched the bridge of his nose, closing his eyes. "No, that didn't go well either."

"What do we do?" Mike asked. "I'm considering shame. Shame and crying."

"Don't be a wimp," Harvey said, crossing his arms. "We're doing Trivia Night."
"Harvey, we can't!"

"Sure we can. I came here to beat you and I'm going to beat you. We'll figure the rest out later," Harvey told him.

"You can't be serious. I have a photographic memory!"

"But you haven't spent years of your life in fandom."

"Have so."

"Wrong kinds. You don't even like Firefly."

"It's super overrated!"

"I'm not arguing with that but -- " Harvey started, and then glared. "We're doing this trivia and I am going to kick your ass. And if you freak out, I do have the power to make your life truly miserable. Choke it down and bring your A-game, or you can go sit with the posers in the corner who think Chris Pine is Captain Kirk and William Shatner does Priceline ads."

Mike stared at him.

"I was going to say that's the nerdiest thing I've ever heard from you, but I think that's the nerdiest thing I've ever heard."

"Oh ye innocent," Harvey replied, and Mike was opening his mouth to retort when the Trivia Emcee blew an airhorn, silencing the room.

Under the table Mike sent a second frantic text.

MR: Weirdness off the charts but I'm handling it. You maybe should not hang around. Ti is a situation. Will explain all later.

"So like, you don't actually owe me a beer for the headlock," the woman said to Donna, as they stood at the bar. "I'm not saying no, I'm just saying."

"I'm not paying, don't worry about it," Donna replied.

"Awkward boy?"

"He's usually smoother. Something's up. Anyway, point is, he's buying the beer, I'm just presenting it to you," Donna said, and toasted her. "Donna, by the way."

"Ella," the woman answered. "I'm sensing this place isn't your gig."

"Chaperoning awkward boy. He had a date tonight, internet meetup, you know how it is."

"Oh, me too! Well, less chaperoning, more standing by with a fire extinguisher in case of -- " Ella paused as her phone beeped. "Actually he says...I should...leave. That's nice, I like that," she added sarcastically.

She looked up. Donna met her eyes. There was a thoughtful moment.

"Nah," they said in unison.
"So do you want to get out of here?" Ella asked. "I just got the blow-off and trivia's fun, but not really my thing. I'm not from around here, I don't know the cool spots."

"I'm local -- come on, I'll give you a tour of bars where nobody tries to look down your shirt."

"I have news for you," Ella said. "I'm totally trying to look down your shirt."

Donna grinned at her. "I can sense this is going to be a fun evening."

Harvey won Trivia Night. Of course he won. And with his winnings, which amounted to a $50 bar credit and a HAN SHOT FIRST shirt, he bought a round for all the losers.

"Here's yours, loser," he said, putting the shot on the bar in front of Mike.

"I think you rigged it," Mike said. "I would have won if the last question hadn't been about Lord of the Rings."

"I can't believe you haven't read Lord of the Rings," Harvey said.

"Elves don't do it for me."

"Me either, but it's some kind of prerequisite to have seen the movies, at least. They should take away your fandom card. I also can't believe the words coming out of my mouth right now," Harvey added.

"It's a little like I got dumped into an AU," Mike agreed. "So are we talking about this now?"

"No. No we're not," Harvey said firmly.

Mike's phone buzzed, and he looked down.

EP: Booty call. Hot redhead. Your apartment's all yours. Thanks for having me come down, it's been a lovely visit so far.

Even as he cleared it, another one came in:

HS: Stop ignoring me in favor of your phone.

He looked up at Harvey, who was tucking his own phone back in his pocket.

"You're not funny," Mike said.

"I'm not trying to be. Manners, Mike."

Harvey held up a hand, casually, and like magic the bartender drifted over, setting another two shots on the bar. Harvey downed one; Mike shot back the other one.

"What would you have done if it wasn't me?" Mike asked, as Harvey studied the empty shot glass. "If we weren't who we are. If I was just some guy you met online. How would this be ending right now?"

Harvey turned to him, leaning on the bar with an elbow, and to Mike's surprise, let his fingers drift down Mike's cheek until he cupped his chin, holding him still, taking him in. His face was thoughtful, calm.
"Guess we'll never know," he said. "I'm going. I'll see you at work tomorrow."

The Friday following the Thursday night that Mike discovered TiberiusGhost was Harvey was perhaps the most awkward day of Mike's life. And Mike's life included the time he and Trevor once spent an entire day at the all-you-can-eat fried chicken bar.

It was like finding out that your boss was your favorite porn star. It could not have been more awkward if he'd seen Harvey naked. Harvey knew it, too.

Mike spent most of the day working at his cubicle with regular breaks to see if Donna would let him into Harvey's office yet. Donna, who was oddly cheerful and mellow, nevertheless assured Mike repeatedly that Harvey had a lot on his plate and had declared a No Puppies In My Office day unless there was an emergency.

He met Ella for lunch, told her the whole horrifying story, and then suffered more when they realized the hot redhead who'd taken Ella home was, in fact, TiberiusGhosts's assistant, also known as the Goddess. Also known as Donna.

"Man, you can pick 'em," Ella said frankly. She seemed completely unrepentant. "Ti's not wrong, though."

"Stop calling him Ti, oh my God," Mike moaned. Ella patted him on the head.

"It'll work out. Look at it this way, you have exclusive access to the biggest BNF in trek fandom. And he's super-smoking hot," she added, looking at her phone.

"What?"

"Googled him," Ella said, holding it out, showing off Harvey's profile picture from the Pearson Hardman website. "Tap that, Photo. Tap it hard. Do whatever it is you must do."

"He doesn't even want to see me," Mike sighed. "I think he's ashamed of it. You should have seen his face last night."

"I'm sure he'll calm down. It's not like you're going to run all over Livejournal outing him. He's probably just nervous."

"Harvey doesn't get nervous."

"You want me to yell at him?"

"No!"

"Well, you two work it out. I have to run, baby, I need to catch my train. I'll email you when I'm back in Philly, okay?"

"Okay," Mike agreed, face still planted in his arms. "Thanks for coming."
"My pleasure. I might be back in a couple of weeks. Never know," she said, kissed him on the back of the head and departed. Mike dragged himself back to work morosely, and ignored the comments on his journal asking if he'd died because he hadn't updated in almost sixteen hours.

No email from Ti. Or from Harvey.

Finally, as he was getting ready to leave, he saw Donna leaving too; she was still smiling, and now he knew why, and he could never erase the mental image (not that he really wanted to; yowza). He took his opportunity, and dumped into Harvey's office without knocking. Harvey looked up tiredly.

"So," Mike said, shoving his hands in his pockets.

"Help you with something?" Harvey asked, turning back to his work. Mike came up to the desk and sat down across from Harvey.

"I have a photographic memory," he said.

"I'm aware."

"So it's not like I've been going back and re-reading all the stuff we said to each other," Mike continued. "It's just there in my head. All the emails and chats -- well, some of those are a little fuzzy towards the end," he allowed, and saw Harvey smile ruefully. "Honestly? I don't know which parts you're worried about, but what I keep coming around to is that email about how you treat your associate. 'Cause frankly, Harvey, I wouldn't trade you for any other lawyer to teach me how to do this, but I can't say I wasn't a little jealous."

Harvey lifted his head, cocking it. "Of yourself."

"Well, I thought, you know, maybe he hates Ti sometimes, but he must know Ti cares about him. He must have at least that much bedrock to stand on. I never know with you, one minute you're ditching me in mock trial and the next you're bailing me out of corporate espionage. So..." Mike shook his head. "We can't ignore this. I can't. We have a problem."

Harvey set down his pen, about to speak, and then looked past Mike at the doorway. Mike turned; Louis, he saw, was also taking advantage of Donna's absence to put his head in.

"Harvey, I need to borrow Mike."

"No," Harvey said.

"He has --"

"I said no, Louis, get out of here," Harvey interrupted, and Louis raised his eyebrows, glanced at Mike, and backed down. He was probably going to go lurk around Mike's cube on the off-chance he returned.

"We're not talking about this here," Harvey said. "You have everything you need?"

Mike nodded.

"Let's go."

They walked downstairs in silence, and Harvey hailed a cab; he gave his own address, so Mike kept quiet. Harvey fiddled with his phone for a while, then sat back and closed his eyes.

When they walked into Harvey's condo, Mike was struck by two things at once -- the awesomeness
he hadn't been able to see clearly through the doorway, that one time, and the smell of onions and spices, tomatoes and beef.

"I'm going to change," Harvey said. "Help yourself to food."

There was a gently steaming slow-cooker sitting on the counter; Mike set his bag down, took off his tie and jacket, rolling up his sleeves while Harvey banged around somewhere in another room. When he lifted the lid, the smell coalesced into something amazing, and his mouth watered.

"Is this..." Mike looked at it. "Is this Ti's infamous stew?"

"What?" Harvey asked, emerging. "Oh -- I suppose so. Feel privileged," he added gruffly. "Only three other people have tasted that, and I'm one of them."

"Who are the other two?" Mike asked, picking up one of the shallow bowls sitting in a stack on the counter.

"Donna and Jessica."

"Jesus, Harvey -- "

"Just shut up and give me some," Harvey ordered. Mike passed it to him, taking in what was apparently Harvey's at-home clothing: track pants and the HAN SHOT FIRST shirt he'd won the night before.

Harvey had blogged about this stew. It was said to have mystical cold-curing properties. He guarded the recipe, wouldn't share it with anyone on the journal. Mike followed Harvey into the living room, sitting down carefully on his leather couch, tasting it.

"Jesus," he managed, around a mouthful of total bliss.

"I know," Harvey said, settling into the chair next to the couch.

"What's in this, crack?"

"Like I'm telling you?"

"Fair enough." Mike tasted another spoonful of stew. "So now are we talking about it?"

Harvey sighed, set his food down, and stood up.

"Harvey, I -- "

"Keep your shirt on, Rookie, I'm getting a drink," he said, opening a cupboard. He poured out half a tumbler of scotch, then waggled the bottle at Mike. Mike shook his head. Harvey shrugged, put it back, and sat down again, altering bites of food and sips of alcohol.

"Talk," he said.

"I keep trying to figure out what to do," Mike admitted, after a while.

"And your conclusions?"

Mike shook his head. "I have a few. Nothing substantial. If you're worried about word getting out, you don't need to be."
"I wasn't concerned about that. Not from you," Harvey allowed, when Mike opened his mouth.

"You're ashamed of it."

"No. Not...as such. But I keep these two lives separate, and now they aren't, and that's...difficult."

Harvey set aside his food. "You talk about your life on your journal, you've goaded me into talking about mine sometimes, and that's dangerous."

Mike scoffed.

"It is. Some of the separation I make, I admit, is a holdover from when I was a kid. Back then things weren't safe -- or we thought they weren't, anyway. Paranoia about internet predators, about bad influences, easily accessible pornography. It was a different world then. Most of that's fallen by the wayside, but there are other things to worry about now. I'm not someone who keeps out of trouble online, you know that. I'm well-known, and that creates problems too. And not everyone abides by the don't-take-this-to-real-life rule. You and I both know that what we do -- "

"Fanfic, you can say it."

" -- what we do isn't copyright infringement. But transformative works, creative commons, that's a murky area for the rest of the world out there. Even if everyone understood copyright law the way we do, do you think my clients would trust me to represent them if they knew I wrote gay porn on the internet? You think the rest of the firm would trust you if they knew you talked about them online, however obfuscatory you might be about it?"

Mike bowed his head.

"You're not like me, I know that, you're...mannered," Harvey said, and Mike glanced up at him.

"That story you wrote after we threw down, I was sure you were going to be going after me, parodying me, but you didn't. You only called me out in the first place because you thought I was harassing Ella. But you're still dangerous, Mike, because you talk fast and loose and you've never seen the firsthand consequences of that. You could be fired for what you've already said, if anyone tracks it back to you."

"I'm careful, I don't post from work -- "

"But you check your email on your phone, on your computer. I've seen people get fired for it. It's just like looking the part, knowing what to say. This is part of the image we have to present. That's just the way it is."

"Gay pornographer, still schooling me," Mike muttered.

"I have more experience than you. You listened when it was Ti."

"No, I listened to Ti because you proved he was right."

"What's the difference? Why can't you just take what I say at face value?"

"Because what you say never has face value," Mike retorted, angry now. "It's never just the truth, it's half-truth and manipulation and -- your emails proved that. You let me in on the secret, remember? Why did it have to be a secret, Harvey? And now I don't know whether we're supposed to be friends -- "

"I'm your boss, not your friend."
"But Ti's not my boss," Mike said. "Ti's my friend and I don't want to lose that friendship because you're -- "

"-- you should stop talking before you say something you're going to regret," Harvey said sharply.

Mike exhaled, trying to regain control. "You're right. Sorry. But as much as you might want to, we can't go back. It's all tangled up now."

Harvey sat in silence for a while; Mike felt like something had changed, now that it was out there in the open, now that...they couldn't be untangled. It was like one of those really bad string knots, where you might try to pull the ends thinking that would unravel it, but it only pulled it tighter.

On the other hand...

His thoughts were interrupted by Harvey.

"You should have been a novelist," he said quietly. "Your work's really good."

"Thank you. Yours is too," Mike answered, then snorted. "Tiberius Ghost...ghost, Specter?"

"Even I was once an unoriginal teenager."

"I find the unoriginal part hard to believe."

"You've seen my older stuff." Harvey set the glass down. "Literary critique isn't going to get us closer to a solution."

"Well, if you have anything helpful, I'd love to hear it," Mike said, even while his wheels were spinning frantically.

He could see in Harvey's eyes now -- had seen, in the bar the night before when Harvey had touched him -- that Ti's invitation had been a rare risk. It wasn't something he would do for just anyone, and not something he would do if friendship was all he wanted. Ti wanted him, even if Harvey was wary. And you couldn't untangle Ti and Harvey, either.

Which changed the rules, a little, and if he pulled hard enough at the knot...

Harvey sat back finally, fingers toying with the rim of his glass. "The number of times I've ever admitted to not knowing how to do something can probably be counted on one hand, so feel special: I don't know how we reconcile this. I can't be your boss and your friend, Mike, and it has nothing to do with ethics. I can't do my job with you if I'm worried about hurting you because I like you. Our interactions are already screwed on so many levels it's almost unreal. It's crazy that we're even talking about this and not repressing the fact that Thursday night ever happened."

"So what, Photo and Ti just stop being friends?" Mike asked, subtly taunting. "Or we have some pretend charade where we're two different people?"

"Are you not hearing me? I don't know. This is insane," Harvey said. He stood up to refill his glass, but Mike stood too; Harvey paused, and Mike stepped forward to put a hand on his chest.

"Mike -- "

"No, I got this," Mike said, and kissed him.

To: photohead@gmail.com
From: ella_pants@gmail.com
Subject: You alive?

Did he kill you and hide the body? Because I know what he looks like now, I can call the cops.

Seriously though, I'm a little worried. Email me in the morning, ok?

When Mike kissed him, Harvey reacted instinctively; he sucked in a breath and grabbed Mike's wrist, but he didn't back away like he should have. He kissed back, thinking this is Photo, God, I'm kissing Photo and it wasn't until he'd heard that two or three times in his head that it began to be tinged with fear.

When he finally came to his senses, he did break the kiss, but nothing else -- didn't take Mike's hand from his chest. Didn't move away.

"Mike, we can't," he breathed.

Mike smiled, pressed his face into his neck and nuzzled. Harvey lifted his chin, eyes flickering closed.

"Trust me," Mike said, which was about the last thing Harvey had expected to hear. He kissed Harvey's throat. "I have a plan."

"You have a plan," Harvey repeated, incredulous. "That you came up with when?"

"Bout thirty seconds ago," Mike said, leaning back. He sounded like Photo, he was smiling like Harvey always pictured Photo smiling when they argued. "But even if I didn't, you could use that lie as an excellent excuse to get laid."

Harvey considered this.

"You actually do have a plan?"

"Yes."

"That starts with us -- ?" Harvey raised an eyebrow.

"My theory is that we're only mostly insane right now but this will take us all the way through insane and out the other side."

"Should have known you were a Pratchett fan too," Harvey muttered.

"There's more to it, but that's the basics. I'm working it out as I go. I promise, I'll explain it later. Trust me?" Mike asked.

He still had his hand on Mike's wrist, Mike's palm was still flat on his chest; he looked down at it, and couldn't bring his arm to move. He wanted this. No use in denying that, if they were going to admit to everything else.

He jerked Mike's hand up, over his shoulder, using his new leverage to reel him in for another kiss.

"Obnoxious little pissant," he murmured against Mike's mouth. "Such a smart mouth on you -- "

"Yeah -- knew that'd get to you," Mike answered, and Harvey bit him on the jaw. "Ow! Asshole!"
"Fuck you too," Harvey said, pulling their bodies flush, tugging one of Mike's thighs up around his. Mike rolled against him.

"I hope so," he muttered, tipping his head back. Harvey bit him again, this time lower on the side of his throat.

"Pushy dickhead, always pushing -- "

"Harvey, yes, c'mon -- "

"Should've known it would be you," Harvey growled, trying to walk them backwards, and Mike just put his weight on him and rutted. "Never met anyone like you. Thorn in my fucking side."

"Admit it, you care, I have it in writing that you like me," Mike breathed, and let out a high, desperate whine when Harvey shoved them back again. Harvey hooked his free hand in Mike's shirt-collar and tugged. Buttons flew.

"Holy shit, I didn't think that happened in real life," Mike said, letting go of him, staggering back when Harvey pushed the shirt off his shoulders. "You just ripped my shirt off -- "

"Shut up," Harvey ordered, because under Mike's dark blue dress shirt was a grey undershirt, worn, printed in red. **STARK INDUSTRIES: Building for a better tomorrow, today!**

He touched it, then looked up at Mike.

"You left it at Trivia Night," Mike said, breathless, eyes wide and dazed. There was a red mark blooming on his jaw where he'd been bitten. "When you changed into the shirt you won."

Harvey surged forward, a sudden possessive urge clouding his brain, and Mike staggered back, fell onto the couch. Harvey kneeled up over him, grabbed his wrists and pinned them to the back of the couch, settled down and kissed him. Mike's hips jerked up, erection brushing the inside of Harvey's thigh. He whined, twisting, trying for more.

"You want it back?" Mike breathed, as Harvey sucked on the bruise he'd left on his throat. He let go of Mike's wrists and slid his hands up under the shirt, smoothing over Mike's stomach. Mike leaned forward, caught him in a kiss, and Harvey tugged the shirt off him. Mike flailed.

"Warn me!"

"No," Harvey replied, and dove in again. Mike's hands landed on his shoulders, curled around his neck, and then dropped to his ass.

"I'm getting a lap dance from a man in a HAN SHOT FIRST shirt," Mike muttered into his mouth.

"Secret fantasy?" Harvey asked, grinding against him.

"Feels like I fell asleep watching Star Wars."

Harvey laughed, leaning back to pull the shirt off. "I don't think I've ever met anyone," he said, around deep, wet kisses, "that wouldn't just say nice shirt, I'm not going to sleep with you."

"That's because you're always picking up the cool kids," Mike answered, one hand snaking between them. Harvey bucked against it, breathing hard in Mike's stomach. "Manwhore."

"What does that make you?" Harvey asked, fumbling with Mike's belt. "God, what have I told you about getting your stupid pants tailored, you wouldn't need this piece of shit -- "
"Fashion advice right now? Really?" Mike arched up as Harvey got his fly down, shoving his briefs to his thighs.

"Will you shut up -- " Harvey nipped his lower lip, and Mike followed his mouth greedily, "and let me jerk you off already, I want to see you come."

Mike whimpered. Harvey wasn't sure (didn't care) whether it was what he'd said, or that Mike was warm and hard and thick in his hand, trying not to thrust up into it. Sweet, really.

He tightened his fingers and tugged, thumb brushing up over the smooth, soft skin of his head. He knew what Photo liked. The man's writing was an open book for those with brains enough to read it.

"Come on, that's it," he murmured in Mike's ear, nosing at his temple while Mike's restless hands touched his arms, shoulders, twisted in the waistband of his pants. Mike was making soft, breathy little noises, aborted thrusts, twisting under him. Harvey shifted so that he could rub against Mike's thigh, and Mike pushed up into it, panted and moaned.

"Harvey, Harvey," he breathed into Harvey's shoulder, bucking in earnest now. "I'm gonna come, please, come on, I'm -- "

He tensed and dug his fingernails into Harvey's arms, and gave a loud, hoarse moan of relief as he came.

Mike fell backwards, body going loose and pliant. Harvey leaned with him, buried his face in Mike's neck, and thrust twice against his thigh, coming breathlessly, almost silently.

They collapsed in a messy heap, Mike boneless and sprawling, his come on Harvey's pants and hand, his pants half-on and belt hanging loose. Harvey felt twitchy little sparks of pleasure every time he inhaled.

"Well," Mike said, breathlessly. "I'm pretty sure your couch is the definition of defiled."

"It's seen worse," Harvey said, and Mike made a jealous little growl in the back of his throat. Harvey enjoyed the feel of it, face still tucked against Mike's neck, but there was something...slightly off about what they just did. "I'm not normally...usually -- "

"You don't rip peoples' shirts off, throw them onto your couch and bite them?" Mike asked. He sounded like he couldn't be bothered to make it seem like he meant it.

"Finesse, Michael," Harvey murmured.

"Fuck finesse. That was awesome. Nobody's ever ripped my clothes off before."

"That shirt was cheap anyway," Harvey answered, easing back, still sensitive and still in his pants. He jerked his head at the stairs. "Bedroom's that way."

"Where are you going?"

"To make myself look less like an extra from a porn film."

"You'd never be an extra," Mike answered, standing up. "You wouldn't allow it."

Harvey kissed him, sharp and quick.

ben dover
When Harvey came out of the bathroom, Mike was curled up in his bed, most of the blankets nestled around him, face a mask of bliss.

"You have the best bed," he said, as Harvey climbed over him and tugged some of the blankets away as he went. "I'm never leaving here."

"What if I kick you out?"

"I'll sneak back. Hashtag occupyblankets."

"Mmhm." Harvey settled in and Mike gravitated to him, curling up around his body, warm and relaxed.

"So," Mike said after a while, faceplanted in his chest. "You want to hear the plan?"

Harvey blinked at the ceiling. Slowly, cautiously, he asked, "Am I going to like this plan?"

"Probably. I mean, you're the one who came up with the fake-Harvard-degree plan, so your standards have to be pretty low."

Harvey rolled his eyes. Mike lifted his head and smiled, almost shy.

"The cat's kind of out of the bag as regards your mentorship techniques," Mike said. "The head games don't work as well if you know that's what's going on."

"You did this so I'd be quiet while you talked, didn't you?"

"Kinda. You look a little high."

"Fine, talk," Harvey said, waving dismissively.

"Okay, but, so look, no offense, your mentorship technique? You learned about head games as a valid teaching tool from a total douchebag. I don't blame you, because he was the only example you had, but he was still a douchebag. I'm smart, and I'm a grownup. I don't need the games to get the lessons."

"I think, given some of the lessons you failed in the past, you probably do," Harvey said. He rolled a little until Mike fell off him in a tangle of limbs, then propped himself up on an elbow.

"Don't think I don't know you're doing that to establish your superior status in this discussion," Mike said, turning to look at him. Harvey gave him a mildly impressed face. "Okay, yes, there were some rough patches at first. But again -- you remember when I bitched about you on my journal and you emailed me to explain why you were the way you were?"

"This is going to give me a headache. Yes."

"If you had just told me what you were up to with Dekan, I would have understood. Here's the thing," Mike said, running a hand up Harvey's arm, over his shoulder. "You need to trust that if you give me honest praise for honest good work, I won't let it go to my head. You need to trust that if you tell me something, if you're trying to just outright teach me a lesson with no games, I'll give it fair
consideration and I'll listen to you. I need to trust that you won't play games with me anymore and
that if I call you on being a douche, you'll stop and think about how your actions look to me before
you react. I think we could have all this, if we can be honest with each other and play the game with
everyone else instead of between ourselves. But we have to trust each other."

"And?" Harvey spread his hands.

"I trust you, Harvey," Mike said. "I don't sleep with people I don't trust."

Harvey let his head fall, shaking it. "I do all the time."

"Not people you work with. Not people you supervise. You wouldn't have done this if you didn't
trust me."

The confidence in Mike's voice was surprising -- Harvey could have accepted it if Mike were asking
a question, but he wasn't. He believed it.

Well, it wasn't untrue.

He eased down into the blankets again, turning onto his stomach, pillowing his head on his arms as
he turned it to study Mike, who was watching him with a confident, pleased expression.

"Come on, Harvey," Mike said. "Think how awesome it would be to have one person you can be
totally real around. Ti," he added, grinning, and then, "Tigs."

"I hate that one."

"It does make you sound like a particularly spoiled pug."

Harvey snorted, turning his face into his arms. After a moment he felt Mike's hand sliding across his
back, Mike's lips against his shoulder.

"It's different for us. Maybe you don't know that, I get why you keep things separate and I respect it,
but -- you don't know, do you? What it's like to be with someone who knows your secrets. Someone
who knows what you like. Maybe gets your kinks," Mike said, nipping at his skin. Harvey shivered.
"The boundaries are pushed way back. There's more room, fewer games. And anyway, the two of us
together, we could do anything. Here or out there. I promise," he said, "to be a good student."

"Speaking of kinks," Harvey said drily. Mike laughed.

"We had this," he said. "So if nothing else, we worked something out here. You want to go back to
being what we were on Monday, I'll give that a shot. But I'd miss Ti like hell. And I think you'd miss
me too."

Harvey grunted. "We'll see," he said, already halfway to convinced. Clearly his assessment of Mike's
skill in arguing was dead on. "Go to sleep."

Mike fell asleep drooling on his shoulder. Harvey didn't have the guts to push him off.

Not Potatohead (photohead) wrote:

**Subject: NOT DEAD**

Rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated. Insert other clever Mark Twain sayings here.
Everybody calm down, I just didn't have much to talk about yesterday, jeez. And last night I was busy getting busy. I totally have a new kink, which I will present to you all in literary form sooner or later.

Probably later, he's waking up and he's going to be pissed if he finds out I was using his computer.

(20 Comments on: NOT DEAD by photohead) (Post A Comment)

The account Harvey landed in March was a relatively small one, and well below his pay scale, but representing the newly formed New York Television And Film Workers' Collective Union came with some perks. One was a paid ticket to San Diego in July.

Technically, he was there to lobby entertainment companies in town for Comic-Con; the union wanted new filming contracts and were willing to be competitive with Vancouver to get them. ("Vancouver," Mike sniffed. "I've seen so much X-Files I think I could find my way around the city blind.")

In reality, well. Comic-Con. And his VIP pass got him everywhere.

He arrived a few days before, leaving Mike behind to hold down his meetings and do his bidding until the morning of the twelfth, when the con opened. Mike knocked on his hotel suite door late on the eleventh, bleary from the long flight and more than ready to fall into bed with or without sex beforehand.

"This red-eye flying is some serious bullshit," he said, when the door opened. "Next time I'm going to upgrade myself to first-class and I'm going to use your credit card to Jesus Christ what is on your face."

Harvey grinned at him. "You're not hallucinating."

Mike stared at the goatee. "Are you evil? Is this Evil Harvey's room? Do I have to battle you to get Good Harvey back? Actually, scratch that, you might be more fun --"

"Get in here, punk," Harvey ordered, dragging Mike in and subtly shifting Mike's luggage out of his hand, tossing it on a nearby couch. He went for a kiss but Mike poked him in the cheek, holding him off.

"Explain the face rug," Mike ordered. Harvey looked put-upon.

"I have to wear a suit for the next three days while I make friends with famous people," he said.

"So? Is there a beard rule of some kind when you're a union lobbyist?" Mike dropped onto the couch next to his bag, looking about as beat-up.

"I also have to walk around a geek convention for three days."

Mike stared at him.

"Oh my god you're cosplaying," he said. Harvey grinned. "You're stealth cosplaying Tony Stark!"

"I thought Vulcan ears might stand out," Harvey replied. "Got you a present, by the way," he added, and before Mike could make a smart remark, he tossed him a plastic bag. Mike gave him a suspicious look, unfolded it, and groaned.
"A redshirt? Really, Harvey?"

"It means whenever I don't need you I can order you to get lost," Harvey said.

"You are so terrible and inappropriate, I don't know why I like you," Mike replied, but he was already struggling into the vintage red TOS-style uniform shirt.

"Very hot," Harvey said.

"You're not a well man."

"Come on," Harvey said, tugging him off the couch. "There's a big cold bed in the other room, and if you're nice to me now, tomorrow I'll introduce you to Matt Bomer."

"Seriously?" Mike asked, allowing himself to be led.

"He's a nice guy. Try not to be a fanboy," Harvey replied, pulling him close for a kiss. Mike allowed it this time, but he made a face when Harvey pulled back. "Promise I'll shave it off before we go home," Harvey sighed.

"I could shave it off for you," Mike murmured. Harvey caught his breath. "Oh, you like that?"

"Your thousands of tiny kinks always surprise me, that's all," Harvey said roughly.

"Honesty, Harvey," Mike sing-songed. "Does it get you off?"

Harvey ducked his head. "Yeah, okay."

"Good boy."

"Mm." Harvey sat down on the bed, pulling Mike into his lap. "Sleep, or vaguely kinky sex?"

Mike groaned. "Sleep. I need sleep. Kinky nerd sex tomorrow."

Harvey kissed his forehead. "Okay. I need to make a post, then I'll join you."

Ti G. (tiberiusghost) wrote:

**Subject: Not Really A Con Report**

Those of you who've been reading along know I've been in San Diego for a few days, doing some behind-the-scenes work for the con. I think tonight's the first time it's really seemed like it's actually happening, though. I'm going to Comic-Con. I've never been able to get the time off before, but I'm actually going.

And before you ask, no, I'm not going to ask any of the famous people I'm meeting about fanfic, nor will I pitch them your episode, film, or comic book ideas.

Boy just arrived in from New York on the red-eye, and he's getting ready for bed. Tomorrow morning we have a couple of hours of con-going before I have to get back to work, and I expect he'll be like a toddler on meth. We're splitting up -- he's going to some TV panels, rudely ignoring the VIP passes I got for the new Marvel film panel -- and then we're meeting to try and shove our way through the sweaty masses in the exhibit hall. My concerns about catching con crud are high. Boy will probably be mainlining some kind of useless vitamin C elixir.
He doesn't like my new goatee. I think we've established he has no taste. Except for dating me, obviously.

So tomorrow's insane, but all's quiet here for now.

Be good while I'm at the con, kids.

( I Comment on: Not Really A Con Report by tiberiusghost ) ( Post A Comment )

Anonymous
(Local) (Link)

You should stop calling him Boy. It makes you sound like you're in an intense BDSM relationship.

Are you?

"Mike! I know that was you! Put your phone away and go to sleep!"

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven--
Sleep safe till tomorrow.
-- William Carlos Williams
I. Silence Your Cellphones

Mike never really thought much about phone etiquette before Harvey, because it was never an issue. Everyone he knew checked their phones all the time, texted, facebooked, everything. But after Harvey, there were rules: phones silenced in meetings, off in certain meetings, always on at any other time, silenced during lunch with clients, on during lunch with Harvey but only to be checked, not answered, unless it was either the firm calling or an emergency. The normal rules were reversed: phone on in the movies, and you had better goddamn answer if Harvey called. He learned never to react to anything he saw on his phone, not a laugh, not a frown, because reacting was practically the same as saying this machine is getting a better response from me than you are.

Mike's phone was never more than ten feet from his body. It was getting a little stressful.

So when Harvey got up in the middle of lunch to take a call from Jessica, Mike stayed at the table and took a moment to break a little rule, check his phone, answer some email. Nothing on his work email that couldn't wait; photohead's email had a couple of comment notifications and a message from Ti taunting him about the poll he had on his journal regarding skinny ties.

Mike tapped out a snarky reply and hit send right as Harvey sat down again. About two seconds later, Harvey's phone gave the email-alert chime. Harvey checked it, face impassive, and then excused himself again. Thirty seconds later, Mike's phone gave the email alert chime.

Mike checked his phone before Harvey came back -- fast response from Ti, apparently -- and responded to Ti's rage about skinny ties with a simple "Whatever." Nothing could set Ti off faster than whatever, and Ti knew he knew that.

Harvey's phone beeped as he sat down.

Mike frowned. Harvey checked his phone, and while he didn't react, a spot of color appeared on his cheek. "Ties," he muttered.

"I'm sorry, did you say ties?" Mike asked.

"You're apparently not the only person in the world who is completely wrong about skinny ties,"
Harvey said, tucking his phone in his inside pocket.

Mike subtly took out his phone while Harvey ordered, and tapped out a quick email under the table.  
*I'm not wrong about ties, and you're going to regret ordering the soup.*

Harvey ignored the ding from his pocket -- until he saw Mike holding his phone. He took his out, looked down to read the email, and then looked back up.

Mike raised an eyebrow. They sat there like that, studying each other, a standoff of sorts.

"We never speak of this again," Harvey said.

"Yeah, definitely," Mike agreed.

"But you're still wrong about skinny ties."

---

II. Donna Knows Everything

"Okay," Mike said, slinking up to Donna in the copy room. She gave him an arch look. "What tribute can I offer you to get Harvey out of here by five today?"

"Why baby, whatever do you mean?" she asked, turning to him and resting a hand on her hip.

"I can't leave until he does, he has some kind of sixth sense about when I'm trying to get away early, and the screening's at five-thirty. Do you know what I had to do to get a ticket to the pre-release screening of the Avengers?"

"I'm sure it was suitably humiliating."

"Come on, don't make me beg."

"You won't have to. Harvey's leaving at three." She shot him a smile. "Kiss up and he might hold you a seat."

"He might -- what?"

"Didn't you read Ti's post this morning?" she asked. Mike's world tilted on its axis. "He's going down as soon as they let the line form, so he can get a good seat. Play your cards right and he might save you one."

"I...what...Harvey is...?"

She patted his cheek. "I know he likes you, Photo. Go be good, buy him lunch, and tell him you know his secret superhero identity. He'll fold like a house of cards."

"I love you," Mike said. "How did you find out?"

"I know everything," she reminded him.

---

III. Meetup

This was a bad idea, and Harvey knew it was a bad idea, but Ella had yelled at him about being in the Geek Closet, and told him that fandom was all the rage these days, and (more importantly) that there were tons of hot nerdy chicks who went to meetups. And Harvey wasn't averse to hot nerdy
chicks. Or hot nerdy boys, but he had plenty of closets, no need to choose.

The meetup was just supposed to be coffee, a bunch of fans sitting around bullshitting about Star Trek, and maybe some phone numbers exchanged. Harvey could do this, he could totally do it. No matter that there was a little voice in the back of his head reminding him that Star Trek was for losers and fanboys were all mouthbreathers. It wasn't true. But it had felt true for years, so...

There were a lot of people, which was a relief. Harvey, nerves already strung taut, sat in a corner of the meetup room in the back of a Manhattan cafe and mostly watched. Ella hadn't been wrong, and everyone seemed pretty...exuberant about fandom. Most of them were wearing nametags with obvious LiveJournal or Tumblr handles, a few Twitter names, and his just said "Henry". What, like he was going to use his real name?

And then Mike walked in.

_The horror._

Mike didn't seem to notice him, which was fine by Harvey; he stopped at the table where the nametags were laid out, scribbled on one of them, peeled it off, stuck it to his chest.

HELLO, MY NAME IS: _PhotoHead._

Christ.

Harvey peeled off his nametag, tucked it in his pocket, and prayed Mike wouldn't --

"Harvey!" Mike said, making possibly the most surprised face Harvey had ever seen, including the time with the briefcase full of pot. "What're you doing here?"

Harvey pointed at his coffee silently.

"Dude, you know this place is like, being invaded by fankids, right? This is a meetup. You should probably -- " and then Mike tilted his head. "Are you here for the meetup? You like Star Trek, right? That's so cool, I didn't know you went to stuff like this."

"I don't, ordinarily," Harvey said. Mike sat down across from him. Harvey wanted to cringe. "You totally should, it's a blast. How'd you hear about it?"

"I hear things." Harvey shrugged. "LiveJournal."

It felt weird to say the word out loud. Normally he only ever wrote it.

"Really? What's your username?"

"I don't..." Harvey started, eyes darting to Mike's nametag.

"Oh! Yeah, do me a favor, don't read mine for like, two days, I'll go through and lock all the really emo stuff I've said about you," Mike said, laughing selfconsciously. "Seriously. What's your handle?"

Harvey heard himself say, to his own great surprise, "TiberiusGhost."

Mike's eyes went huge and round. "No way."

"Yeah, don't...make a big deal, okay?"
"Seriously?" Mike asked, voice hushed and awed.

"No, I lied to impress you. Yes, okay?"

"Oh man, I work for TiberiusGhost. This is *so cool*. Come on, let's get out of here, I want to ask you like a million questions," Mike said.

Harvey, relieved at having at least an excuse to leave, followed Mike out.

---

**IV. Mortification Of The Daleks**

_Nice coat_, the Dalek said, and Harvey blinked at it.

"Nice eyestalk," he replied, and then waggled his eyebrows, because that was what Captain Jack would do.

He started going to cons in costume because very few people would recognize him, and he felt it had worked out well to date. He wasn't quite ripped enough to pull off an old school Trek uniform anymore, but neither was John Barrowman, and that didn't stop Barrowman from running around in a flappy coat and suspenders.

Harvey liked the Captain Jack Harkness look, and it was easy to pull off -- he has the blue shirt and dark trousers ready in his wardrobe, an old broken bluetooth headset for an earpiece, and the suspenders from some unfortunate preppy fad in his youth. The vintage coat...well, that took some finding, but it was worth it. He looked good, and he knew this because the con hashtag was full of talk of the Hot Captain Jack wandering around hitting on everyone.

_I bet you say that to all the alien cyborgs_, the Dalek replied, and flashed the cone-shaped lights on its head in an odd but unmistakable eyelash-batting fashion.

"Only the prettiest," Harvey replied, intrigued. He'd never flirted with a Dalek before.

_Harvey, you shameless manwhore_, the Dalek replied. Harvey froze.

"Who are you?" he hissed.

_Dalek Kahn_, the Dalek answered innocently. _Obviously. EXTERMINATE!_

"I'm not playing around," Harvey said urgently, well aware that people were watching Captain Jack Harkness have an argument with a Dalek. "Don't say my name!"

There was a digitally-altered sigh. _Fine_, the Dalek said. _Follow me._

Nobody really looked twice at Captain Jack walking through the crowd with a Dalek at his side, though they did have to stop twice for people to take photos of the Dalek. Eventually they turned down a narrow hallway in the convention center, and then into a totally deserted one. The Dalek stopped in front of a door, and its headlamps went dark.

The door swung open.

"Hey, looking good," Mike said.

He was sitting in a chair with a little monitor in front of him, a microphone headset perched on his head, and a remote control box in his hands.
"Is that thing yours?" Harvey asked, trying not to look too obviously like he was dressed as a television character.

"Nah. I paid the owner twenty bucks for half an hour at the controls. Did not expect to find you here," Mike replied, grinning. "Seriously, Harvey, you are rocking the Harkness. The hashtag's all over you."

"This isn't funny," Harvey insisted.

"No! It's super-funny!" Mike replied, starting to laugh. "Jesus, when I said your name, you should have seen your face. What are you doing here? Client demand you dress up like a sex symbol and gad about with her? Or him?"

"I like cons," Harvey said stiffly.

"Oh sure. Who doesn't enjoy posing as a bisexual con artist turned secret agent?"

"Omnisexual," Harvey corrected.

"By the way, if you don't want to be made as TiberiusGhost?" Mike tapped Harvey's belt-buckle -- the only one he had, actually, Harvey didn't wear belts often. It had a Star Trek badge on it. "Might not want to post a photo of yourself on your blog wearing something distinctive like that, even if it was from the shoulders down."

"You...read...?"

"Oh, I should introduce myself," Mike said, holding up his little laminated con nametag. "Hi. I'm Photohead."

---

**V. The Late News**

"Hey," Mike said, from the couch, "do you ever worry about the fact that you're dating a younger man?"

Harvey glanced over at him from the kitchen. Mike was settled in, laptop on his thighs, wearing Harvey's shirt and a pair of pyjama pants -- standard lazy Sunday morning wear. He was studying the screen intently.

"Should I?" Harvey asked, curiously.

"Just wondering if you did. One of the blogs I read is talking about the perils of dating a younger man. I mean he seems cool with it, but he's definitely having some issues."

"What kind?" Harvey asked, turning back to the coffee machine and pouring out two cups.

"Well, he says sometimes he and his boyfriend don't get the same cultural references, but he doesn't think that's really a big deal."

"Neither do I."

"And he worries because he makes more money than his boyfriend, he doesn't want the guy to feel intimidated. Uh, for the record, if that's a worry, I'm not intimidated. I'm totally happy for you to pay for dinner and treat me like a kept man," Mike said, glancing up and grinning.

"Duly noted." Harvey frowned. "What blog is this?"
"Just a blog. And he says it's hard not to be super-protective when his boyfriend has friends his own age, because, and I quote, People his age are mostly morons." Mike laughed. "This one's funny. Refractory periods. Enough said."

Harvey sat down next to him, bringing an arm around Mike's shoulders and presenting him with a mug of coffee, staring at the screen. His own list of his neurotic, paranoid worries about dating a younger man looked up at him from the web browser, taunting him.

"But he says it's worth it," he offered.

"Well, sure, it's not like I think you're going to ditch me because I'm young and gorgeous," Mike said, kissing him on the cheek and accepting his mug.

"And so humble." Harvey sipped his coffee. "Do you read that blog a lot?"

"Sure. He's interesting, lots of fun pop culture stuff."

"He nice about his boyfriend, at least?"

"Oh yeah. I mean, you should see the shit he talks about this coworker he has, and sometimes the people who hire his firm. Nothing but nice things to say about the boyfriend, though."

"So if that were me, talking about you, you wouldn't be offended by any of it?"

"No, I guess not."

"Or think he was unduly insecure about their relationship?"

Mike looked up at him. "No. Why do you ask?"

"Because most of your friends really are morons." Harvey said. "And I'm pretty sure the worries about the sex won't be an issue for at least ten years, but I can't help thinking about it."

Mike looked back at the blog. "You're...?"

"Sorry. I didn't know how to explain it."

"Oh my God! When you spent all that time on the laptop in the evening I always assumed you were working!"

"I was! Mostly! Except when I was..." Harvey gestured at the screen.

"I guess I don't have any room to talk," Mike said.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, last week I posted a poll about whether people thought it was creepy I was dating someone older than -- "

"That was you? That's why I made the -- "

They fell silent.

"Oh man, I'm fucking a BNF," Mike said finally. "I'm totally tweeting this."
All of the nerdy t-shirts in the later sections are real:

- **STARK INDUSTRIES**
- **STAND BACK, I'M GOING TO TRY SCIENCE**
- **HAN SHOT FIRST**

The Avengers "secret identity" arc that Harvey refers to can be found in Avengers 215-216, where Molecule Man strips the Avengers of their power. Captain America loses his shield, Thor loses his hammer, and Iron Man loses his armor, revealing him to be Tony Stark, a fact the others were unaware of. It also reveals that under the armor, Tony wears a red posing pouch and a smile. There's a great fic about it: **T is for Thong**.

Tigra later defeats Molecule Man by talking him into getting therapy. You can't make this shit up.

Works inspired by this one: **Mulberry** by **himitsutsubasa**

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