The ETA From You to Me

by Rawren (Deshonanana)

Summary

In which Derek drives a tow truck and Stiles is the weekend dispatcher who attempts to woo him with his lack of a brain-to-mouth filter and affinity for run-on sentences.

Notes

Hey ETA is back! I took it down when I published my book but I realize that they're both different enough that it shouldn't be an issue so now that my life has settled a wee bit, I've taken the time to put this back up and hope y'all forgive me.

***You can find the original version of this story in book and kindle format on amazon under the same title. ***

Any and all other fics were delayed due to being distracted with some very drastic IRL changes, like getting married and starting a family. Hopefully I will be able to come back to them but seeing as how I don't enjoy watching the show anymore, I'm sorry to say I can't make any promises.
Chapter 1

It took a second for Stiles to get his office key to properly turn in the lock, cursing the entire way until it twisted and the deadbolt slid free with a loud click. It wasn’t his most shining moment, given that he’d been unlocking and locking the damn thing every single weekend for the past three years running, rain or shine.

Stiles might have possibly had a momentary lapse in judgment the night prior by deciding it was a good idea to start playing Bioshock at two in the morning when he had to be at work by eight. He slipped inside of the office, stumbling over the floormat-of-questionable-use, and turning on the light. It hadn’t cooled off much overnight, and so the first thing Stiles did was to switch on the air conditioner and pull the chord for the fan. It made Stiles feel like of those mystical creator geniuses in a fantasy movie when the room instantly hummed to life, air conditioner whirring and fan creaking overhead.

Sadly, even if Stiles were a mystical creator genius from a fantasy movie, only the cameras placed in opposite corners of the room would have been witness to anything mind-blowing that Stiles could have possibly done. Well, anything outside of his morning routine consisting of turning on both computers, setting down his satchel, clocking in and then doing a quick dust of everything in the office.

Moreso lazy than actually satisfied, Stiles sat down after a quick brush-down of the office, logging in and reaching over to the two phones so he could pull the lines back from the overnight service. Once each line was pulled back, (a quick tap of two numbers that Stiles constantly confused with the two similar numbers for transferring the phones TO service) he grabbed the receiver and quickly dialed the service center.

“Beacon Hills Towing, how can I help you?”

“Hey Adrian, its Stiles, can I get the messages?” Stiles fiddled with the paperwork from the previous day, shuffling them into order. It was almost depressing how meticulous Lydia was with labeling everything and spacing all of the information out. Stiles, himself, wrote much like a the aftermath of drunk man who had decided to smash his hand inside of a desk drawer to see if he could still feel pain.

“Of course, sweetie. Did you sleep well last night?”

Stiles laughed, eyes skimming the paperwork and shifting the phone between his jaw and shoulder. “Three hours is good, right?” He did a double-take when his eyes caught sight of a new driver name on the dispatch sheet, which totally wasn’t cool because who the fuck was Derek?

Plagued by this very concern, Stiles decided to ask Adrian.

“Hey- who is Derek? Did we get a new driver?” The fax machine beeped to notify Stiles that messages were being received, and Adrian made a sound of surprise.

“He started here a few weeks ago, nobody told you? This is his first time working the weekend shift.”

“Ohhhh,” Stiles reached over to the fax machine, snatching the papers up. There was an awkward pause, because Stiles really couldn’t be recorded on camera informing her that no, nobody told him, because he wouldn’t be asking if someone had TOLD him.
Instead, Stiles made another sound like the entire meaning of life had been revealed to him. God, he was a grumpy bitch in the morning. “Alrighty then. I’ve gotta log into the GPS so I’mma let you go. Sleep well!”

Stiles hung up before she’d even finished bidding her farewell. He kinda almost felt bad about it afterwards, but he was totally justified in being grumpy, because now he was going to eventually have to call this random strange dude on the phone - who was probably an old creeper who had finally gotten off pedobear parole and needed a job in which the questionable legalities of his past were not brought to the surface - and tell him what to do.

Logging into the truck tracking system on the computer, Stiles sat back with a sigh, rolling his head around and then staring blankly at the small stack of messages that had come in overnight. Every morning, he had to go through each fax message (which contained information on any and every run that a driver was sent on during the night) and write it down onto the dispatch sheet which was sorted the date. Anything before midnight was put onto the sheet from the night prior, anything after midnight was added onto a fresh sheet for the day to come. It was tedious, and took a good hour or so if the morning was particularly busy - which was almost every Saturday morning.

He’d barely written down the date before the computer was honking at him. It was a deafening sound that came from the speakers when a new call came in, and was supposed to simulate the horn of a car - but really only served to make Stiles utterly terrified of midday traffic.

He opened the call information, instantly releasing a long, drawn out sigh when he realized that it was for a tire change.

Isaac, who drove the battery truck, didn’t come in for another hour. This always left Stiles scrambling in the mornings to meet the thirty minute ETAs that they were required to finish any calls in. ETAs were a creation of the devil - or possibly Stephanie Meyer - because the company policy was ‘30 minutes or less’, which, really? They were offering roadside service and car tows, not delivering pizza with the comment box option where you could demand things like crude drawings of Loki standing in a bucket of ice on the inside of the lid.

Regardless, nobody was awake except for Stiles. This meant that any morning calls were going to be late because, apparently, they had to be the one company where all of the drivers upheld an actual form of daily hygiene by showering right after they woke up.

Stiles skimmed the faxes that he’d yet to finish filling out, a small coil of dread pooling in his stomach when he realized that Derek, whoever he was, was the next person to be called on a run despite the fact that he’d been out on a tow at three in the morning.

Stiles twirled his seat around to check the cork board, finger skimming through the list of numbers until he saw a new one scratched in with pen at the bottom of the list. He took a deep breath, mentally going over what to say to the man, and then dialed.

On the third ring, a sleepy, disgruntled voice answered with, “H’lo?”

“Hey, Derek?” Stiles glanced back at the number to make sure it was right. This was the awkward moment of truth in which he could really have dialed some random frat dude who had just been out partying all night, and that would just be unpleasant. There was a tired, affirmative grunt, which - hey- apparently Derek actually existed. This was a lot more enlightening than the possibility of dialing someone who didn’t actually work for the company. Feeling a little bit less like an asshole, Stiles instantly began to talk. “Hey, this is Stiles, I work the weekends at Beacon Hi-”

“You do realize I got back at four in the morning, right?” Derek growled tiredly. Stiles bit down on
his tongue, mentally wincing. Possibly not the best idea to be yakking someone’s head off like Sabrina the Teenage Witch when the dude probably hadn’t slept more than three hours.

“Yeah, but Boyd and Mike were out at like, six, and Isaac won’t get in until ni-”

“Stop talking and let me get my damn paperwork,” Derek snarled, his voice muffled with the sound of rustling sheets and the creak of a drawer. Stiles snapped his mouth shut, muttering a soft apology under his breath and waiting until Derek was ready for the information. In the meantime, he decided to see how many times he could click and unclick his pen, hitting somewhere in the low thirties when Derek finally spoke again.

“Mmkay.”

Stiles made sure to read everything slowly, not knowing how fast Derek could write - or how awake he was - and really really not wanting to irritate the man even further. The second he finished, Derek mumbled something incoherently and there was a click as he hung up the phone. It took Stiles a second to realize this, slowly lowering the receiver into the cradle and staring down at his unfinished paperwork. Which, hello, totally uncalled for. Stiles was just doing his job, it wasn’t like he was out to put Rick Santorum in office or something, jesus tapdancing christ.

Once Derek and the others were out on runs, though, the hours crawled by. Stiles thanked the higher powers, and the creator of Fruit Ninja, for keeping him entertained between the occasional bursts of activity. He wasn’t really sure he wanted to be thanking anyone in particular when they would get slammed so much in one hour that Stiles found himself scrambling to dispatch calls and placate irritated customers who had been waiting too long, or didn’t want to pay the required amount for whatever service they needed.

It wasn’t long before Stiles was maybe falling a little bit in love with the way that Derek worked, paging the radio with his times and miles, and always letting Stiles know when he was on scene or finishing with a tow. He never complained about his assignments after that first call, and never tried to convince a customer into getting their vehicle towed for a long haul that would leave Stiles down one truck for over an hour at a time. The only disappointing factor, Stiles realized, was that Derek never bothered to come into the office when he stopped by the shop to get fuel or relax for a few minutes. When Stiles called him over the intercom, Derek would instantly be in his truck and ready for whatever information Stiles had to give him on a call.

Derek wasn’t friendly, but he wasn’t particularly vindictive. He was curt, and Stiles often sensed a tiny coil of blunt humor in his dry comments about customers or situations outside of the norm.

It all came to a head three weeks and a good dose of mild bantering over radio and phone conversations later. Stiles had possibly ingested far too much coffee after completely foregoing sleep the night before to finish an assignment for one of his Uni classes, and had been chatting a bit zealously with the other drivers on the radio when Derek cut in with a low growl.

“Stiles. Can you shut up, for once?”

Taken aback, Stiles wrenched his hand away from where he’d been ready to press down on the radio’s broadcast button. There was silence - not even a single crackle - and Derek spoke again. “Are there any runs, or are we all caught up?”

Oh, so he wanted runs. Stiles pursed his lips, muttering under his breath and checking the paperwork. If Derek wanted runs, he’d get as many runs as possible.

Stiles liked to think he had 99 problems, but a bitch (ie: Derek) wasn’t one.
With that in mind, Stiles pulled up a tire change that had been waiting for ten minutes - he’d planned on sending Isaac in the service truck, since he was doing a lockout down the road, but now he was feeling just a smigeon spiteful.

“There’s a tire change on Morgan St.”

“Nothing else?”

“Nope.”

Another long pause, and then Derek released a soft growl over the radio of acceptance. It was really just the beginning of the end, because Stiles spent the rest of the day sending Derek on everything that drivers hated to do; tire changes, in-city runs, fuel deliveries, impounds, the whole shebang.

Two hours before close, Stiles pulled up the GPS to find someone close to where a tire change was, and took a long second staring at where Derek’s truck icon was apparently idling in park halfway across town from his last run.

“What is this assclown doing?” Stiles muttered under his breath, hovering his mouse over Derek’s truck and staring blankly at the street name. He sighed, reaching for the radio. Honestly, it was like trying to keep track of a handful of young lion princes with a penchant for wandering into the Elephant Graveyard when they were specifically instructed not to do so.

“Base to 49.”

Dead silence.

“Base to 49?”

More silence, broken only by Isaac suggesting Stiles call Derek’s phone in case he wasn’t in his truck. Stiles didn’t bother to mention that Derek was idling, which meant he was sitting in his truck. Now, if Derek had actually, say, been doing something Stiles had told him to do, he could be idling while unlocking or hooking up a car. However, since Derek was currently resting his car in the middle of bumfuck and purty mouth, Stiles was 98% certain that he was off in the land of dickery and doing fuck-all to actually help with the runs.

Stiles grabbed the phone, dialing Derek’s number (he’d placed a sticky note on the bottom of the computer monitor with any new phone numbers) and nearly jumping out of his seat when Derek answered with an irritated snarl of, “Fucking REALLY, Stiles?”

Stiles swallowed back an apology, fidgeting with his pen and wondering why HE suddenly felt like the bad guy in this situation. It might have possibly been the way that Derek’s voice was like if Adonis’ body had been melted and refined into delicious dark chocolate used only for sensual purposes.

Stiles didn’t say any of that, only, “I need you to do this AAA tire change… please?”

A rustling of paper was Stiles’ response, followed by Derek inhaling sharply and snapping, “You. Are on my shit list.”

“I’m so-”

“Go ahead with your damn info.”
Well, now Stiles felt kind of bad. Derek never got angry at him. In fact, Stiles usually went ridiculously out of his way to make sure that NOBODY got angry with him. The mere idea that someone was feeling anything more than neutral acceptance towards Stiles’ existence made his stomach churn with unpleasant feelings of …. feelings.

“Dude, I’m really sorry, I’m like- gonna have a coronary or something, I’m totally drowning in paperwork and my hand is cramping and we’re gonna lose like, three ETAs, dude. If I cou-”

“Give me the fucking address, Stiles.”

Stiles gave him the address, biting back the urge to suddenly and bluntly inform Derek that, if he could leave the office, he’d go and change the tire his godamn self.

Fifteen minutes later, Derek’s voice crackled over the radio. “49 is on scene.”

Instantly, Boyd was laughing over the radio, his voice amused. “Wow, Derek, Stiles has had you runnin’ ‘round all day, hasn’t he?”

Violently clicking his pen in a short burst of irritation, Stiles studiously controlled the urge to comment on the radio, scribbling down more information on his paperwork. He didn’t feel like informing Boyd that part of the reason Derek got so many calls was because he didn’t mess around when he got out of the truck, always did his paperwork, kept up on his times and miles, and made Stiles’ job infinitely easier than half the other drivers.

“Yeah. I guess I’m just not going to eat today, it seems.” Derek muttered bitterly. Boyd, Isaac, and Mike (Isaac’s father, and the other flatbed driver that weekend) all started teasing Derek over the radio and Stiles started to drown in his own guilt. He hadn’t even realized that he’d kept Derek so busy that the guy never had time to even sit down and eat in the past ten hours.

Sighing, Stiles set his pen down. He couldn’t apologize, not over the radio, but he could do something to earn Derek’s forgiveness. With that in mind, Stiles grabbed the phone and dialed the number for the nearest pizza joint. He didn’t know if Derek was really picky or not, so he ordered a half cheese, half meat lovers. Whichever one Derek didn’t want, Stiles would happily eat.

With peace-offering omnoms on the way, Stiles sent Derek on one last run and divided the rest between the other drivers. He knew Derek had to come in to get fuel soon, which would be the perfect time to enact his diabolical plan to get back on Derek’s good side.

The pizza was barely cooling on his desk when Derek pulled into the garage half an hour later. Stiles took a second to turn off the vacuum, one of the cleanups necessary before closing, and paged Derek on the intercom.

“Hey Derek, can you come in here for a second?” Stiles glanced at the clock as he set the phone back onto the cradle, taking a minute to transfer the phone lines to the overnight service and then returning to vacuuming. Derek didn’t come into the office for a few long minutes, not until Stiles was coming out of the bathroom after putting away the vacuum. He hadn’t even noticed that Derek was standing inside the door until he walked straight into a disturbingly firm body and nearly toppled over.

A hand grabbed his shoulder to steady him and Stiles bit down on a yelp of surprise. “Shit, thanks Der-” Stiles choked on his words the second he glanced up. He may have been a little excited to see what Derek looked like, just for curiosity’s sake, but all of his expectations fell horrifically short at the sight of the illegally hot man standing before him. It wasn’t often that Stiles had an insatiable urge to take his own pants off and present himself like a cornucopia of potential sexual promiscuity.
Derek, with his inhumanly chiseled jaw, pale eyes and thick (defined, Stiles) eyebrows, was still in his driver’s uniform with bits of engine grease staining it. He quirked one of his pleasurably intense eyebrows at Stiles’ sudden silence. His hand fell from Stiles’ shoulder, the other eyebrow coming up to join its partner when Stiles struggled to remember what he was going to say.

“I bought you some pizza,” Stiles squeaked, fumbling with the Windex in his hand and gesturing to the desk. Food, yes, food was a wonderful and charismatic peace offering that often distracted men from the idea that their clothes could be suffering a mental removal-via-teeth by other men. Derek stared for another long moment before he slowly looked over to the pizza. Stiles decided that he wasn’t sure how to feel about that action, and he really wasn’t sure how to feel when Derek turned to narrow his eyes suspiciously at Stiles.

Stiles decided that a smile would be in order, because everyone loved smiles - babies loved smiles. If babies loved it, everyone had to love it. Babies were picky little fuckers.

“All of it?” Derek walked over to the box, lifting the lid while Stiles meticulously folded the paper towels in his hand. He needed to make sure he had a properly distributed ratio of towel-to-hand coverage, as well as a heavy enough thickness that the Windex wouldn’t seep through the paper towel and end up with a giant soppy handprint on it.

"Uhm. well if you WANT all of it. I would have liked to have half since you know. I also haven't eaten all day, since y'know I can't leave the office and I forgot to make lunch this morning and -"

"Thanks."

"- so I was thinking this could be a fresh sta- what?” Stiles snapped his head up, nearly crunching the paper towels in his surprise. Derek walked over, plucking them from his hand and tearing off one of the strips before handing them back to Stiles and grabbing a slice from the meat-lovers half. Miffed, Stiles stared at the paper towels in his hand, because he had totally just gotten them how he liked them.

"Thanks.” Derek repeated flatly.

"Oh... you're welcome.” Taken aback at how ridiculously easy it had been, Stiles couldn’t really do much more than absently rearrange the remainder of his paper towels and start to clean the windows.

Derek took a seat in one of the extra office chairs, leaning back and watching Stiles meticulously wipe everything down, chewing absently. Stiles tried not to pay attention to the way he could feel Derek’s eyes on him the entire time, finishing up the windows and the glass on the vending machine and returning into the bathroom to grab the duster. Secretly, he may have added a bit of a sashay to his hips in hopes that Derek would notice how nice and curvaceous it was for a strapping young man like Stiles. It wasn’t that he was trying to perform any type of mating ritual in order to get Derek to bend him over the nearest surface, but he totally would be game for at least a little bit of a side-eye glance. If a hot guy like Derek enjoyed looking at his butt, that opened up a world of possibilities for Stiles.

He was thinking about this way too much.

Derek was halfway through his second slice when Stiles walked over to the computer to shut it down, apparently finding Stiles an easy source of entertainment. Stiles was really bad at reacting properly when he noticed that people were staring, because people staring at him made Stiles want to throw things at their faces. This in mind, Stiles kept his gaze focused on the monitor, clicking around to try and shut down the programs and cursing under his breath when the entire computer locked up.
“Come on, baby, don’t do this to me. I’ve been good to you, I cleaned out your C drive last night,” Stiles whined, stroking the monitor like it would help. Derek snorted softly, making Stiles glance up to see the man using his thumb to swipe a bit of pizza sauce from his lip before sucking it off of his finger.

Who the fuck even did that?

Why was Stiles even turned on right now? This wasn’t fair, he was not supposed to be aroused by stereotypically sexual actions that were also scapegoated as innocently human behaviors.

Stiles struggled to keep his breathing even, swallowing a few times so he could get rid of the lump in his throat, and turned back to the computer.

“So.. Uh. I didn’t mean for you not to eat today, man. Totally my bad.” Stiles switched hard drives with a tap to the keyboard, going through shutting the second one down, “I mean, if I had known, I wouldn’t have sent you on so many runs or anything, just so you know.”

Derek was silent, which obviously meant that Stiles should keep talking. Which was completely okay with Stiles because he was incredibly good at talking.

Rephrase: he was good at rambling, but bad at making cohesive conversation.

“Like, dude, give me a heads up when you need to do something, ‘cus, like, if I know, y’know, then I will know not to send you on a run and stuff until you’re done with all that crap.”

Stiles glanced up, heart skipping for a second when he saw that Derek had stopped eating to watch him, expression unreadable. Stiles didn’t really like being the subject of anyone’s attention for more than five seconds, it made him nervous and on-edge, waiting for a fallout or judgment.

Sometimes it gave him an insatiable urge to punch things in the jugular.

He turned off the computer monitor, muttering, “So.. Yeah.. Totally my bad, I’m sorry.”

Derek’s chair creaked as he rocked forward from his reclined position, chewing on the crust of his pizza, eyes following Stiles’ every movement like a wolf stalking its prey. Stiles wished desperately that Derek was more like a Balto-type of wolf than like the bloodthirsty one from 300 that went after a young Leonidas. In fact, the only association that Stiles would willingly make between Derek and 300 would be the hope that the man had a set ridiculous, air-brushed abs.

Stiles nearly jumped out of his skin when Derek stood, fumbling with the paperwork in his hand that he was organizing. Derek grabbed another slice of the pizza, the corners of his mouth pulled into a tiny smirk.

“Goodnight, Stiles.”

Derek turned, walking out of the office without another word. Stiles didn’t move for a good second, and then exhaled heavily and finished cleaning up his paperwork. He clocked out, grabbing his things and switching off the air conditioner. Grabbing the trash, Stiles slipped out of the office and locked the door behind himself before heading to the dumpster, nearly tripping over himself on the way back towards his jeep when he caught a glimpse inside of the garage. The first and only thing his eyes zeroed in on was Derek’s sculpted-from-gods ass shifting around while the rest of him was hidden inside the engine of a black camaro.

Stiles nearly ran back to his jeep before he said something completely ridiculous, sitting inside and thudding his head on the steering wheel.
His job just got ridiculously harder.

On the bright side, when Derek’s voice came in over the radio at a quarter to noon the next day to inform Stiles that he was going to step out of his truck to eat, Stiles could barely keep the smile out of his voice when he paged back to acknowledge it.

---

Stiles should have known all good things never lasted. The only good thing that actually lasted was sugar, and that was only applicable if the sugar was stored in a cool, dry area and away from the grubby hands of children.

Anyway, most good things never lasted, which was why he was roasting inside of his jeep on the side of the highway not twenty minutes after getting out of his Friday classes. His car had overheated and completely stalled out on his drive home, leaving him stranded. He felt kind of like the characters from Lost, except he’d never actually watched Lost, so he wasn’t quite sure how applicable his situation was to the comparison itself.

What he also felt like, was Rango- sans the Hawaiian print shirt and Hunter S Thompson references - cooking under the last dredges of the late afternoon sun.

The upside to all of this was that perks to working for a tow company included reduced tow prices, and that the drivers were often willing to do pro-bono work on his jeep in their free time. However, that also meant that he would probably be waiting for a few hours until one of the trucks had free time to pick him up.

A quick call to Lydia, who worked evenings at the office, let him know that Danny would be swinging by to grab pick Stiles up when he was on his way back from a run that had taken him out of the city. Stiles, doomed to another hour of waiting, was hunched in the driver’s seat with all of his windows open and the battery on his phone going lower and lower with every minute that he continued to play Fruit Ninja.

He texted Scott for maybe five minutes, but then a prolonged lack of response made it easy for Stiles’ to assume that he had gone to visit Allison and there was now a round of hanky panky being executed in the Argent household. Stiles once contemplated buying Scott a bulletproof vest, given how many times Allison’s father had tried to shoot him, but Scott had a habit of never learning things until he was put through a grievous amount of pain beforehand.

Fifteen minutes passed, and Stiles had merely glanced up for a half second and nearly dropped his phone when he saw one of the company wreckers pulling over. Danny, he knew, drove a flatbed, which was probably why Stiles nearly had an aneurysm when Derek climbed out of the truck and started walking towards his jeep.

Good lord, it was like watching a Greek god (clothed in a baggy, oil stained service uniform) descend from the heavens. Actually, Stiles wasn’t really sure where that kind of comparison came from, unless Derek had the intention of pretending to be a swan or goose or whatever and shagging Stiles until he was popping with little demigod babies.

Not that Stiles could get pregnant, considering this was all in absent speculation.

He shut his phone off, scrambling out of the jeep just as Derek reached the door. Derek stared at him, and Stiles stared back until Derek grunted, “Well? Get in the truck, I need to fuel up after this.”

“I thought Danny was picking me up?” Stiles blurted, following after Derek like a duckling trying to
keep up with its mother as Derek headed for his truck, where the wheel lift end was pulled up to the back of Stiles’ jeep.

“I’m closer.”

“Yeah, but…” Stiles trailed off and Derek glanced over his shoulder, doing the same eyebrow thing he always did when he expected Stiles to elaborate. Stiles decided that too many people expected things from him, and shrugged helplessly, “Well, it’s 4 wheel drive.”

“I have dollies.”

“Very true,” Stiles agreed, hesitant to add any further comment on it, because all trucks had dollies, but most of the time drivers avoided using them because they didn’t like the extra work. It was the main reason Stiles tried to send flatbed trucks to pick up anything that didn’t use 2 wheel drive. However, if Derek wasn’t going to complain, Stiles wasn’t going to even bother commenting. Hell, Stiles was totally game for there being absolutely no complaints at all, because that meant that Derek was mostly disinclined to violently murdering Stiles on a deserted stretch of road and then leaving his body for mountain lions to devour.

Climbing into the passenger side of Derek’s truck, Stiles watched him start the task of hooking up to his jeep. Curiosity to see how dollies were used struck him hard, and Stiles clambered right back out to edge his way over and watch Derek work.

Derek, one hand on the lever for the dollies, glanced up and gave Stiles a thoughtful stare. “Have you even touched a truck?”

Stiles, sheepish, dug his hands into the pockets of his jeans and gave Derek an apologetic grin.

“No, not really. I just dispatch, dude.”

Seriously, he sat in an office all day. Unless he suddenly gained the ability x-men the shit out of himself and have optional clones, he couldn’t actually leave the office to go and ask for a demonstration from the drivers on how things worked.

“C’mere.” Derek gestured with his free hand, crouching to check and see if the metal bars of the dollies were lining up with the jeep’s back wheels. Stiles didn’t come over until Derek gestured again, a little more impatient.

“Do you know how dollies work?” Derek asked when Stiles reached his side.

“Little bit?” Stiles made a pinching motion to signify how little that bit was. Derek huffed, biting back a grin and rolling his eyes.

“Dollies are what you put under the wheels so you can pull it along. You lift one end of the car and attach the dollies. Don’t ever listen to Jackson when he says he can’t tow a 4 wheel. He’s a whiner and he doesn’t want to do the extra work. Every truck has them, and this what they’re for.

Put your hand here and ease up on it.” Derek gestured to the lever he’d been fiddling with, as if he actually wanted Stiles to touch it. Stiles didn’t move, because hell no he wasn’t going to touch a giant lever that could mean life or death for his sweet, darling baby.
Derek sighed, loudly.

“Here,” he grabbed Stiles’ hand, setting it on one of the levers. “You hook up the wheel lift to one end, pull that.” Derek gave Stiles’ hand a coaxing push, his palm cool from being in an air conditioned truck, nearly engulfing Stiles’ fingers. Flustered, Stiles wrenched on the lever and shrieked when his Jeep went flying up and almost knocked off of the track.

“Oh my god!” Stiles shrieked, jumping a good half foot in the air. Derek’s hand, over his own, firmly gave the lever a quick tug that had the lift freezing and the Jeep rattling precariously in place. Stiles’ heart was thundering in his chest like some sort of Mars Volta bongo solo, breath coming in short gasps as he tried to comprehend the fact that he had nearly destroyed his precious jeep.

Derek’s laugh was soft and restrained, prying Stiles’ fingers away from the lever. It took more effort than possible, because Stiles had totally crab-fingered the thing like one of those horror films where the body died clutching to something. “I guess this is why they have you behind a desk,” he teased quietly. Mortified, Stiles threw his hands up in the air and tried to blame the burning in his face on the heat of the early summer evening.

“Well, I’m totally an awesome dispatcher and nobody ever bothered to like, tell me any of this stuff. Any time I ask anything about any of the trucks, I get this long and detailed explanation that totally makes no sense whatsoever because there’s no diagrams and I’m totally not a dude who can learn by ear. I have to like, do it or have some kind of heavily depicted diagram that’s loaded with a ridiculous amount of detail!” Stiles went silent when Derek’s hand landed heavily on his shoulder, giving it a firm squeeze.

“I’ll finish the hookup, go ahead back in the truck and let Lydia know I picked you up. There’s a bottle of water in the arm rest.”

Stiles didn’t need a better excuse to scramble his skinny ass all the way back into the truck. He buckled in, grabbing the water bottle Derek had mentioned and chugging half of it until he felt hydrated enough to grab the radio mic from the cradle. Seriously, was there even a tutorial book on how to be incompetent and sexy at the same time? Did he need to study Kim Kardashian or something? Stiles was pretty sure the only way he could have made any more of an ass of himself were if Derek had come up to the truck to find Stiles jerking it to some you tube video on his phone of kittens playing with bunny rabbits.

Stiles shook his head because seriously, even PeeWee Hermann had better standards than that.

Merely entertaining the idea of doing so made Stiles want to punch himself in the dick.

He paged the radio, instead.

“Good afternoon, gentlemen and lady. Fear not, Stiles is safe inside of 49 and no longer in mortal peril on the side of the highway.” Stiles chirped, leaning back into his seat and watching in the side mirror as Derek bent over to look underneath the jeep to make sure that the dollies were secured.

“Already?” Danny crackled in over the radio, “I didn’t know someone could change a tire that fast.”

Confused, Stiles brought the mic back up, pressing down on the button. “I didn’t have a flat, we’re hooking my jeep back to take it to the shop. Engine overheated.” Setting the mic down, Stiles watched Derek walk around to hook up the dollies behind the front wheels.
“Derek was just on a tire change about fifteen minutes ago,” Danny elaborated.

“Oh…” Stiles said to the inside of the truck, absently sticking the mic back onto the cradle while Derek returned to the side of the truck, pulling a lever that dragged the jeep back onto the dollies.

Danny’s words struck him suddenly and with full force, eyes flying wide.

What did that even mean?! There were so many possibilities of the reasoning behind such actions that Stiles wished he could crawl inside of Derek’s brain and poke at things with a stick until the answers spewed out like a burst blood vessel.

Oblivious to Stiles’ inner turmoil, Derek finished hooking the jeep up and headed back for the truck, climbing in with a grunt of exertion. He reached for the mic, not even giving Stiles a second glance as he paged the office. “49 is in tow to the shop to drop off and fuel up.”

Derek shifted out of park, glancing out the window to pull onto the highway again when Lydia’s voice came from the radio. “What were your miles for that tire change? You got out of the truck before I could ask you.”

Expressionless, Derek turned to grab the mic. “7 miles.”

Shady as fuck, by the way. The only way Stiles couldn’t have picked up on the sketch of Derek’s sketchiness were if he had been flying in the clouds after a visit with a gravity bong. Not that Stiles smoked weed, this was another concept that was completely in speculative theory.

It wasn’t until they were halfway back to the shop when Derek finally glanced over at Stiles to see that he was still being stared at. Stiles was kind of happy he had chosen AFTER Stiles had blinked, because his flare was particularly intense and unflinching. Enough to make Derek feel at least a smidgeon awkward, it seemed.

“What?”

“Did they tell you I was in an accident? Is that why you hurried?” Stiles blurted. Derek stiffened, and words practically spewed from Stiles’ mouth. “Dude, I could totally see Lydia doing that. She loves bullshitting everyone to get in ETAs and shit. I mean, not that I don’t do that when necessary, but - come on, you didn’t have to bust your ass to pick me up. It wasn’t like I was going anywhere.”

By the time Stiles was finished rambling, Derek had shifted in his seat a good two times, lips pursed into a tight frown. “The faster I got you, the faster I get back to the shop, go home, eat, and sleep before my on call shift.”

Stiles glanced at the clock, guilt hitting him like a pillowcase full of loose change. “Aw, dude.

You totally got off like, a half hour ago, did you?” Stiles whined, gesturing to the truck’s radio.

“See, that’s where you should have gone the typical douche bag trucker route and just had me sit my
Derek’s pursed lips were starting to look a little bit like he was biting back a smile. Stiles continued on, arms flailing just a tiny bit. “I mean, not that I don’t appreciate it - because I totally do, man - I totally love that I’m in this nice, air conditioned truck and not sweating my nipples off outside, but now I feel all guilty and stuff because you totally are staying overtime because of me.” At some point, Stiles was pretty sure he was speaking in nothing but run-on sentences, half of what he said being drowned out by radio chatter between the other drivers. Derek’s hands were clenching the steering wheel just shy of violently, a small tick in his jaw making it look like the guy was in physical pain at the idea of possibly telling Stiles that he didn’t mind being nice by picking Stiles up.

Stiles decided to save Derek any more agony by blurring, “Let me buy you something for dinner as repayment.”

Derek’s eyes flicked over to him, and then back to the road, and Stiles realized what he’d just said. “I mean - not like a date, because I’m sure that’s not cool. I mean, not cool like - not cool because its homo, because I love gay people. I have my gay moments- but, shit - I mean, not gay like, I’m going to crawl into your bed at night and jerk off on your face, which, by the way, creepers do that, not gay people. I meant gay like, I appreciate the human body aaaand I’m shutting up now.”

Stiles slouched down into his seat until his knees were pressing up against the glove box, face burning hot in mortification at his lack of brain-to-mouth filter. Derek snorted, attempting to disguise the sound as a mild cough, and reached for the CB radio. Stiles could see just by looking at him that Derek’s mouth was twitching with the effort not to smile.

“49’s dropping off this jeep and going out for a bite to eat. I’m third out for tonight’s on-call, so I’ll be taking Stiles home and then getting some sleep.”

Since Derek was distracted with checking traffic before turning, Stiles took that moment to do a tiny little fist pump with his hand tucked up next to his thigh, relief uncoiling the anxiety that had built up in his chest just seconds prior.

“Alrighty. Make sure to cover up, boys.” Lydia chimed back. Stiles’ anxiety came back tenfold, making him choke on a strangled laugh that sounded more like a deer mating call than anything. Thinking that made Stiles wince internally, because that was an awful analogy.

Determined to somehow deny Lydia’s underhanded accusations, (because, seriously, he’d been pining after her for years, he could at least make an attempt to still be pining) he reached for the radio, only to have Derek snatch it out of his hand. Dismayed, Stiles tried to grab it back, only for Derek to stretch his arm over his other shoulder and out of Stiles’ reach. Stiles’ seatbelt kicked in halfway through his attempted lunge for the radio, strangling him and making Stiles gag for air.

Derek gave him a warning stare - between watching the road and making sure not to swerve into traffic - and waited until Stiles was completely back in his seat before he started to slowly put the mic back. Stiles’ hand hadn’t even come up all the way for a second grab when Derek was jerking his hand out of reach a second time.

Stiles huffed, crossing his arms and flopping back into his seat. Too much time had passed for him to even bother saying anything on the radio, which Derek seemed to know, because he replaced the...
mic on its cradle without any problems. Derek was far too possessive of his mic, and Stiles opened his mouth to inform the driver of this when Derek cut him off.

“None of that cheap shit, either.”

Stiles, taken aback, openly gaped. “Uh, dude. Part time job? College kid?” There was no way he was going to dish out heaps of money for a not-date with Derek, especially if he wasn’t going to get any free orgasms from it.

Derek glanced over at Stiles, his eyebrows lifting up to his hairline. “Uh, dude. Fixing your jeep?” His voice hitched up an octave, openly mocking Stiles in a way that really didn’t bother Stiles all that much.

Knowing he’d been bested, Stiles narrowed his eyes, muttering, “touche,” under his breath. Derek didn’t even bother hiding the crooked smirk that came to his lips this time, turning into their business lot and driving in a half circle so that he could back Stiles’ jeep into the garage.

When Derek idled to climb out and unhitch the jeep, Stiles slipped out of the truck to run into the office so he could talk to Lydia for a few minutes. She was seated behind the office desk, a book in hand and the phone cradled between her ear and shoulder - on hold, most likely.

“Hey Lydia,” Stiles began, waving when she glanced up at him before going back to her book.

“So uhm, what was that thing on the radio - I mean, like, you don’t think me and Derek - I mean,” Stiles broke off, laughing awkwardly and gesturing behind himself to the door, “No, that’s crazy, ha, but - really - you don’t think we’re going on, like, a date or something, do you? I mean, you know he was supposed to clock out like, almost an hour ago and, dude, I feel super bad about it. I was totally just gonna buy him some food because he’s totally going to help fix my jeep and shit tomorrow, and I was gonna ask him if he could give me a ride into work an-”

“Stiles, what are you talking about?” Lydia finally looked up at him, finger marking her place in the book and giving Stiles a blank, wide-eyed stare that usually meant she wasn’t actually listening to him at all.

Stiles’ brain flatlined, mouth flapping open for a second and then shutting when Lydia held up a finger to him and brought the phone to her mouth as she was taken off hold.

Once she was done informing the insurance company she was talking to that she needed to authorize a cancelation on a tow, she hung up and looked at Stiles. “Why would I think you and Derek were seeing each other?” She gave Stiles another one of her blank stares, before her eyes narrowed suspiciously, “unless… you are?”

“Uh-. Buh,” Stiles tongue refused to cooperate, and he shook his head. “I mean, but, on the radio. The thing- you said, c-cover… up?” His voice cracked nervously at the end, shrugging in confusion.

Lydia sat back, thumbs tucking her hair behind her shoulders. “… uh, yeah? Its overcast tonight. Don’t you ever check the weather? You should, you know we get twice as many calls on rainy days.” She pulled her hair up, fluffing it and letting it fall back down.

“Oh,” Stiles said stupidly, eyes going wide with understanding. “Cover like… cover with a rain coat or an umbrella… not… cover… like condoms,” he trailed off at the very end, muttering the last few words under his breath so quietly that Lydia had to double-take to even understand what he said.

“Excuse me?”
The office door opened, Derek sticking his head in and looking at Stiles expectantly. “Can we go?”

Stiles jumped on the chance to avoid an awkward moment, turning and reaching out to push the door open when Derek stepped back and did it for him. “Yes, food. Food is good. Bye Lydia!” The door closed on the sound of Lydia releasing a long, loud, “Ohhhhh!” of understanding.

Stiles climbed back into the truck, now without his jeep attached to it, and buckling himself in. Derek didn’t bother with his seatbelt, shifting out of park and pulling out of the garage. Stiles instantly brought up a mental list of places in his price range, listing a few of them to Derek until he realized that Derek wasn’t even listening - already driving with a destination in mind.

They pulled into the parking lot of the nearest Applebees, Derek guiding the truck towards a spot that was out of the way. Stiles stumbled out of the truck, walking around to the driver’s side to see Derek standing next to his door and pulling his uniform shirt over his head to reveal a black wifebeater that Stiles thought, personally, should be outlawed in at least 48 states.

Initially, Stiles had figured that Derek was just a tiny bit stocky, the uniform baggy in the middle in a way that made it impossible for him to realize before now that Derek wasn’t stocky, he was just built. Stiles had to swallow back a horrified groan of imminent arousal, watching Derek lower his arms and trying to look everywhere but at the way his chest and biceps flexed at the movement. Derek, oblivious, locked the truck and gestured for Stiles to follow him inside. Stiles kept himself a good step behind Derek, just for the chance to stare at the way the man’s torso disappeared sinfully into the band of his uniform pants.

The host barely gave them a second glance before cheerily saying, “Booth? Follow me.” Booth. Booths were meant for small groups of friends, families and couples.

Couples.

Stiles’ face burned and his mouth itched to frantically inform the host that no, sadly, he and Derek were not a couple - despite the fact that he would totally love to bone the guy six ways to Sunday, if possible. However, Derek was already following the man down the aisle and towards a small booth in the far corner of the restaurant.

Once seated, Stiles grabbed his menu and searched through it for the cheapest possible meal. He was totally game for getting an appetizer. He had the metabolism of a vicious jungle cat, but the stomach of someone who often forgot to eat more than once or twice a day. His eyes zeroed in on a delicious looking photo of some honey barbeque wings when there was a brushing sensation against his leg.

Stiles almost jumped completely out of his skin, because there was no way that wasn’t a foot rubbing against his ankle. A myriad of emotions thundered through Stiles mind, ranging from ‘oh god, Derek is playing footsie with me, what do I do?’ to, ‘oh my god is he seriously playing footsie with me? That’s so third grade.’

Derek’s foot brushed Stiles’ calf again and Stiles decided to go balls-out and reciprocate, sliding his tow awkwardly along Derek’s calf and then jerking it back when Derek looked up sharply in surprise.

This was the moment of truth.

Setting his menu down, Derek shifted to look under the table, eyebrows hopping up as he glanced at Stiles with an apologetic grunt. “Sorry, steel-toed boots. Didn’t know I was bumping your leg,” he muttered, shifting and dragging his feet back.

Jesus, mother Mary and Joseph.
Stiles’ menu came all the way up in a desperate effort to hide the mortified burn in his face. “S’ok,” he mumbled, laughing awkwardly. The waiter appeared at their table, first taking their drink orders, and then their food orders when Derek and Stiles both informed the man that they knew what they wanted. The instant that the waiter left, the tension came back tenfold, driving Stiles out of his mind.

So he talked.

“So, dude,” Stiles began, glancing down when Derek turned to look at him, “Where did you come from? Have you been here long? You know, I’ve been in Beacon Hills, like, my entire life, man. I guess that’s why I make an awesome dispatcher - because I totally grew up here and I know where everything is. Like, I have this mind-mojo shit going on, where you can give me an address and I do some kind of crazy zoom-think shit like on that show Psych, have you seen Psych?”

Derek shook his head and Stiles couldn’t stop things from spewing out of his mouth like a vomit of awkward rambling.

“That’s ok, its this dude who pretends to be psychic but he’s really super observant and has photographic memory. I mean, I don’t have photographic memory, but like, the way they animate him noticing things is zooming into the image and anyway, yeah. I almost always know how long it’s going to be for a driver to get there. I make some mad ETAs like that, even though there’s math involved, right?” Stiles barely waited for Derek to give him an amused nod before he was off again.

“Yeah, I mean, mileage and stuff is a form of math. I’m not actually that great at math - I was thinking I could have dyscalculia, which is a legitimate thing, by the way. I shit you not, man.” The waiter came over with their drinks, and Stiles continued to ramble while fighting with his straw.

“It’s like dyslexia, but with numbers. I’m not saying I have dyslexia, I’m good with words and spelling - I was thinking about being an English teacher, but then I realized that I’d be dealing with hormonal teenagers. I could barely handle my friend Scott when he started dating his girlfriend, Allison. So I’m getting my gen. education degree. Do you have a degree?”

Derek’s ‘I’m really amused but I don’t want you to think I’m a smiley kinda guy’ smirk was back on his face, absently glancing over the liquor menu. Stiles grabbed the wrapper for his straw. “I’m pretty ADD, so they had me on Adderall in high school, and, man, I will tell you now, that stuff was like steroids for your brain or something. I would get mad focused on an assignment and just zing through it,” Stiles made a jerky hand motion to signify how fast he was actually zinging through his assignments and then grabbed Derek’s straw wrapper to fold that one as well, “and I’m pretty sure it made my dad’s life way easier because, y’know, being a sherriff is tough shit, but if your kid has good grades, it looks good on you. Not that I’m saying I represent my dad, in actuality, but I’m pretty sure he felt that way.”

Unfolding the wrappers, Stiles smoothed them out and then started braiding them.

“Which is why I think he’s happy that I’m at Uni, cuz he knows I’m not out doing drugs or having promiscuous sex with people of unknown origin.” Stiles muttered, undoing the braid and then attempting to make an origami heart. Derek reached out, snatchi...
and placing them next to his elbow and out of Stiles’ reach.

Affronted, Stiles leaned forward to grab them back, only for Derek to smack the top of his hand as if reprimanding a child. Stiles jerked his hand back, releasing a dramatically hurt noise and holding the appendage to his chest.

Derek stared, and Stiles realized that he maybe, probably, had rambled way too much and the guy was only here to get some free food, not to have his head talked off. Mentally cursing himself, Stiles lowered his hand and picked nervously at his fingernails, trying not to bring them up to his mouth and nibble on the ones that were getting too long. He slouched down in his seat, embarrassed.

A loud sigh from Derek made Stiles peek up to see the straw wrappers being slid back in his direction. Stiles tried his hardest not to light up like a Christmas tree, but he was pretty sure he failed miserably.

Returning to his task of trying to make a crappy origami heart, Stiles forced himself to stay quiet so as not to bother Derek any more than he already had.

It was Derek who spoke next, huffing through his nose and sitting back in his booth seat to watch Stiles with detached interest. “So, you’re in school.”

It was like giving a twinkie to a man trapped in a zombie apocalypse, and Stiles latched onto the chance to redeem himself. He sat up, wiping his palms on his thighs.

“Yeah, I mean. I’m in school full time and you know I’m working weekends - which is good because I can pretty much get my homework done when there aren’t too many runs or anything, so I’m not ever really that bored…” Stiles sat his elbows on the table, amending that statement, “except when I am, which is why I like to bring my laptop and my DS. Which, by the way, Animal Crossing is pretty much the devil. Have you ever played it?”

“No.”

Stiles waited for Derek to elaborate, or at least tack on something for him to work with, but was met with more extended and awkward silence. Stiles drummed a small beat onto the table. “Do you play any video games?”

“Not really, no.” Derek took a swig of his water, which prompted Stiles to suck down half of his soda in one go, because he was suddenly very thirsty.

“What about internet games?”

Derek was starting to look just the tiniest bit uncomfortable, thumbing the rim of his cup and giving Stiles a crooked shrug. “I don’t go online much.”

Horrified, Stiles twisted his palm out in the universal hand motion for ‘what even,’ and struggled to see if Derek was actually telling the truth. Derek’s eyebrows did their little awkward bobbing thing and Stiles was overcome with the urge to reach out with his thumb and pet one. Instead, he released a shocked sound.

“Oh my god, dude. How?”

Derek laughed, most likely at the horrified expression on Stiles’ face, and then glanced up when the waiter came by to refill Stiles’ drink for a second time. “I like to read books… I go hiking a lot.”

“Hiking? Here?”
“We’re not too far from the mountains.” Derek pointed out dryly, his lips twitching spastically like he had some physical illness that made him incapable of smiling more than once an hour.

“You must have an ass of steel.” Stiles told him seriously.

Derek snorted, rolling his eyes, probably because Stiles was really bad at not acting interested and it was possible that he thought Stiles was a complete headcase who needed to be dosed up with ridiculous amounts of klonopin and kept inside all day.

Stiles struggled to prove him wrong - despite the fact that Derek hadn’t actually said any of this and threw his hands out in desperation. “I mean, not that I would look or anything right because, hey, no homo, right? Not that I’m saying you don’t have an ass of steel, I’m sure you have a great -”

“Stiles.”

“Sorry!” Stiles squeaked, ducking down to sip at his soda and taking a painfully long moment to chase his straw around the rim with his tongue, looking everywhere but at Derek.

Huffing softly, Derek shook his head and sat up when the waiter appeared with their food. Stiles was instantly grabbing for his wings, digging in with gusto. Derek did the same, only with a tad more restraint.

Within seconds, Stiles had his cheeks stuffed with food, licking his lips and trying to fit a second boneless wing into his mouth because sweet jesus these things were tasty. He looked up in time to see Derek watching him with a disturbed look on his face, halfway to bringing a forkful of steak to his mouth.

“What?” Stiles felt painfully self conscious, chewing slower and slower until he finally stopped altogether.

Derek made a pained noise in the back of his throat, “You’re … like a chipmunk.”

Flustered, Stiles stared back at his food, swallowing and grumbling, “chipmunks are awesome anyway,” under his breath. Either Derek didn’t hear him, or didn’t care, because he merely resumed eating his own meal.

Stiles was only halfway through his dinner when he realized that the two sodas he’d chugged had already passed through his system. He excused himself, hop-walking his way to the bathroom. He returned to see that his plate suddenly had a good handful of fries that hadn’t been there before. A quick glance to Derek’s own plate showed a significant depletion in his fry community, which made Stiles really want to comment, but he already had a habit of pushing things that needed to be left alone. It was the exact reason he was rather lacking in the relationship department, which was also why he kept his mouth shut and sat down without a single word on the subject.

Derek’s shoulders sagged just the tiniest bit - in relief, most likely - and Stiles quickly resumed stuffing his face.

When they were done eating and Stiles had paid the bill, (with Derek tossing down $5 for the tip) they headed back out to the truck. Derek pulled his GPS from its cradle, shoving it at Stiles with instructions to type in his address. There was minimal chatter on the CB radio, enough for Derek to turn on the actual radio and fill the truck with the soft sound of the classic rock station. Stiles knew what a silent cue was to keep his mouth shut, and so he sat back and watched the scenery fly by.

Pulling into Stiles’ driveway, Derek shut off the radio and dug his phone out of the breast pocket of his uniform, shoving it at Stiles. Startled, Stiles fumbled with it for a second and then stared at Derek
in hopes that he would elaborate the action.

“You need a ride in tomorrow, right?” Derek’s eyebrow bob came back again and man, this guy really had no other way to express his emotions, did he? Stiles nodded, and Derek gestured to the phone. “Be outside at seven thirty tomorrow so I can pick you up on my way in.”

“Dude,” Stiles breathed, a grin overtaking his face, “You are awesome,” he tapped his number into Derek’s phone, adding, “more than awesome,” after a prolonged moment. He was pretty sure that Derek had just preened at the words, because the guy’s chest puffed out the tiniest bit when he shifted in his seat.

Adorable.

Stiles shot himself a quick text message from Derek’s phone, possibly to save his number, more possibly to stare at it for hours and pretend he could muster the balls (or vagina, if you used the phrase around Lydia and wanted to hear her rant about how vagina’s can withstand a hundred times the abuse that a man’s testicles could) to actually send Derek a meaningless text message as a means of establishing out-of-work contact. That little fantasy realm really did little more than make Stiles think of ridiculous scenarios featuring sexy mechanic!Derek and Stiles being gloriously violated on the hood of a car.

Derek’s hand came into Stiles’ line of vision, breaking him from that horrifyingly wonderful image, prompting Stiles to return his phone.

Stiles dropped the cell into Derek’s palm, unbuckling his seat belt and grabbing his laptop back from the floor. “So… yeah. Thanks for the ride, and for fixing my jeep tomorrow, and for the ride tomorrow…and for generally not being a dick like I know a lot of the drivers take infinite pleasure from doing. All of which I totally appreciate, by the way.”

Stiles fiddled with the door handle, not really wanting to leave but kind of wanting to run very far away, where he could live on a cloud of marshmallows and fully functional brain-to-mouth filters. “I know I’m like… the kid of the group, but that totally isn’t cool when they’re all like, ‘oh, stupid kid,’ when I fuck up - ‘cause everyone fucks up, and I don’t want you guys to think I’m smarter or anything, but age has nothing to do with the stuff like doing your job right. I mean, I’ve been working there for like, almost three years, and I never hear about any real complaints or anything, so I must be doing something ri-”

“Stiles.”

Stiles’ mouth snapped shut, eyes going wide in mild horror (partially at the fact that everything that had just come out of his mouth was practically one agonizing run-on sentence, partially because he somehow lacked the ability to stop himself from rambling until Derek did it for him) and gripping to the door handle.

“You’re fine. Get the fuck out of my truck so I can go sleep.”

“Oh. Fuck. Sorry, I mean. yeah. Sorry.” Stiles shoved the door open, scrambling out of the truck without another word, because another word from Stiles was actually more of a perpetual diarrhea of incomprehensible language that only served to dig a deeper hole. A hole that Stiles was pretty sure was almost all the way to China, by now.

He didn’t bother to watch Derek pull out of the driveway, slipping inside of his house and waving at his father, who was seated at the couch with a glass of whiskey and a mound of paperwork before him.
Stiles’ father slipped his glasses down, giving Stiles a thoughtful look. “Classes run late?”

Stiles shouldered his school bag, fiddling with the loop of his belt and suddenly feeling so anxious that he had a fleeting concern that he might have had a xenomorph implanted into his stomach that was ready to explode out in a fit of bloody and violent horror film glory.

“Oh, no. My jeep broke down. I had one of the drivers pick me up and take it to the garage. They’re gonna fix it tomorrow, and we stopped on the way back to get food.”

There was a moment in which Stiles’ father stared far longer than necessary, reaching up and completely removing his glasses. “You okay, Stiles?”

Of course, his dad was a cop and had those creepy perceptive powers that Brad Pitt was completely lacking in the movie Seven. Which was okay, Seven was an awesome movie anyway.

“I think I’m having an existential gay crisis.” Well, where the hell did that come from.

It was almost disconcerting how his dad barely batted an eye, pushing his glasses back up his nose with a soft, “oh,” and then grabbing his whiskey and taking a swig. “Well… have fun with that.”

“Wow, dude.” Stiles jerked his head and arm in opposite directions, expecting at least some form of consolation from his father and getting nothing but a raised whiskey glass. Apparently his father was toasting to Stiles’ inability to comprehend what his own hormones were doing. “Totally not feeling the love here,” he added under his breath, walking past the couch and up the stairs.

He had homework to do anyway.

Except somehow homework is apparently really hard to do when all he can think about is how much he wants to lick Derek’s abs.

And hips.

And shoulders.

Collarbone, too.

All of which somehow leads to the passing consideration if it would be possible for Derek’s stubble to give him rug burn, which - in turn - ended with such thoughts that had Stiles coming to the startling realization that he was actually incredibly lewd.

With another moment of self-clarity that was spiraling towards his second crisis of the evening, Stiles popped an Adderal and turned on his Xbox for a good, long round of killing Necromorphs in Dead Space II.

----

Stiles didn’t wake up to his phone ringing; in retrospect, he really wished that he had. Well….. either woken up, or at least gone to bed wearing something other than just his boxers.

As it was, Stiles happened to be happily ensconced in the land of dreams and rainbows when something wrapped around his arm like the jaws of an agitated, toothless crocodile and began to shake him in firm tugs.

“Stiles. Wake the fuck up.” Someone snarled angrily, shaking him again. Actually, that someone sounded a lot like Derek - which would just be silly because that would mean that Derek was in his
“Stiles. I swear to God, I will drag your ass out of bed.”

Stiles instantly snapped his eyes open, halfway curled into a fetal position with his quilt cuddled and wrapped intricately around his body like some sort of bondage porno. Stiles, being the eloquent, controlled man that he was, released an undignified shriek, jerking so hard in Derek’s grasp that the upper half of his body completely slid off of the bed. His head thudded onto the toe of Derek’s boot, feet trapped in an elaborate boy-scout style tangle of sheets with his goodmorning-you-have-no-sex-life boner standing half mast inside of his boxers.

“Derek?!” Stiles struggled to comprehend the situation, staring up the length of Derek’s sinfully long body (mother of god) and finding himself the subject of a bemused stare.

“Your dad let me in, which, by the way, you’re going to be late for work because I sat outside for fifteen minutes trying to get you to answer your phone.”

“Oh my god.” Stiles then took that exact moment to realize that he was literally lying at Derek’s feet with a half-woodie, and glanced down.

Yeah, it was actually pretty hard not to notice.

Which meant Derek could pretty much see- “… OH MY GOD.” Stiles flopped around like a dying fish to try and get off of the bed, half-rolling, half-falling until he was on the ground completely. He grabbed his sheets, wrapping them around his hips and breathing out another mortified, “oh my god,” before hightailing it out of his room lest he die of complete and utter humiliation.

He could hear Derek’s laughter even after he shut the bathroom door.

By the times Stiles was out of the bathroom, Derek was no longer upstairs. He hurried to get dressed, grabbing his laptop bag that served as more of a Marry Poppins satchel of things-to-keep him-entertained, and jogging down the stairs. Derek wasn’t in the living room, probably in his truck, and Stiles rushed for the door.

“Stiles!” His dad called from the kitchen. Stiles looked up just in time to shriek and barely catch the flying projectile of a Tupperware container, shooting his smirking father a dirty look and wave before he ducked out of the house.

He resisted the urge to yell back at his father that the man could seriously hurt someone like that. Stiles knew of at least three cases consisting of death-via-Tupperware that had all ended miserably. The internet had told him so.

Derek was hanging up the CB radio mic when Stiles climbed into the truck, face instantly burning hot when he remembered that Derek had totally seen him popping a halfie when he’d woken up. Which, by the way, was probably ranking higher on his list of ‘moments that Stiles wished could be forgotten due to their traumatizing aspects’ than the time his dad had walked in on Stiles making out with Danny back during their senior year of high school.

In Stiles’ defense, he had been trying to convince Danny that Stiles was totally his type.

It hadn’t worked.

Buckling in, he looked over to see Derek watching him with a raised eyebrow. They were nice eyebrows, even if they had these little tufts on each end that went in the opposite direction - like they’d been forced in that position after years of scowling like an irritated gorilla at anyone who
bothered to exist.

Stiles sunk down into his seat and, turning even redder, muttered, “Shut up and drive, Kato,” under his breath. Derek snorted, pulling the truck out of park and doing exactly that.

The first few hours of work were relatively uneventful once Stiles had clocked in and started dispatching runs. His morning crawled by at an agonizing pace, making Stiles somewhat twitchy by the time noon rolled around.

Derek had come into the garage only once that morning, spending a few minutes tinkering around in the engine of Stiles’ jeep before he was sent out again. Before he’d left, Derek had slipped into the office to let Stiles know that his jeep was going to be out of commission for a good few days if he wanted it fixed for free. Either way, Stiles was completely cool with it.

Out of everything that had happened so far that day, the newest development was a text from Derek around the middle of the afternoon.

Grabbing food. Want anything?

Thank baby Jesus, the man knew how to use the English language. It was something that made Stiles want to climb onto the roof and sing his praises. In actuality, if he climbed onto the roof to do anything, the chances were high that one of the other businesses in their lot would think that Stiles had finally cracked and was going to throw his body off of the one-story in a mad attempt at ending his life. Stiles wouldn’t be surprised if they would have assumed that he legitimately thought the hypothetical jumping would kill him and not just break every bone in his body.

Stiles brushed off that train of thought and gleefully responded with, yeah. Get me some curly fries. I’ll pay you back.

Momentarily, he wondered if it was a bit too soon to feel giddy over the fact that the guy was picking him up food when it was completely unnecessary. He then remembered how Derek was ridiculously gorgeous and had a heart somewhere underneath of his cold, emotionless exterior, and dismissed his worries with a pointless wave of his hand.

They got slammed not long after Stiles had gotten a text back of, ‘ok,’ from Derek, which had Stiles frantically trying to get calls sent out on time. When it finally died down, Derek showed up with a bag of significantly cooled food, sheepishly handing Stiles’ fries over.

Stiles bit down the urge to comment that Derek looked like a puppy that had gotten caught peeing on the carpet, and took his fries. “Dude, we’ve got a microwave.” Grinning, he held a hand out for Derek to give over his own food. “I’ll heat your stuff up, too.”

“Thanks,” Derek grunted, nodding and taking a seat while Stiles fiddled with the microwave. While the food was heating up, Stiles tugged his wallet out of his pocket, grabbing $5 and handing it to Derek. When Derek didn't take the money right away, Stiles started waving it in his face, moving closer and closer until Derek snarled and snatched it away. Satisfied, Stiles returned to the microwave to watch the food cook. Someone once told him that a person could get cancer from watching food in a microwave, but he was pretty sure if that were true, his eyes would have rotted out years ago - but not after he would have gone blind from compulsive teenage masturbation.

Once the food was done, he took a seat with his reheated fries and handed Derek’s lunch over. Derek shoved the phone over on the desk, making himself a corner-table opposite to Stiles and
digging in with the appetite of a man starved.

Good Lord, Derek even had his own designated space in Stiles office. That could only mean that they had some sort of destiny together, right? The next step had to be that Stiles would get his own drawer in Derek’s room for spare clothes after rigorous activities that involved lots of sweat, grunting, and bodily fluids.

Realizing he was being utterly lewd again, Stiles didn’t waste a second shoving fries into his mouth with one hand, using the other to fill out paperwork. Derek ate in silence, not even commenting when Stiles muttered to himself under his breath and moved to click around on the computer to pull up the times he’d forgotten to write down.

Stiles didn’t mind the quiet, for once. Normally any lack of sound would make him feel uncomfortable; with the television on mute (captions on) and the phones completely dead, Derek’s presence was, surprisingly, more of a calming balm than anything. It was like Derek was an all natural brand of metaphorical THC.

Except when he was actually looking at Stiles, or thinking in Stiles’ general direction. When that happened, Stiles had an insatiable urge to climb Derek like a tree - or climb an actual tree and stay far, far out of sight.

The two conflicting desires were at a constant battle, which made Stiles feel like his brain and libido were having their own version of a Red Alert II scrimmage battle. Personally, Stiles considered his heart as the creepy Soviet spider droid thing that attacked people’s faces and murdered them. Well… his heart murdered with kindness and lots of ridiculous compliments that only served to make Stiles sound like the crazy old hobo on the corner of Metro and Lexington with the sign reading ‘Need beer money, God Bless.’

When he finished eating, Derek tossed his trash and sat back down, lighting a cigarette.

Technically, it broke the rules, but the owner was a smoker and they had ash trays set up for some of the dispatchers and drivers. Stiles - himself - didn’t smoke, but he’d gotten used to suffocation-via-cancerous-fumes, and was completely unbothered by it.

Having thrown away his own trash and catching up on his paperwork, Stiles pulled out his Nintendo DS to play Animal Crossing in order to pass the time.

“Nobody cares, Nook. Just give me my godamn money.” He hissed after a few minutes, tapping angrily at the screen to try and skip past the ridiculous amount of pointless, garbled chatter that the character on the game insisted on having. He peeked up, seeing Derek watching the muted television absently, and then went back to his game with the decision that he would go fishing to earn some extra money.

The third time a fish swam away just as he approached the shore, Stiles cursed loudly and then jerked his head up upon remembering that there was someone actually in the office with him. He locked eyes with Derek, face going from room temperature to burning hot in the second of a heartbeat. It was like walking into the fires of Mordor, sans the creepy eye staring him down.

Suffocated by his own mortification, Stiles ducked his head back down with a shrug and murmur of, “Sorry, I talk to games.”

“You talk to everything.” Derek pointed out quietly, flicking ash from his cigarette into the tray near his elbow.
Stiles paused, pursing his lips and nodding. “… truth.” He had to give Derek mental props for the lack of mocking in his tone, secretly pleased that he-who-had-to-be-forced-to-talk hadn’t even bothered to tease Stiles when given the perfect opportunity.

Derek snorted, leaning back in his chair and turning to watch the television.

Dicking around on his game, Stiles glanced up at Derek after a prolonged moment. “… do you ever talk to yourself? ‘Cause I gotta day, dude, I don’t even know how you can’t. Actually, I don’t know how anyone can stand silence. Silences is suffocating. It’s like drowning in a pool, except it’s your brain and not a massive body of water filled with chlorine that burns your eyes.” To be honest, both options sounded equally unpleasant.

Giving Stiles a quirked eyebrow, Derek took a drag from his cigarette and exhaled the smoke slowly, making it billow in thick, gray clouds that drifted upwards. Stiles decided that smoking should be outlawed for the fact that it was cancerous and illegally attractive on men like Derek. It made Stiles want to pick up the habit just to see if they could make him look as debonair. If that worked out, he might actually succeed in seducing Derek with his wit and exuberant charm.

Probably not.

Derek tapped some of his ash out, leaning back again and shrugging. “I’m used to it.” “Aw, that’s… so sad.” Stiles replied faintly, giving Derek a big, fake pout.

Rolling his eyes, Derek twisted his chair around so that his back was facing Stiles and muttered, “smartass,” under his breath.

“I heard that!” Stiles felt it pertinent to mention that pride was instantly wounded like an arrow to the knee. He would have, if he didn’t already know that the obscure Skyrim reference would go completely over Derek’s head. Derek glanced at Stiles over his shoulder, offering him a smirk to end all smirks.

“I know.”

“Rude.”

“You like it.“

Sweet Jesus, he did not just go there.

“Oh my god,” Stiles groaned, because Derek calling him out on things like that was utterly horrifying. It could only mean that he was completely aware that he was dragging Stiles around by the dick, and enjoyed it immensely.

Derek’s laugh was a sharp, sudden bark that eased all of Stiles’ fears - he wasn’t being a tool, he was just attempting to lightheartedly tease and failing miserably in every aspect except that he made Stiles want to lock himself in the bathroom for the rest of eternity.

The phone rang not long after, which was really the prelude to more runs coming in, and Stiles spent a good few minutes dispatching Boyd and Mike for some in-city tows and sending Isaac on a jumpstart.

He filled out the paperwork, glancing up at the computer when it honked at him for another tow call. Stiles had to resist the urge to smother a coil of disappointment, because he was totally enjoying forcing Derek to endure his presence in hopes that he would start to find Stiles’ company pleasurable.
through sheer exposure.

Not exposure like Stiles taking his pants off and flashing Derek his dangly bits, exposure like ‘hey, I’m here, I’m awesome. Love me.’

“Got one for you,” Stiles said to Derek, grabbing the dispatch paper meant for drivers and starting to scribble down everything Derek needed. Derek stood, stubbing out his cigarette and walking around until he was standing behind Stiles to look at the computer screen.

He bent down, chest pressing against Stiles’ back and shoulder and squinting his eyes. Stiles’ heart felt like the stampede from Jumanji, hiccupping and thundering in his chest when he caught a whiff of cologne that made him want to do unspeakable things that would probably cost him his job if the owner ever reviewed the security tapes.

“Where is it at?”

“Uh,” Stiles said intelligently, lifting his pen and tapping the screen as he read the address out loud. Derek bent in further, eyes narrowing while he followed the movement of Stiles’ pen. Stiles took it as incentive to also show Derek where everything else was, the customer’s information, the car’s year, color, make and model, and the comment box that had details on the type of call. The words left him in a rush, awkwardly explaining everything in excessive detail because he possibly, maybe, wanted an excuse to keep Derek all up in his shit like Snooki at a house party.

Derek didn’t move right away, skimming his eyes over the screen before he reached a hand up and settled it on the back of Stiles’ neck. Stiles’ body felt like a livewire, barely able to stop himself from sucking in a sharp breath when Derek’s fingers squeezed his neck gently before he stood. If Stiles were a cat, or a lesser man, he would have happily gone limp in Derek’s hands, leaving the man free to do whatever he wished with Stiles.

“Okay, do you have the paper?”

Brain melted into a pile of goo, Stiles absently tore the info sheet from the pad and handed it to Derek. “Here,” he choked, clearing his throat. Derek took it, other hand landing on Stiles’ head and rubbing it (Stiles assumed that, if he actually had more than an inch of hair, Derek would have been ruffling it) with a tiny smirk. Stiles squawked in protest, shoving at Derek’s hand and getting an amused snort in return as Derek slipped out of the office.

Stiles sat there for a few seconds, and then slowly brought his hand down between his legs to readjust himself - because he’d apparently somehow gotten a bit of a chubby from just that single touch. Honestly, it was like he was back in high school and had nearly busted a nut just from brushing arms with Lydia.

“Holy god,” Stiles breathed, so discombobulated that he nearly jerked out of his seat when the phone rang.

“Beacon Hills Towing,” Stiles chirped into the phone, rubbing at his burning cheeks and glancing at the number. He realized that it was one of the insurance companies calling just as the man on the other line spoke.

“Hello, this is Steve with AAA. I’m calling about call number eight zero three.”

Stiles glanced up at the computer, staring at the run that he’d just sent Derek on and realizing, with a bit of detached horror, that he’d never even clicked the button to acknowledge and dispatch the call. He had seriously been that distracted by Derek that he’d completely forgotten one of the first steps
required when receiving runs.

“Oh my gosh, I’m so sorry sir,” he blurted, hurriedly grabbing the mouse and clicking it, “I thought I clicked it, but I didn’t. It’s already been dispatched, the ETA is thirty minutes.”

The man on the other line must have thought that Stiles was an incompetent loon when he made an amused sound of acknowledgement. “All right, thank you, sir.” The line went dead a second later and Stiles practically slammed the phone down to bury his face in his hands.

“I’m so screwed, and I’m not even getting laid.”

Of course, after that, the rest of the evening was disappointing in the area of Stiles attempting to woo Derek with his ineptitude. They got hit with runs that kept everyone busy for the last few hours until Stiles was locking up at eight without ever having seen Derek since lunch. Allison was outside, waving from her car as he made his way over.

“Hey Als, thanks for the ride,” he grinned, buckling himself in, “One of the drivers is supposed to be fixing my car this week, so hopefully this won’t happen that much.”

Allison, being her creepishly perceptive self, (seriously, why was Stiles related to his father, and not her?) stared at him for a long moment before she started the car. “Sure is a nice guy, fixing your car and all.”

“Oh my god, you don’t even KNOW.” Stiles cried, throwing his arms out. “I swear this dude is like, inhuman. He’s totally got this creepy ‘hello, Clarise’ stare and not-talk-to-you thing going on, but then he’ll turn around and be all nice and shit. But he hates being nice so when he does it you have to act like you don’t even realize he’s being nice. This one time—”

“At band camp?”

“Shut the fuck up.”

Allison burst into laughter, reaching out to pat Stiles on the leg sympathetically when he crossed his arms and slouched into his seat. “I’m sorry, Stiles, you set yourself up for that. Continue?”

Stiles huffed, but continued anyway, because all of these emotions were building up inside of him with more force than a mentos meeting a bottle of coke. “I don’t even know, Allison. He’ll act all irritated at me when I’m sending him on some calls, but then he’ll be super nice-but-not-really and do shit like bring me curly fries. He brought me curly fries, Allison! I had to shove my money at him just to keep from feeling guilty!”

Smothering a grin, Allison turned at the light and shook her head. “You really sound like you’ve got your hands full. I haven’t heard you this worked up since that time Lydia said you were cute.”

“Okay, dude, legitimate reason for a freakout. Nobody calls me cute, everyone calls me a spazz and - and a chipmunk! But never cute!”

“A chipmunk?” Allison asked incredulously. Stiles choked, his face doing that lets-start-our-owninternal-combustion thing again.

“Derek said I look like a chipmunk when I’m eating.” He breathed weakly. Allison laughed, the sound filling her car and making Stiles wish that he had a bucket of shame to put over his head.

They talked about classes for the rest of the ride, breaking only for Stiles to rant more about Derek and his ass that could rival Hercules’, until they pulled up into his driveway. Stiles gathered his
things, slipping out of the car with a farewell to Allison when she rolled her window down to call his
name.

“Hey, Stiles!” Stiles turned, and Allison gave him a wide, knowing grin. “Chipmunks are cute.”

“Oh my god, get out of here!” Stiles yelped, flipping her his middle finger and then practically
stomping his way into the house.

His dad wasn’t home, already out for the night shift, so Stiles scribbled him a message that he needed
a ride into work the next morning before hiking upstairs to shower and wind down before bed.

His lack of sleep from the night prior made it easy for Stiles to climb into bed after a game of Team
Fortress 2, jerk off, toss his soiled tissues in the trash, and pass out entirely.

The next morning was greeted with far less bed-intruders, until Stiles’ phone rang at a quarter to
eight and he scrambled to answer it after seeing Derek’s name on the caller ID.

“Are you awake this time?” Derek asked, his voice just shy of jesting. Stiles fumbled to finish
buttoning his pants, tripping over his backpack in his mad dash for the window.

“What? Oh my god, dude, are you here? Why are you here?” Stiles shoved his fingers into the
blinds, prying them open to see Derek’s truck idling in their driveway.

“… because you don’t have a car and you’re on my way to the shop?” Derek said slowly, like he
was attempting to talk to a man who had suffered a head injury and wanted to hop in his car and
drive off into the sunset.

“Oh… have you been waiting for very long?”

“Yes?”

“Oh. Okay. Be right out.” Stiles squeaked, scrambling off of his bed and shoving the rest of his
things into his bag before he tripped his way downstairs. His dad was asleep on the couch, still in his
uniform and apparently waiting for Stiles to wake him up so that he could drive him to work. Stiles
felt painfully guilty - his dad had probably gotten off work less than two hours ago, which made
Stiles an awful son for wanting to rely on him for transportation when he probably could have taken
the bus if he was really desperate.

Stiles approached his father, gently shaking his shoulder until he groggily looked up at his son. “Hey
dad, I got a ride. You can go to bed.” Stiles said softly. His dad grunted, yawning and rolling over.

“Okay. Cool. I approve of your new boyfriend.” Stiles’ dad muttered tiredly, burying his face into
the couch and waving Stiles away.

What.

“Why, father, why must you do this to me.” Stiles whined in mortification. His dad snorted,
murmuring incoherently in a way that made Stiles relatively certain that the man’s main goal in life
was to emotionally torture his son. It was to a point where Stiles was sure he would be doomed to
end up as the creepy old guy at the end of the block with forty cats and a collection of windchimes in
his yard.

Sighing dramatically, Stiles slipped out of the house and clambered into Derek’s truck. Derek didn’t
even bother to greet him, shifting out of park and instead grunting, “we need to stop and do a lockout
on the way in.”
A perfect opportunity to sit in the truck and lech on Derek, Stiles decided. “Okie dokie.”

It was, in fact, a perfect opportunity. Stiles got to hunch down in the passenger seat and watch Derek’s utterly delectable bum shift back and forth while fighting with the window to get to the lock. However, he wasn’t expecting Derek to suddenly turn around and catch Stiles staring unabashedly at his ass. Stiles instantly jerked his head back down to stare at his DS, returning to his pokemon battle and refusing to ever look at Derek again.

Ever.

When Derek got back in the truck, Stiles thought he was going to have a heart attack from sheer anticipation.

Someone, please, call Life Alert.

Obsessively mashing keys on his DS while Derek called the overnight service with his miles and sat back to fill out his paperwork, Stiles might have glanced up, like the masochist he was. The corner of Derek’s mouth was just shy of being pulled back into the tiniest of smirks.

Not that Stiles was looking, because he was totally playing pokemon without a care in the world.

“Hold this,’ Derek shoved his paperwork clipboard onto Stiles’ lap, knuckles dragging over Stiles’ thigh when he withdrew and making Stiles fumble not to drop it in retaliation to the sudden fire of excitement that it brought.

“Ooohkay,” Stiles stammered, clutching the clipboard and setting his DS on top of it so he could keep playing. He didn’t understand why Derek made him feel this way, it couldn’t have been the dark, brooding attitude - mostly because that’s what Edward Cullen did, and Edward Cullen creeped Stiles out more than the dude from Silence of the Lambs who wore other people’s skin and tucked his junk.

Derek shifted into drive, pulling out of the parking lot and onto the main road. Stiles threw himself into his game, attention focused enough that he was able to keep from rambling like a fool, for the most part.

When a song came on the radio that made Stiles cringe, he reached out to hurriedly change the station, hand wrenching back halfway to the button because Derek had a tendency to smack his hand. Not that Stiles minded when Derek touched him, but the hand smacking was just shy of painful (though, Stiles would be the first to admit that he wouldn’t be opposed to a little bit of spanking, if Derek was the one doing it) and completely unnecessary.

However, Derek didn’t even move. Instead, his face twitched and he reached out to change the station for Stiles, switching it from oldies to classic rock. Stiles grinned, scoothing back in his seat and saying, “much better. Rock is good, but eight minute guitar ballads are hit and miss,” with a wave of his hand.

“Agreed.” Derek muttered, nodding solemnly. Stiles couldn’t help but swell a little with pride. Not only had they made decent conversation, but Stiles had actually controlled himself from going on a rant about the pros and cons of listening to Guns and Roses while drowning one’s sorrows into a bottle of spiced rum.
We don’t talk about that night, though.

Derek dropped him off upon arrival, leaving right after to do another run that had come in during the trip to the office. Stiles got himself settled in for the day, humming under his breath because today was completely awesome and there was nothing that could make him think otherwise.

Of course, that confidence must have been the exact reason that everything went to shit just a few hours later.

----

The second that Isaac pulled into the garage, Stiles hopped onto the intercom to ask him to come into the office. Derek was in there, working on Stiles’ jeep and most likely talking to Isaac’s father, Mike, who a raging back of dicks. The guy was a decent driver, but he was an awful father that harassed Isaac constantly when he made mistakes, so Stiles went out of his way to try and contact Isaac properly whenever there was any miscommunication.

It was partially because Stiles didn’t want to hear Mike’s snide commentary, lest he go on a babypunching rampage, and partially because the words were cruel and biting. No child should hear that from their father, especially in front of coworkers. It made Stiles appreciate his own dad, because his dad was fucking awesome, okay.

When the door opened and Isaac came in with his father hot on his trail, Stiles held back the burning desire to just grab the phone and chuck it at the man’s head. Instead, he gave Isaac a placating grin and snagged his pen.

“Hey, dude, what were your miles on that tire change? I think you were mumbling ‘cause it was hard to hear you.”

Isaac opened his mouth to list the miles, but Mike was already jumping on the opportunity, coming up behind his son and slapping him on the back. It didn’t sound affectionate, it actually sounded pretty painful. Mike shot Stiles a grin, roughly holding Isaac’s shoulder and shaking him.

“Aw, don’t blame him. I bet his mouth’s sore from sucking too much dick. Boy needs to learn to speak up, huh?” Mike laughed, and Isaac’s expression took on a look of miserable humiliation.

Stiles’ had never been so infuriated in his entire life. Seriously, what the hell. How was that even work-appropriate. Actually, how was that appropriate in any context to talk about your son like that? Did this guy take his cues from Rush Limbaugh or something?

It wasn’t really Stiles’ fault that his brain-to-mouth filter completely malfunctioned. “I’m sorry, I don’t think I heard you correctly. Did you just make a derogatory comment about your son in reference to a sexual situation that should not be implicated as insulting?” He threw his arms out, gesturing to Isaac and watching Mike start to tense in preparation for an argument. “You didn’t? Because what I heard was you talking some bad mojo about your son and about what he does with his life.”

Isaac’s eyes went wider than Mike’s - which was a feat on it’s own.

“Excuse me, son?” Mike breathed, his hand falling from Isaac’s shoulder. It would have been intimidating, but Stiles was a) on a roll and b) in an office with cameras, which meant that only an idiot would actually go Tarzan apeshit on someone.
Stiles shrugged flippantly, bouncing his pen between his fingers. “I’m sorry, maybe you couldn’t hear me over the sound of your own ignorance.”

Jesus Christ, he was going to get his own ass fired for this.

Mike shoved Isaac out of the way, advancing for the desk so quickly that Stiles jumped to his feet and knocked his chair over. Isaac lurched forward, grabbing his father’s arm to try and pull him back. It had the opposite effect when Mike whirled around and snapped his fist right into Isaac’s cheek, knocking him to the ground.

Holy mother of God. He actually was an idiot.

“Woah!” Stiles cried, lunging past Mike to get to Isaac. “What the fuck is wrong with you, man? Are you a fucking Neanderthal? You don’t hit. Your son!”

Advancing on the two younger men, Mike’s finger came out to jab into Stiles’ chest. “You don’t tell me what to do with my kid.” His finger was actually more like a javelin of fury, hitting Stiles right in the sternum and making him want to uppercut the guy.

Stiles stiffened, positioning his body completely in front of Isaac’s fallen one and trying to make himself look like he wasn’t utterly petrified and running on adrenaline. “You know what? Get the fuck out of this office. You don’t work here anymore, and don’t think --”

He cut himself off with a startled yelp when Mike grabbed on to the front of his shirt, whirling the both of them around and slamming Stiles up against the vending machine - which was an old ass piece of shit made of nothing but metal and some plexiglass windows.

His head now knew this from personal experience.

Stiles struggled, shoving at Mike when he was shaken and bashed into the machine a second time. It made his head spin, and he absently wondered if maybe Mike habitually injected PCP into his eyes or something because this was just nuts.

“You’re just some punkass kid who works weekends here!” Mike snarled, pushing and pushing until Stiles was terrified that his chest was going to cave in from the sheer pressure. “You don’t know shit about how to raise a son!”

It was he was channeling his father in that moment, (kind of creepy, really) anger increased tenfold at the idea that someone would ever hurt their child. “I know you don’t hurt them and humiliate them!” Stiles cried, gasping for air and flailing his legs out. No matter how hard he fought back, thought, Stiles couldn’t get free. The man was like a fucking juggernaut, shoving forward and never moving back no matter how much Stiles pushed and kicked at him. Mike may have been thin, but he was nothing but wiry muscle from years of hauling cars for a living.

“Dad!” Isaac screamed, face blotching around the red welt blossoming on his cheek. He looked completely wrecked, tears filling his eyes with each passing second. Stiles felt kind of bad, in a way, because Isaac didn’t deserve to see any of this happening. Isaac didn’t deserve any of this, period. Not when he was crying, “dad, let him go!” as if frightened that Stiles’ life might actually be in danger.

“You shut the fuck up!” Mike roared, not even looking away from where he was staring into Stiles’ face as if he could murder him by sheer will alone. Stiles choked, hands coming to try and pry Mike’s fingers from his shirt when he saw the front door fling open in the corner of his eye.
Stiles had never been happier to see Derek in his entire life, even if Derek looked utterly livid. The only thing that could have made this better was if he was wearing less clothes and his entrance had been introduced with a vicious rock ballad. He was up behind Mike in a heartbeat, hand snagging the back of the other driver’s collar and wrenching him off of Stiles. Mike didn’t let go of Stiles right away, dragging him forward until Derek could get between them and shove them apart.

“Get the fuck out,” Derek barked, positioning himself between Stiles and Mike. Isaac’s father looked thrown for a moment, pointing at Stiles and opening his mouth to protest when Derek’s minimal patience snapped. “I said get the FUCK out!” Derek grabbed the front of Mike’s uniform, bodily hauling the man towards the door, jerking it open and shoving him outside.

“Go stick your head in the sink and cool off before you start looking for a new job!” Derek snarled, shutting the door as quickly as he could and snapping the deadbolt lock on it.

Stiles couldn’t seem to find the energy in himself to stand up from where he’d been tossed to the ground, because seriously - what the hell just happened? Was he high? Was he on acid? If he was on acid, he was tripping fucking balls.

Stiles wasn’t really sure when Derek had crouched in front of him, it probably didn’t help that his head was ringing so loud that it was deafening, and his chest was aching like a bitch.

“Hey. Hey- look at me,” Derek said softly, and wow, his hand was on Stiles’ chin. This would have been awesome in any other context except Stiles was having trouble processing what had just happened. It was like his memories were on a repetitive loop of the past three minutes.

“Stiles. Look. At. Me.” This time, Derek’s voice was firmer, something unreadable in the edge of how he spoke. He sounded… worried?

What the hell was he even worried about? It’s not like he had some crazy asshole trying to hulk smash his chest in.

Oh. Stiles hadn’t stopped staring at the door. He flicked his eyes to lock with Derek’s and holy mother of god, the guy looked fucking scared.

How was that even possible?

“Stiles, did he hurt you?”

Stiles’ brain hadn’t seemed to actually come back online until Derek was looked like he was close to grabbing Stiles’ head and shaking him like a rag doll. The computer gave a loud honk as a call came in, the sound shooting straight through Stiles and jerking him out of the shock he’d settled into. Everything hit him with a startling clarity, and Stiles tensed up as a hysterical rage welled up inside of him.

“NO!” He shrieked, shaking his head and sucking in a breath of air. “I mean, YEAH. A little! BUT NO. Ohmygod. What- what a fucking DICK! Seriously,“ Stiles’ body started trembling, his lungs constricting as he started to gesture wildly, “Did- did you SEE that shit? Wha- he fucking HIT Isaac! I’m… I’m so MAD. I’m so mad I - I can’t stop SHAKING.”

And fuck. He WAS shaking. His entire body was seizing up in tiny, jerking trembles that made him feel like one of those yippy dogs after getting a bath and acting like they were in the arctic tundra. His chest was killing him, every gasp accompanied by a sharp burst of main. Stiles brought his hands up, shoving them in Derek’s face to show him the way they couldn’t stop quaking.

Derek released a soft sigh, reaching out and taking Stiles’ hands for a second. “You’re fine, Stiles.” He set Stiles’ hands back into his lap, palm coming up and squeezing his arm before running down it
in a soothing pet. “Just sit tight, I need to check on Isaac, okay?”

“Yes…” Stiles replied faintly, slumping just the tiniest bit. He’d had his fair share of assholes, of people getting their kicks out of knocking him around, but he’d never seen so much hatred in a man’s eyes before. It was more terrifying than being on the internet at stupid in the morning and coming across that traumatizing flashing gif of the crazy inverted ghost chick with the screaming background noise.

Stiles pressed his hands together, rubbing them to try and coax the trembling to a minimum. He could hear Derek talking to Isaac in that same calming voice. The phone was ringing, but Stiles legitimately did not feel like answering it to talk to any one about any thing.

“I’m fine,” Isaac said shakily, “I’m fine. I’m… I’m sorry about my dad - I’m really sorry.”

Glancing up, Stiles watched Derek sigh and stand, carding a hand through his hair. “Neither of you two are fine. I’m calling the manager, and then I’m calling the police. Your dad’s stupidity just got himself arrested.” Derek’s voice was a low, frustrated growl, which only turned into a snarl and curse when he glanced out the window to see Mike peeling out of the garage in his car, tow truck left abandoned on the lot.

Absently, Stiles watched the car disappear down the road. Seriously - what a fucking prick. His dad was the sheriff, did the douchetit honestly think he was going to get away with this?

“Derek, you can’t-” Isaac cried softly.

Stiles watched Derek turn to Isaac, face clouding over in anger. “It isn’t up to you, Isaac. He attacked Stiles, too, and he would have gone after me if he’d had the chance.” Derek looked over at Stiles, which really made Stiles wish that he wasn’t still sitting on the floor like some sort of helpless damsel, because he suddenly had a pair of strong, warm hands cupping his elbows and helping him to his feet.

Lightheaded, Stiles took a second to gather himself, and pushed past Derek to circle the office. He was still way too freaked out to deal with customers, or insurance companies, or truck drivers.

Actually, he didn’t feel like dealing with anything.

He flapped his arms up and down for a second, trying to work out the excess adrenaline built up inside of him - it was something he did sometimes after panic attacks, too - and then pushed by Derek to go to his desk. Isaac was hovering in the corner of the room, face swollen and looking miserable.

Stiles righted his chair, sat down, exhaled slowly, and then grabbed the mouse to dispatch the call that had come in. He could feel the other two watching him, and yeah - he should say something….

Right now, though, he didn’t feel like initiating some deep, emotional conversation about the proverbial shitstorm that had just occurred. Derek approached the desk, eyes on Stiles for a second before he grabbed the phone and turned it to face himself.

He called the owner, first, who was a man Stiles had only met a small handful of times. The guy was a hermit who lived in his giant mobile home behind the office and only came out randomly to scare the shit out of Stiles by suddenly appearing from the back office to grab the newspaper. Stiles tuned out of the conversation, dispatching the call and then paging Boyd on the radio to send him on the run.

Derek called the manager next, a grouchy man named Robert Finstock, retelling the story and then
hanging up to call the police. Isaac was pressed up against the wall, sniffing and shaking and trying to keep himself together. Stiles kind of wanted to hug the guy, he looked like his entire world had just ended, but he really didn’t know if it was a good idea to get all touchy-feely right now.

When Derek hung up, he sighed through his nose and took a second to gather his thoughts. “The cops are out looking for your dad. Joe says you can go home, but I think it’s best if you went somewhere else. Do you have any friends you could stay with?”

“No,” Isaac choked, shaking his head, “not really.”

Another sigh left Derek, mind wracking for ideas. Stiles was on the verge of offering for Isaac to stay at his house when Derek spoke first.

“You can crash with me until the cops find your dad.” He said it so easily that Stiles couldn’t help but jerk his head up to stare at him, even though Derek was busy watching Isaac for his response. He was so open with Isaac, so friendly that it made Stiles worry that all the time he missed - the time Isaac spent hanging out with Derek in the garage - meant that he really had no chance at all against someone else. Isaac was quiet, like Derek, but kind and softspoken. He mumbled a lot, took a while on tire changes and things like that, but Stiles could see how it would be endearing.

Much more endearing than someone who talked too much and didn’t know when to stop.

“Okay.” Isaac said quietly, digging the heel of his palm into his eye and rubbing. “Okay…”

“Go ahead and get in your truck, I’ll be out in a minute.”

Isaac shuffled out of the room, leaving Derek alone with Stiles.

“I want to go after him.” Derek growled the instant the door was shut. Stiles glanced up from his paperwork, eyebrows rising. “I want him to get more than just an assault charge. He’s fucked that kid up, and he nee-”

“I know,” Stiles interrupted quietly, clicking his pen a few times, “I do too. We can all testify, dude. Every one of us has seen him hit Isaac. My dad is the sheriff, anyway, so y’know, I’m pretty sure I might be able to get Mike’s ass thrown in jail for a while.”

For a long moment, Derek just stared at Stiles, as if he was observing some new species of animal. Stiles felt nervous and jittery under his scrutiny, and he had to break eye contact to shrug and look away.

“How up, then. I’ll call around and see if I can get someone to replace Mike… and hopefully Jared will come in to do service calls for Isaac.” It was going to be hell trying to convince the drivers that weren’t on-call that weekend to come in, and even moreso the weekday service truck driver. Stiles was pretty sure the end of the day was going to end with his blood pressure exploding through the roof.

“Alright.” Derek tilted his head to Stiles and left.

Stiles stared down at his paperwork, counting the number of runs and deciding it would be better to wait until the other drivers were needed before calling them. It lowered the risk of people verbally abusing him over the phone.

Fuck. They were down three drivers for the next hour or so, and after that, they’d still be down two. Stiles only had Boyd until Derek got back. He reached for the phone to try and call Jackson just to be on the safe side - when the phone rang.
Stiles answered it quickly, stiffening at the sound of their manager on the other line.

“Bolinski! I watched the damn tape. You mind telling’ me what the hell you were thinking, talking back like that?” The sound of smacking gum was loud through the ear piece, and Stiles winced internally.

“Uh, sir, I was very upset. Slandering anyone is against company policy.”

“Huh…” A longer silence, more gum being chewed, and then a snort. “Knew I hired you for a reason, Bolinski. Keep up the good work - don’t give Derek any reward sex in the office. Keep that shit in the bedroom.”

Stiles literally choked on air, stammering uselessly for a second. “I - w h a t.”

“I’ve seen the tapes, Bolinski. I swear, the sexual tension between you? I’d need a chainsaw to cut through that shit. Now get back to work.”

The line went dead and Stiles temporarily wondered how many times a person could go into shock in one day before their brain finally gave up and vegetated itself. He set the phone back in the cradle, absently writing down the time on the dispatch sheet when Boyd informed him that he was done with his current run. He brought up the unlock that was across town, paging Boyd back to give it to him. He waited half a second, and then paged again to let him know that Mike and Isaac weren’t going to be working for the rest of the day, and that hey, sorry dude, you’re gonna be running around until I can call someone else in and Derek gets back.

With the police on the lookout for Mike, and Derek getting Isaac settled into his house or apartment or wherever he lived, Stiles started to work on autopilot. The second they got a run that Stiles knew Boyd would never get to in time, he called Jackson up. Halfway through the second ring, another line started to call and he hung up on Jackson to answer.

“Beacon Hills Towing,” Stiles muttered, rubbing a palm down his face and preparing to deal with some sort of angry customer.

“Hungry?” Derek grunted over the other line.

“Huh?” Stiles sat up.

“Are. You hungry.”

Startled, and mildly pleased, Stiles tripped over his words. “Yeah, kinda. I haven’t eaten today - I was gonna get something from the vend-”

“What do you want?” Derek didn’t even sound irritated at Stiles. Actually, he sounded pretty calm, which was probably more of a shock to Stiles than if he were being tased in the nipple or something.

“…. Chinese? Burgers work, too.” Truthfully, Stiles was pretty much game for any type of food because hello, food. Food was amazing. Derek huffed, the sound of a turn signal clicking in the background.

“… what DON’T you want.”

That was probably the best question anyone had ever asked him. “Tacos, or fish. Or anything containing onions.”

“Ok.” Derek hung up after an awkward pause in which Stiles wasn’t sure if he was done talking or
not. Sitting back in his seat, Stiles had to stop himself from grinning like the baby with the old man laugh. When he thought about it, a lot of stuff with Derek involved food. Maybe it was a secret code of theirs that he’d yet to really catch up on. What if Derek was actually trying to seduce Stiles through his stomach? It was legitimately possible, there was even a slogan all about it. Though, any time someone said it to Stiles, he instantly thought of people going into cardiac arrest due to clogged arteries from too much McDonalds.

Stiles could see himself going into cardiac arrest due to looking at Derek’s face for too long. There was such thing as death-by-pining, right?

Shaking his head to try and clear his mind, Stiles reached for the phone to dial Jared. The conversation was painful, mostly with Stiles apologizing and Jared cursing up a storm. He was only mildly shaken by the time he got off the phone, feeling just a tiny bit of relief that - despite being furious - Jared had agreed to work the shift.

Next on the list was to call Jackson again, since he was the first available driver with a wrecker.

Boyd and Danny were the main flatbed drivers on weekends, while Derek, Mike, Jackson and Brian drove the wreckers. Stiles didn’t really know Brian very well, he was an older man that was on parole and avoided the office like the plague because Stiles was the Sheriff’s son. Stiles didn’t mind, the guy creeped him out. The only downside was that he made Stiles’ life harder because Stiles couldn’t dispatch him to schools or parks, or generally anywhere that held an abundance of children.

Wreckers, or wheel-lifts, could tow almost anything, as long as there was minimal damage to the vehicle itself and it didn’t ride low to the ground. They had a giant hitch on the back for hooking the cars up to, while the flatbeds were pretty self-explanatory. Stiles, personally, wished that they had more than one flatbed truck on the weekends because a flatbed could tow two cars at once, which meant that two runs could be put together and cut down their ETA by a good amount of time.

Jackson picked up on the fourth ring of the second call, his voice a breathless snarl. “The fuck do you want, Stilinski?”

“I need you to come in and do some runs.” Stiles shot back, trying to keep the malice out of his voice. Everything about Jackson made him on-edge and hostile. He was one of the worst drivers on the team, always snarking about runs and demeaning anyone at any chance. The only person he held a soft spot for was Danny, who was his best friend/boyfriend and had gotten him the job in the first place.

“Bullshit.” Jackson spat. There was a rustling and the sound of hushed voices before Jackson spoke again. “Why the fuck do you need me? I worked last weekend, if you didn’t remember, fuckwit.”

“Hey, dumbass,” Stiles snapped before he could think about it, “Mike’s getting arrested and Isaac got sent home because his dad beat the shit out of him in the office. So, since you, y’know, never thought to report that shit in the ten years you’ve lived across the street from them, I think it would be a good idea for you to pick up the slack.”

God, Jackson pissed him off so bad. The guy had this ridiculous roid rage that made absolutely no sense to Stiles. He was always out for blood, never happy with anything. Stiles didn’t even understand what the guy’s problem was - he was getting laid on a regular basis and had a steady paying job with rich parents to fall back on.

“You little shit.”

“You know what? Fuck it, I’ll call someone else. Don’t even get out of bed.”
Stiles hung the phone up with a little more force than necessary, wincing at the crack of plastic on plastic and then taking a second to get his breathing back under control. He closed his eyes.

Zen thoughts, Stiles. Think of nice things.

Derek’s heavenly butt.

Sufficiently calmer, Stiles brought the phone back to his ear and dialed Danny’s number.

“Hello?”

“Danny, can you please come in and work today? I’m really sorry to ask, I know you were doing overtime all week, but some seriously ridiculous stuff happened and Jackson is being a total ass and-”

“It’s okay, Stiles.” Danny interrupted, breaking off to murmur softly to someone else in the room. It wasn’t hard to listen in, because Jackson was apparently the other person, and he was ranting and raving to a point where Stiles could hear him clearly.

“--fucking ridiculous, Danny! I haven’t seen you all fucking week an-”

“Hang on, Stiles.” Danny said before he muffled the receiver with his hand or something. Stiles sighed, because now he just felt like an ass. It was one thing to fuck Jackson over, because he fucked everyone else over, but Danny totally bent over backwards to help anyone out. Honestly, it freaked Stiles out how easily Danny could calm Jackson down. They weren’t very affectionate with one another in the shop or office, keeping minimal contact and bickering like a married couple half the time with both of their heads halfway inside an engine.

Stiles could only recall one time that he’d ever seen anything to indicate they were more than friends. Jackson had come storming into the office to chew Stiles out for something so idiotic that Stiles had utilized his amazing ADD ability to forget the issue entirely. Danny was there seconds later, a hand on Jackson’s chest to stop him from trying to pulverize Stiles, voice calm and full of reason.

It had actually been kind of hot, in all honesty. Jackson all raging and snarly, and Danny acting like it was utterly normal to lean in and kiss his glower away with a single peck to the lips. If Stiles were any more of a creep than he already was, he would totally have offered to voyeur in on some angry mansex between the two of them.

“Stiles?” Danny came back on the line, sounding slightly out of breath. “What do you need me to do?”

A relieved gush of breath escaped Stiles, pulling up the tow information. “I’m sorry, I really am. I can explain it to you when you swing by the office, but I seriously have no other choice, dude.”

“It’s fine, Stiles. Jackson’s just being Jackson.”

Stiles would have laughed, if he hadn’t caught the soft, hurt noise from somewhere in the background. He ignored it, because the concept of actually hurting Jackson’s feelings was like trying to fathom there was an actual sea animal that looked like a floating vagina.

“It’s okay. I still have twenty minutes left on it, so call me when you get in the truck.” “All right.”

Stiles hung up the phone, slumping across the desk and smacking his forehead into the wood. He took a second to breathe, reminding himself that Derek was on the way with food, and that he would eat and feel a hundred times better afterwards.
Right?

That had to be what would happen, because Derek was just nice to Isaac, and he was pretty sure that Derek liked him, he just needed a little more time to make sure.

Of course, they had to get slammed with runs the second that Stiles had finally relaxed for the first time since that morning. Stiles could feel his stress and anxiety shooting higher than a heroine addict when he had to start calling insurance companies back and placating customers who had been waiting too long.

Jesus, Stiles felt like crying by the time he finally hung up the phone for the last time. He wanted to crawl under his desk and sob his eyes out like Chris Crocker when someone talked about Britney Spears. The last time Stiles had felt so utterly drained, he’d gone three days on no-sleep and had been running on Adderall and energy drinks before crashing in a glorious display that consisted of passing out in the shower. That one had sucked, because his dad had come home and ended up dragging his ass into bed.

Seriously, when your parents tell you ‘I used to change your diapers, it’s nothing I haven’t seen’, it doesn’t really make you feel any better. As a matter of fact, there was distinct difference between the penis of baby Stiles and teenage Stiles. A. Very. Distinct. Difference.

It was a few minutes before Stiles could really register that everything was finally under control. He set his arms on the desk, burying his face into them and sighing. He was so exhausted that he didn’t even bother to look up when the door to the office opened. There was a rustle of paper packaging, the smell of hot food, and then a firm hand pressing into his back.

Starved for the comfort, Stiles exhaled and moaned softly in despair. Derek had some seriously magic fingers, or a knack for knowing exactly what was going to drive Stiles’ crazy. The weight of his palm was gentle, but with enough pressure that it sent tingles of relief through Stiles’ entire nervous system.

Did Stiles ever mention that he really wanted to just drape himself across the desk like a French prostitute from the 1700s and pronounce to Derek that his body was ready?

Derek started to move his hand, rubbing along Stiles’ shoulders and down his spine, massaging out the knots of tense muscles that had bunched up over the past few hours. It was better than ice cream, better than weed, better than that time Stiles had gotten a free blow job from some random girl at a party.

“I just want to crawl into bed and sleep forever.” Stiles groaned softly, whimpering when Derek’s nails dragged along his skin just the tiniest bit.

“No you don’t.” Derek said softly, fingers rising to pinch slow circles into the back of Stiles’ neck. If Stiles wasn’t so drained, he was pretty sure he’d have already creamed his pants by now. This was it, there was no way Derek wasn’t interested in him, not if he was touching Stiles like this, rubbing his back and being ridiculously nice.

“Dude, I totally do.” Stiles muttered absently, because he couldn’t just out and out ask Derek on a date. He needed to come up with a good segue into it, had to build up to the moment. He had to… He had to actually muster the balls to even say anything.

Derek snorted, reaching up and scratching the back of Stiles’ skull before drawing back completely. Stiles groaned at the loss, lifting his head from his arms to see Derek moving to grab the bag of fast food. “If you slept forever, you wouldn’t be able to eat this food.”
Stiles sniffed deeply, mouth watering at the scent of delicious fried things that would clog his arteries. “… food is good.”

“Food is very good.” Derek agreed, holding back a crooked grin and reaching into the bag to distribute the food. Stiles sat up, rubbing at his eyes and then almost squealing like a delighted three year old whenever Derek handed him a burger and an extra large carton of curly fries.

“Have my babies,” Stiles blurted, dragging the fries and the burger towards himself. Derek snorted, unwrapping his burger and shaking his head. Sweet Jesus on a rice cracker, he’d actually gotten Stiles large curly fries. This had to be love, no doubt.

“You realize that can’t actually happen, right?” Derek asked dryly, eyebrow rising up slowly in a way that shouldn’t have made Stiles want to lunge over the desk and molest his face.

“Shhh,” Stiles hushed, far too pleased with the delicious om noms before him to even muster a witty comeback. He dug into his food with gusto, stomach aching upon remembering that he hadn’t eaten since the night prior.

Halfway through finishing off the last of his fries, the computer honked with another run that was right down the road from the office. Given that Derek was the only one who wasn’t busy, Stiles had to hold back a huff of disappointment when he grabbed the reference paper to fill out for Derek. Luckily, Derek didn’t really have to leave for a good fifteen minutes - something Stiles secretly wanted to wiggle in his seat about.

He ripped the paper off once the information was filed out, handing it over to Derek. “It’s down the road, so you’re good for at least fifteen minutes.”

Derek took the slip, folding it and stuffing it in the breast pocket of his uniform. He sat back, eyes locked on Stiles with such an intensity that Stiles could feel the hair on the back of his neck rising.

“What?” Stiles brought a hand up, wiping at his face almost obsessively because having ketchup smeared in the corners of your mouth was completely unattractive. His hands came away clean and he frowned at Derek, head jerking in confusion.

“Isaac told me what you did.” Derek finally said, fingers twitching on the arm rests of his chair. Stiles had no idea where he was going with that sentence, so he clicked his pen and shrugged.

“Okay?”

“Pretty ballsy.”

Taken aback, Stiles couldn’t help but give Derek a sly, crooked grin and wiggle his eyebrows suggestively. “Well, I do have them.” Laying on the Stilinski charm, good one.

Derek scoffed, shaking his head. “He could have kicked your ass.”

“Dude, cameras.” Stiles gestured to the corners of the office for good measure. It was a godsend and a curse at the same time, especially after that awkward afternoon that their manager had apparently been watching Stiles blasting music and gyrating around the office while cleaning it.

That had been an extremely agonizing phone conversation.

One that we don’t talk about.
“He still would have done it.” Now Derek was starting to sound angry, voice getting flatter by the second as his eyebrows lowered and his lips thinned out.

Though this was true, it was entirely not the point that Stiles was trying to make. The best part about getting your ass kicked on camera was that it was on camera. Nobody could lie their way out of that kind of incriminating evidence. “Yeah, but he wouldn’t get away with it.”

Derek sat up sharply, face clouding over and growling low in his chest. “That is the most idiotic argument I’ve ever heard.” Angry Derek was actually kind of sexy, though Stiles would have rather the anger not be directed at himself when he hadn’t even done anything wrong. Seriously, it wasn’t like he was even telling any dead baby jokes like Scott used to back in middle school.

“I’ve been told many times that I’m really good at those.”

Derek stood up, tossing out his trash and approaching Stiles. “Don’t do stupid shit like that again. It isn’t your job to save people.”

“It’s my dad’s job. Call it osmosis.” Stiles shrugged, clicking his pen compulsively and scribbling a stick figure onto some scrap paper.

“Stiles.”

“Derek.” Stiles sniped back. Okay, maybe he was acting like a weenie about this, but he was 23 years old, he didn’t need other people trying to parent him when he’d been doing it since his mother died.

The sound that escaped Derek could only be called an animalistic sigh, hands fist at his sides before he slowly unclenched them and shook his head. “I’ll remind you the next time someone tries to beat you to a pulp and I’m not here to stop him.”

Stiffening, Stiles felt a burst of irritation shoot through him. “I don’t need you to save me.” “That isn’t what-”

It was like all of the stress from the entire day came out in one huge explosion, Stiles’ mouth moving before he could even think about what he was saying. “I’m not some helpless girl, okay?” Stiles threw his hand out before Derek could protest, shaking his head. “I’ve taken way worse beatings than some geriatric asshole who thinks it’s okay to knock his kid around. I’d rather fight for something I believe in than have it be over something stupid - like getting my ass kicked for being gay.”

Derek’s eyes went wide, but Stiles was already talking again. “I’m not even gay, okay! Equal opportunity bisexual and all that shit, yeah, but still - I wasn’t doing anything and they just beat the crap out of me because they could! Isaac goes through that shit every day, from his dad! So if I can stop one guy from hurting his kid, I’m going to do it - whether or not you’re there to help me.

Help. Not save.”

Wow, Stiles, way to overshare. Look, now you’ve scared Derek-the-probably-heterosexual off with your inability to keep your mouth shut.

Derek’s jaw was twitching from how hard he was clenching it. If the air conditioner wasn’t so loud, Stiles was pretty sure he would have been able to hear the sound of grinding teeth. Derek had this expression as if he wanted to punch his fist through the wall - or maybe Stiles’ face hands twitching angrily at his hips.
Dread filled Stiles’ gut the longer the silence went on, until he was ready to grab the boxcutter that Stacy the Crackhead had left there after she’d gotten fired just to have a means of self-defense. Stiles turned, fingers itching to open the drawer because he was suddenly, unrealistically, terrified that Derek was going to harm him.

“I don’t want you to get hurt.”

“What?” Stiles jerked his head up, eyes going wide. Hope shot through him in the beat of a heart, clutching to that single sentence like a lifeline. This was it, right? This was when things came to a head and Derek expressed his true feelings for Stiles and then kiss him roughly and passionately it had to be.

Derek looked like he suffering kidney failure or something, shoulders tightening and an irritated huff escaping through his nose. “You’re a good kid.”

Stiles felt like he’d been punched in the gut, bitterness rising up in him like a boiling volcano. “Oh. Yeah. A kid.” Of course Derek only saw Stiles as a kid - he was a good five years younger than the guy, if not more. It was humiliating to even think that Derek, might have been interested, might have talked to Stiles for any reason other than to humor him.

“Stiles.” Derek sighed. “That’s not what I -”

“Hey, look, you don’t want to be late for that call, do you? You’ve got ten minutes left, better get to driving.” Stiles butted in, trying to hold back that knife-edge of hurt that wanted to make it’s way into his words. Derek opened his mouth, like he wanted to say more, but Stiles couldn’t even bear to maintain eye contact. He clicked his pen a few times and turned back to his paperwork to fill in some of the empty time slots.

“Whatever.”

Derek left, the door falling shut behind him as if he’d never been there.

----

“He hasn’t come into th’office in DAYS, Scott! Plural! More’n one!” Stiles cried, voice muffled by the fur of Count Catula the 4th, Scott and Allison’s shorthair kitty companion. He pressed his face further into the cat’s stomach, cheek rubbing up and down the pliant feline’s belly and whining again. “He probably hates me now- an’ I bet he didn’t even mean what he said!”

Scott snorted softly under his breath, pausing his game to take a swig of rum from the bottle and then resuming his uncoordinated button mashing. “Dude, sometimes I think you use our friendship as an excuse to be with my cat.” So not true.

Tilting his head to the side so he could glare at Scott from where he was cuddling Count Catula the 4th, Stiles harrumphed and resumed nuzzling its belly. “Your cat is a better source of comfort for my self-loathing than you are. His fur absorbs my tears.”

Scott snorted softly under his breath, pausing his game to take a swig of rum from the bottle and then resuming his uncoordinated button mashing. “Dude, sometimes I think you use our friendship as an excuse to be with my cat.” So not true.

Tilting his head to the side so he could glare at Scott from where he was cuddling Count Catula the 4th, Stiles harrumphed and resumed nuzzling its belly. “Your cat is a better source of comfort for my self-loathing than you are. His fur absorbs my tears.”

“Dude… that’s kind of sad.” Scott pointed out, smiling nonetheless. Stiles was pretty sure he’d had more to drink than Scott, but that was okay because Scott had Allison and all Stiles had was Count Catula the 4th.

“Y’don’t understand me.” Stiles moaned, peppering the cat’s stomach with sloppy, drunken kisses and earning a purr of delight in return. At least kitty understood his problems and didn’t mind the fact that Stiles’ breath reeked of alcohol.
“Yes I do.”

“No you don’t.”

Sighing, Scott grabbed the bottle of liquor and shoved it at Stiles. “Here, drink more rum.” It was more glorious than the day Jesus had turned water into wine, only with less fanfare and more immediate gratification.

“I love how y’understand my needs, man.” Stiles sat up, taking the bottle and fumbling with the cap before he could get it off and slurp from it. It was the most glorious, delicious burn that tingled all the way down into his belly, warming him right up. Re-capping the bottle, Stiles plunked it on the coffee table and grabbed Count Catula the 4th, who flopped lazily in his arms as he was dragged into Stiles’ chest and snuggled affectionately.

“So wait. You got into a fight because he called you a kid?” Scott glanced at Stiles from the corner of his eye, brows furrowing in confusion, eyes glazed with the effects of alcohol.

“I kicked him outta th’ office cuz he was bein’ a butt.” Stiles muttered into Count Catula the 4th’s head, kissing it a few times because he couldn’t help himself.

“So he called you a kid.” Scott repeated flatly, looking back at his game and cursing when he realized that he was being attacked by a horde of angry chickens.

“I hate you.” Stiles mumbled. Count Catula the 4th made a ‘prrp’ sound of contentment when Stiles rubbed his lips between the cat’s ears in a drunken nuzzle.

“Dude.”

“I’m sorry, Scott. I love you. I didn’t mean it.”

Scoffing, Scott saved his game and closed out of it, grabbing three different remote controls to switch to another console while Stiles continued to smother with all the pent up love that he’d yet to use on Derek. He snagged a controller, shoving it at Stiles. “Play some violent video games, that’ll cheer you up.”

Stiles released Count Catula the 4th, letting the feline flop uselessly onto his lap and taking the controller from Scott. “I’unno, man. Like, I thought we had something’ good, right?” He mumbled, selecting a character on the screen. “He was totally all up in my grill like a love bug or something.”

“A what?”

“S’called a love bug.”

“Does that even exist?” Scott laughed, proceeding to open up a can of whoopass on Stiles ingame. Stiles cursed, shifting in his seat and violently hitting the buttons on his controller.

“Dude, totally.” Stiles squinted, hoping that if he focused really hard, he’d only see one television screen when there were two extra swimming around in his vision. “Anyway, talkin’ to Derek is like… talkin’ to a vulcan or something. Which, y’know, I wouldn’t mind a’bitta pon farr if that was on the’ table, an’ I totes thought it was- but it WASN’T.”

Scott shrugged with one shoulder, “Well, if you ask him out, the worst he can do is say no? I mean, half the crap that you say is offensive to someone, and he still hasn’t beaten you up. I think you’re good, man.” Scott nearly jumped out of his seat when Stiles threw the controller down and knocked Count Catula the 4th off of his lap.
“Y’r a genius! I loooove you, Scott!” Stiles cried, clambering across the couch and on top of Scott, because Scott seriously needed to know how much Stiles loved him right now. Scott grunted, elbowing Stiles in the chest before he found himself in a vice-grip of arms and legs that was enough to rival the intensity of a hug from Dr. Octopus.

“Ggghh, dude,” Scott grunted, still trying to kick the crap out of Stiles’ immobile game character when his arms were crushed together, “Cat. Use the cat!”

“No, man,” Stiles mumbled, pressing his face against Scott’s arm and squeezing him tightly, “Y’re m’best friend. I’ve b’n a bad friend. I miss you, Scott.”

It apparently wasn’t very hard to realize that Stiles was in his needy, affectionate drunk mode, because Scott quickly went limp. (Who do you think Count Catula the 4th learned it from?) Stiles released a giddy laugh, rubbing his face up and down Scott’s arm and breathing in deeply, comforted by the scent of his best friend. It had been a long time since he’d gotten to hug Scott, he’d forgotten how much he missed it.

“Aww, so precious.”

“Allison!” Scott cried, lifting his head to stare at his girlfriend from over the back of the couch.

“Help!”

Allison, having just come out of where she’d been studying in the bedroom, crossed over to rub the soft fuzz of hair on Stiles’ head, patting gently and earning a cat-like nuzzle from Stiles. She grinned at Stiles, smirked at Scott, and then headed to the kitchen.

“I see where your loyalties lie!” Scott cried, half of his words cutting off into a wheeze when Stiles squashed the breath out of him like a grizzly bear on ecstasy.

“I looooove you ALLISOOON!” Stiles yelled, breaking off into a laugh when Scott tried to wriggle free. It turned into a violently drunk wrestling match that only stopped when Scott used his feet to shove Stiles off of himself and onto the other end of the couch, holding him there with a foot to Stiles’ chest. Allison appeared again with two cups of water, handing one to Stiles.

“You should drink some water, sweetie.” She said. Stiles peered up at her, lips pursed and expression glassy as the last shot of rum finally sent him over the edge of lucidity.

“I don’t need water,” Stiles muttered petulantly, “Rum is my water… I’m like.. CAPTAIN. Jack! Sparrowwww- where’d the cat go?” Stiles picked his head up, blearily looking around for the cat and whining when he realized that Count Catula the 4th had fled the scene. He wriggled around on the couch, climbing back towards Scott, his unsuspecting victim, who was attempting to resume his game. Stiles tackled him into the arm of the couch, forcing a dismayed shriek from Scott.

“Let me love you, Scott!”

Allison laughed at her boyfriend’s dismay when Scott went limp again and wriggled his hands free so he could keep playing his game. “Wow… you’re really hung up on this guy, aren’t you?”

“Mhmm.” Stiles nodded into Scott’s shoulder.

Leaning against the couch, Allison frowned just the tiniest bit. “I haven’t seen you this drunk since you realized you wasted ten years pining after Lydia for no reason.”

The second he thought of Derek, Stiles released an exaggerated sob into Scott’s back, “Allison, you’re so meannn.”
“What? I’m making an observation.”

“Allison you’re not my friend anymore. Scott is my friend. Scott’s my best friend. Scott understands me. Scott -”

“Scott has to pee.” Scott interjected.

“Don’t pee on me, dude.” Stiles mumbled back.

“….you’re still hugging me, bro.”

“Ohmygod, you’re so demanding.” Stiles sighed, shifting and then rolling on top of Scott before he flopped straight off of the couch and onto the floor with a painful thud. A loud burst of giggling laughter tore from Stiles’ mouth, going lax on the ground. “I’m so drunk - I didn’ even fee-eel that,” he sang softly to himself. Scott stood, wobbling for a second and then maneuvering around Stiles to head for the bathroom. Allison went off in search of Count Catula the 4th, finding the cat lounging on a kitchen chair. She picked him up, sitting down and cradling the feline lovingly.

Scott slipped into the kitchen a few minutes later, taking a seat on one of the other chairs and running his hands through his hair with a sigh. He hadn’t had nearly as much to drink as Stiles had, only pleasantly buzzed instead of utterly shitfaced.

“Dude,” Scott mumbled, glancing up at Allison, “We should call Derek and make him listen to Stiles crying about his feelings.”

Allison shot Stiles a dirty look. “You’re an awful friend.,” she huffed, standing and setting the cat back on the chair before making her way into the living room. Stiles was still lying prone on the living room floor, eyes rolling around in his head and feet wiggling as he sang quietly to himself.

Scott trailed after her, watching Allison manhandle Stiles back onto the couch.

“What? I’m a great friend! I’m trying to cut out the middle-man here!” Scott protested. Stiles, leaning heavily on Allison, stared at Scott over her shoulder.

“Middle man? Whuh middle-man?”

“Don’t ask,” Allison cut in, pushing Stiles so that he dropped back onto the couch like a limpet. Stiles groaned loudly, spreading himself along the length of the couch and waving a hand around vaguely.

“I wanna be th’ middle man,” he mumbled, “the man in the middle of Derek an’ the bed. Uggghh,” Stiles groaned and dropped a hand to his face, “I wanna do uuunspeakable things to his abs. They’re like- they’re like Spartacus sexy.”

Stiles dragged his hand down to his chin, staring at Allison with wide eyes. “Allison, have you seen Derek’s abs? I meannnn he was totally wearin’ a shirt over ‘em but you could see the outline of ‘em through th’shirt. And thennn when he picks his arms up - uguuhh - he has this vein un’er his belly button. I want to suck on that vein. I want to suck on his di-”

“STILES!” Scott wailed, hands flying up to cover his ears. Allison cracked up laughing and Stiles began to spew drunken apologies as he struggled to sit up before he sighed and flopped back down again.

Scott grabbed Allison’s arm, dragging her out of earshot. “Allison, you have to do something!” He
hissed, gesticulating wildly with his free hand. Allison stared at him for a long moment before she shook her head.

“He just needs to spend time with his friend and not worry about this guy he’s totally gone over,” she pointed out, taking Scott’s hand from her arm and holding it gently.

Scott shook his head, “No, man. He wasn’t even this gone over Lydia. I’ve never even met this guy before, what if he’s just using Stiles? The dude’s like, thirty or something.”

“I think he’s 28.” Allison grinned.

“Close enough!” Scott cried, flailing his arms around. Allison’s face took on an expression like she was trying not to snicker, reaching out and cupping Scott’s cheek.

“Scott… are you scared?” Allison’s lips twitched with the effort not to grin in utter amusement.

Indignant, Scot wrenched his hand from Allison’s grasp and shook his head wildly.

“No! I’m not scared of anything, why would I be scared!?”

“Because Stiles has never had a relationship he was completely serious about, and now you’re afraid he’ll forget you and spend all his time with this new beau.” Allison supplied, knowing she’d hit a sore spot because Scott’s eyes went guiltily wide.

“NO!”

Chuckling, Allison set her hand on her hip and gave her boyfriend a knowing look. “You did that to him when we first started dating. I think it’s a legitimate concern.”

“I did not!”

“Honey, please.”

“Oh my god, Allison! You don’t understand!” Scott whined, sighing in defeated frustration when she leaned in to give him a sympathetic kiss on the cheek and flounced back over to Stiles. Scott crossed his arms, scowling and muttering, “That’s not true,” under his breath before he went to join them.

The next morning, Stiles woke up with a hangover that was violent enough to rival his 21st birthday. It was probably worse, in all honesty, because Stiles didn’t wake up the day after his 21st feeling like a horde of bloodthirsty leprechauns had been violently assaulting his brain with gold coins fashioned into shanks. He groaned, covering his face with a pillow before mustering the courage to roll out of bed when his bladder started to voice its complaints.

The blinds did little to protect his delicate eyes, and Stiles stopped at his desk to grab a pair of sunglasses, slipping them over his aching eyes and then shuffling down the hall to the bathroom. He felt like one of the zombies from a Romero film, groaning and bumping into the wall every few feet.

When Stiles finally made it downstairs, his father was sitting at the kitchen table, nibbling on a piece of toast slathered in jam and filling out paperwork. His dad barely glanced up at Stiles for a second before laughing softly under his breath and shaking his head.
“Fighting with your boyfriend?”

“Huh?” Stiles asked stupidly, wobbling his way to the fridge and then pressing his forehead against it and begging his stomach to stay stationary. What the hell did Stiles’ nonexistent boyfriend have to do with being hungover? Seriously- no correlation. Nope. Not at all.

“He showed up about an hour ago to drop your jeep off and left.” What.

Wait- what?

Stiles jerked his head up, wincing at the way his head spun with vertigo and then staring at his father. “He what?” Derek had been here? Derek had come by the house and pointedly ignored the fact that Stiles was upstairs? Not even a hello?

“You heard me.”

“Oh my god,” Stiles groaned, opening the freezer to shove his face into it, the cold air blasting across his flushed cheeks and making the throb in his head die down just the tiniest bit. He moaned again, because Derek obviously hated him and wanted him to die in a fire meant for a witch at the stake. This was so depressing, he didn’t even want to try and initiate an epic battle with his hangover and attempt to eat something for breakfast. Instead, Stiles thudded his forehead into the ice maker and whined to it, as if the freezer could understand his inner turmoil.

“Stop that, you’re going to let all the cold air out.” His father said, voice light with amusement.

“You don’t understand my pain, dad,” Stiles whimpered, slowly dragging himself back out of the freezer so that he could close the door. His father’s chuckle was like the mocking laughter of demon children, digging into Stiles’ wounded pride like a blunted butter knife. Stiles dragged his feet, treading back towards the stairs with his shoulders slumped in shame.

It took three hours of moping in his room before Stiles could get around to grabbing his phone and staring at Derek’s number in his contacts list. What could he even say? It wasn’t like they were dating; it wasn’t even like Derek was actually interested in him, right? All the lifetime movies in the world told Stiles that Derek would have tried harder to contact him if he’d actually wanted a relationship.

Then again, someone always died in lifetime movies, so they probably weren’t the best reference to go by for helping Stiles figure out what was going on in Derek’s head.

He pulled up a text to Derek, typing in ‘thanks for fixing the jeep’ and sending it before his balls shot back up into his body and he lost the courage to do so. He slumped in his desk chair, rocking it left and right for a few minutes in hopes that Derek would give him a prompt reply - until he realized that Derek was probably working anyway.

This in mind, Stiles flopped across his desk, lazily logging onto his computer with the intention of entertaining himself until Derek texted him back.

He wasn’t pining.

Girls pined.

Stiles didn’t pine.
Ten minutes and twenty-six deaths into Robot Unicorn Attack, Stiles’ phone went off with a text message. He scrambled to open the message, biting back the burst of anxiety in his chest when he read Derek’s simple, ‘we need to talk’ staring back at him. What the hell kind of text was that supposed to mean? Stiles knew for a fact that they weren’t dating, because he would be a lot less sexually frustrated if he had - at some point - gotten any amount of nookie. What kind of talk did they need?

Did Derek have AIDS? Or maybe just Chlamydia? Either way, Stiles could work with that; he could be supportive, invest in economy-sized boxes of condoms, go with Derek to clinic visits. He was willing to sacrifice things, he really was. Derek was essentially the only person besides Scott who put up with Stiles and his ridiculous jabbering - which was probably more grating than the mating call of a sandhill crane. Also, unlike Scott, Derek didn’t have extreme moments of derp that made Stiles want to shove his face into a blender.

Stiles fiddled with his phone, texting back ‘Sure. When?’ and resuming his game with a defeated sigh.

‘I’m off at 5.’ Derek texted a few minutes later. Stiles gave the message a blank stare before he slowly answered, ‘…okay?’

‘Come over.’

Stiles squinted, checking the contact number to make sure it was actually Derek he was talking to. What if Derek wanted to secretly murder him? Or what if this implied the possibility that Stiles was going to get laid? Actually, no, that was a creepy pickup attempt, even for Derek. In fact, Stiles felt it pertinent to inform Derek of how creepy his text message really was.

‘…that sounds really creepy.’

‘Stiles.’

Sweet baby Jesus, Stiles could actually hear Derek’s voice in his head, that typical little growl of Stiles’ name that was always added with mild irritation. It was sad how just thinking of Derek’s voice made Stiles squirm in his seat and start thinking about other ways he could get Derek to say his name.

Like in the throes of orgasm or something.

Yes, that was a nice thought.

Stiles’ mind wandered into dangerous territory for a second before he remembered that he’d yet to respond to Derek’s text, shooting him a quick ‘ok’ and then returning to his computer.

By the time five o’clock rolled around, Stiles was on the brink of an anxiety attack. He’d jerked off, showered, changed three times, organized and re-organized his laptop bag before finally grabbing his phone to text Derek ten after with, ‘on my way,’ and stare forlornly at his phone like Derek’s response would come back in the beat of a geriatric heart. He’d already grabbed his keys by the time Derek answered, face falling when he read ‘no. wait 15 minutes.’

It was going to take him that long to get there, which meant he was waiting, right? It was fifteen minutes either way. Derek must have meant that he wasn’t going to be home for fifteen more minutes, in which Stiles would get there around the same time that Derek did.

If he didn’t leave now, Stiles was going to crawl out of his own skin with anticipation, anyway.
He hopped into his jeep, making sure to stay within the speed limit just to buy some extra time for Derek to get home. The only reason he knew where Derek lived was because the GPS on the computer at work listed everyone’s addresses when they were at home, and Stiles may have possibly used google to see if he really was on Derek’s way to work those days Derek had given him a ride to the office.

He wasn’t. Which was why Stiles was at least 60% sure Derek wanted in his pants at least a little bit.

Pulling into the parking lot for Derek’s apartment, Stiles caught sight of Derek’s truck sitting in front of a parking block labeled B2. He grinned, locking his jeep up and making his way to the second floor, knocking loudly on the apartment door of B2.

It took a long moment for Derek to answer, and when he did, he cracked the door open and glared through the small bit of space to growl, “I said wait fifteen minutes,” in a low and irritated voice.

Really, that voice shouldn’t have made Stiles’ dick twitch the way it did, but what can you do?

Stiles offered Derek his sweetest, most ignorant grin. “It’s been that long since you told me to wait.”

Derek clenched his jaw, huffing an annoyed sigh through his nose and pursing his lips. “When I said wait, I meant wait to leave.”

Oh, so Stiles maybe had jumped to conclusions just the tiniest bit. It wasn’t like he could Marty McFly himself right back to 5 o’clock, now, right?

Stiles couldn’t help it if his face fell just the tiniest bit, shrugging absently. “Oh… well. I’m here now.”

“Hang on.” Derek shut the door in Stiles’ face, the sound of movement coming from the other side. Stiles panicked - what if Derek had a lover over? A booty call? Derek could probably get all the booty calls he wanted with those abs. Was he trying to hide his aforementioned call of the booty from Stiles? That wouldn’t do, not if they were supposed to have a talk. Stiles needed everything out in the open.

“Fuck it.” Chest tight, he grabbed the handle and twisted, preparing himself for epic disappointment when he pushed the door open. He expected to see Derek half naked, maybe a girl or guy struggling to get their things together, or possibly even Derek trying to clean up his apartment.

What he didn’t expect was to catch Derek walking by the door with an armful of toys or something, making a beeline for the hallway closet that was stuffed with posters and other random junk.

Derek froze the second he heard the door open, head snapping to stare at Stiles like a deer in the headlight with eyes widened to the point where it was unnaturally comical. That’s when Stiles actually took note of what was in his arms.

Tons of wolf figurines.

He looked over to the closet, where a half-folded poster of a wolf pack was shoved in with three different realistic looking plush toys of the same animal. Derek looked like he was about to have an aneurysm, which would have been adorable if it weren’t for the fact that Stiles was trying to get on his good side. Seriously, though, how much wolf paraphernalia could one man have?
Stiles slowly stepped back out of the doorway and into the hall, shutting the door again after one final glance at Derek’s petrified expression.

Pressing his forehead against the door, Stiles couldn’t help but grin like a madman, barking out a laugh and then smothering it with his hand. It was - what - just - Derek’s scary tough guy façade had been completely shattered in just five seconds of looking around his apartment. Stiles didn’t want to laugh, he really didn’t, because laughing at Derek would seriously set back the progress they might be making.

Instead, Stiles smacked at his cheeks to try and use pain as a means of getting rid of the idiotic grin he knew was plastered all over his face. He’d barely gotten himself under control when the door opened and Derek’s mortified expression almost set him off again. Stiles bit down violently, oh so violently, on the inside of his cheek, chomping off a good hunk of skin and filling his mouth with blood as Derek stepped aside to let him into the apartment.

“Uh,” Stiles ventured, offering Derek a tentative grin that he hoped didn’t look too terribly amused, “So… you like wolves?”

If looks could kill, Derek’s expression would have stabbed Stiles through the gut and wrenched his entrails out across the floor.

Medusa didn’t have shit on Derek.

Stiles took a step back just to make sure Derek didn’t want to bite his throat out (there were only two possible ways that throat biting could not be intimidating, and Derek didn’t look like he was in the mood for either of those) and glanced around the room. The shelves were relatively barren, save for a few trophies and some photos of people Stiles had never met before.

“Uh, so… you wanted to talk?”

“Wolves are amazing animals,” Derek blurted, though it sounded more like a bark that commanded Stiles to agree with him. Taken aback, Stiles couldn’t stop himself from releasing a startled laugh, nervously shifting towards the couch.

“I guess? I like foxes.”

Derek scoffed so loudly that Stiles legitimately felt offended. He sat on the couch - even though Derek hadn’t actually told him to - and crossed his arms. “Foxes are clever, and fantastic.”

“That’s a ridiculous trope,” Derek shot back vehemently, shutting the door and crossing over to loom by the couch with his arms crossed, “They’re obnoxious, and they jump on your trampoline and get it dirty.”

“Why do I get the feeling you’ve had this discussion before?” Stiles ventured, ignoring the desire to lunge across the room and smother Derek’s flushed cheeks in baby kisses and coo about how precious he was. It was with relative certainty that Derek would probably defenestrate him if he tried.

“Oh, once or twice,” Derek admitted begrudgingly, turning and heading into the small kitchen attached to the living room. “Do you want something to drink?”

Oh man, hospitality. Stiles must be tripping balls again. What if his body was sporadically releasing DMT into his brain for shits and giggles? It was a possibility - more believable than the fact that Derek had an unhealthy obsession with wolves.
“Water’s fine.”

The small apartment was filled with the sounds of Derek fussing about in the kitchen as Stiles examined the living room. “So, where’s Isaac?”

“Went to live with his aunt.”

“Ah…”

Derek returned with a mug of water, handing it to Stiles. “Stop looking at me like that.”

Stiles doubted Derek could read it ‘I want to touch your body with my mouth’ expression, and probably mistook it for something less provocative. Miffed, Stiles took a sip of water. “Like what?”

“Like I’m crazy.”

Stiles laughed, because - seriously? Derek would be upset at the idea of Stiles thinking HE was crazy? Everyone thought Stiles had completely gone off of his rocker since his first dose of Adderall back in 5th grade. In fact, the only way Stiles could seem even more insane was if he started cult-worshipping Tarentino films and running around carving swastikas into people’s foreheads.

“You’re not crazy. You just uh.. Really like wolves.” Stiles pointed out, gesturing vaguely, “Wolves are cool. I mean, everyone like wolves, sometimes people out there think they’re werewolves. Did you know that’s an actual illness? The term lycanthropy is derived from a madness in which certain people would be convinced that they could shift into man-eating wolves on the nights of the full moon.”

“Wolves don’t eat people.” Derek muttered, hovering by the couch again like the creeper he was and digging his hands into the pockets of his jeans.

His very nice, very fitting jeans.

Stiles took a second to appreciate the way they hugged Derek’s thighs and accentuated the curves of his calves before he realized that Derek was watching him.

“I didn’t say they did.”

“Wolves are harmless.”

“Until they eat you.” Stiles interjected. Derek’s nostrils flared in irritation.

“Stiles-”

“I’m kidding!” It wasn’t like Stiles could help it, he may have been having a slight anxiety attack over the fact that Derek was actually having a normal conversation with him. Well, normal as in Stiles wasn’t the one completely filling the silence with inane babble.

“Wolves don’t hurt anyone. Humans hurt people. Do you know what they do in Alaska?” Finally, Derek approached the couch to stiffly take a seat on the end opposite to Stiles.

No, he didn’t know, because they lived in California and Stiles had an allergy to politics and Fox News. He fiddled with the rim of his mug, shaking his head and gesturing for Derek to continue, because Derek’s voice was like the sweet molasses of sexual pleasure - music to Stiles’ ears.
“They hunt them. From helicopters.” Derek hissed. Stiles choked on his water, eyes going wide.

“Who does that?”

“Hunters! Did you ever even pay attention during the presidential election with McCain? Palin was a horrible candidate for vice president!”

“Wait, what?”

It was like unleashing the kraken, really. Derek threw his hands up in the air with a frustrated snarl. “Palin! That crazy bitch wanted to put bounties on wolves! She tried to pay people to hunt them and- and cut their left foreleg off to bring in for money! Who does that?!?”

“Helicopters?” Stiles echoed weakly, feeling a little blindsided by the fact that Derek was actually expressing emotion other than benign amusement and annoyance. Derek nodded, another growl escaping him.

“With guns. From helicopters with guns.” Derek affirmed, lips pursing into a thin line, “That woman has no soul.”

It was the first time Stiles had ever seen Derek so passionate about anything, eyes drifting down to the mug in his hands and staring at the canvas panting on it of a pack of majestic wolves and Jesus fucking Christ, this man was adorable. He listened absently as Derek listed the reasons why they justified hunting wolves, and how their argument was completely biased on the fact that Palin has apparently never met an animal she didn’t want to kill.

A thought drifted through Stiles’ mind, unable to engage his brain-to-mouth filter before he was blurting, “Does this mean I shouldn’t eat animal crackers with wolves on them?”

“-ch is completely idiotic. There’s a high enough moose to wolf- no, there aren’t any wolf animal crackers - to wolf ratio that hunting them to increase moose game is an irrelevant and bullshit argument.”

Oh my god, he’s checked. What - when - Stiles couldn’t even compute the level of ridiculous endearment he was feeling at the moment. He just wanted to buy Derek all of the wolf puppies in the world and dump them on the man to see if Derek would actually squeal in delight. Derek seemed to realize that Stiles was having an internal conniption fit because his mouth snapped shut with a click of teeth and he shot Stiles a defensive glare.

“It was a legitimate curiosity!”

Stiles knew he was grinning like a loon, but he didn’t care. It took all of his self control not to drag Derek into a hug and tell him that there would be no judgment from Stiles, because Stiles himself was far worse when it came to obsessions. Derek fell silent, face red and his fingers curled into fists on his knees. It made Stiles wonder how often Derek talked about the things he cared about and enjoyed, because it wasn’t hard to figure out that the guy was growing increasingly uncomfortable.

Clearing his throat, Stiles set his mug on the chipped end table next to the arm of the couch. "I feel better, knowing that you can y'know, actually chill and talk about shit sometimes.”

Derek stiffened, his jaw flexing and his focus sliding to stare blankly at the small television mounted on an old entertainment center. “I don’t talk to people I don’t trust,” he said quietly, much more like the stoic Derek that Stiles knew, and not the passionate man he’d seen just seconds before.

It was still confusing as hell, though. Did that mean Derek trusted him? HIM? Stiles Stilinski? The
spastic kid who always tweaked out on Adderall in high school and scared everyone off except for Scott and Allison?

“So wait,” Stiles scowled in confusion, “You’re talking to me, now… so what does that mean?”

Derek turned to face Stiles, his expression falling into a very familiar stare of utter disgruntled bitchiness. “Would you like more water?”

Stiles squinted, resisting the urge to mutter, ‘not sure if angry, or just emotionally constipated,’ under his breath. Instead, he pursed his lips and attempted to lay on the old Stilinski charm by blurting out, “I could do with something a little… harder.”

It was almost disturbing how Derek was able to stare back at Stiles without blinking once. “I have beer,” he said slowly, cautiously.

Stiles narrowed his eyes, echoing the tone of Derek’s voice, “…harder.”

“…. pudding?” Derek ventured, as if pudding was actually a viable option when Stiles was demanding something harder than beer. In actuality, Stiles had no idea what either of them was talking about anymore, because all he really wanted to do was to have Derek shove him up against the nearest hard surface and fuck him raw.

"What?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Stiles." Derek said in exasperation, shrugging dismissively.

There was no possible way that Derek was actually this thick. Unless it was in reference to his penis, which, Stiles would be pleasantly delighted to find out the if it was a nice level of thickness Thick and huge, and filling and - wait.

No, he was trying to have a damn conversation here, and Derek was distracting him without even trying. “Where the fuck are you getting pudding from?”

"I don't know! It has a thicker consistency?” Derek cried. Stiles zeroed in on the word ‘thick’ again, but shook his head to try and dispel the lewd images that came to mind, instead throwing his hands in vague, frustrated gestures. He knew when he was being fucked with, and Derek was fucking with him royally. So royally that Stiles was wondering if he had a Prince Albert hidden down in his Not even going there.

“Are you just faking stupid to avoid the elephant in the room?” He blurted, eyes going wide when Derek went silent for a prolonged minute in an attempt to come up with some sort of argument.

Oh my god, he was! “You are!” Stiles shouted, throwing an accusing finger in Derek’s face, “Oh my god, dude!”

It was like someone had replaced Derek with some kind of socially deficient clone who didn’t know how to have a regular conversation…

Wait, no. He was definitely talking to Derek, if that was the case.

Derek was starting to look like he’d rather be kicked in the balls by a moose, shifting in his seat and releasing a pained sigh and setting his palms out in a placating gesture. “Stiles, look-”

“What? Don’t tell me you can't totally pick up on the fact that I want to have gaybies with you.
I'm pretty sure I lack subtlety in that department.

It was like watching someone feed a lemon to a toddler as Derek’s expression took on an extremely pinched look. Stiles wiggled his arms around, adding, “Either you want gaybies with me, or you don’t. I’m getting really discouraged here when I try to get up in your shit and you do that creeper smirk but you don’t give me any signals that really define ‘yes’ or ‘no’.”

Derek opened his mouth, but Stiles was on a roll, eyes going wider in panic because his mouth was apparently on strike from communication with his brain right now. “I mean, I get it if you aren’t into me, but you can’t lead me on by-”

“Yes.”

“-acting like you think- what?”

That intense stare was back on Derek’s face again as he gritted out, “Did you want more water, or not?”

Seriously? Was it that fucking hard for Derek to establish a basic means of communication? Did he have some kind of shock collar attached to his dick that sent a zap through his nutsack every time he expressed any sort of understandable conversation that pertained to whatever he and Stiles didn’t actually have?

"I want you not to act emotionally constipated." Stiles snapped, his chest growing tighter as his anxiety grew. Oh hell no, he was not going to have a damn panic attack over whether or not Derek liked him. He'd spent ten years crushing on Lydia, and barely two months pining after Derek. The possibility that his feelings wouldn’t be reciprocated should not have been such an issue that Stiles had to try and remember if he’d left his inhaler in his jeep.

"Stiles."

"What's the issue here?!" Stiles exclaimed, throwing his arms up in the air and trying to ignore how hard it was getting to breathe, “I like you - you maybe like me. Not a big fucking deal. I don't know what you're tripping out about."

Derek sighed, running his hands through his hair and pulling an expression of extreme frustration before he looked away to mutter, "I'm not a good person."

That was the most ridiculous load of crap Stiles had ever heard. It was worse than the ‘its not you, its me’ speech - especially because it usually WAS Stiles. It didn’t matter either way, because

Stiles had already covered this issue three weeks ago.

"Uh. dude. my dad's the sheriff."

Derek snapped his head up to stare at Stiles with wide eyes. "What?"

"You think I didn't look up your criminal record the second I realized you had a nice ass?" "... what."

Okay, talking about Derek’s ass was probably not a good segue into an emotional conversation, but it wasn’t like Stiles was a prime example of what-not-to-say when it came to people he wanted to do the horizontal mambo with. "Which, by the way, I totally was checking it out. But - yeah, anyway. You had a dropped arson charge, that was it."
Now Stiles was starting to sound like the creeper. "Okay and some misdemeanors and an assault charge but whatever. no big deal, man. You've got nothing on your record in the past three years, so you obviously aren't that bad."

The look Derek was giving him was making Stiles start to feel like he was at fault - which he totally wasn't. Derek was the one talking about investigating legitimate curiosities. There wasn't that big of a difference between whether they made wolf animal crackers and whether Derek was a former fugitive, right?

"What? It's totally legal to look up someone's criminal record!"

Derek adapted an extremely intense look on his face, one that Stiles couldn't even begin to classify - but he wasn’t angry. That was a start.

Stiles patted the spot next to him on the couch in an attempt to coax Derek into scooting closer. Derek didn’t move, and Stiles sighed before pulling his hand back. "I don't know what you think is wrong with you, but it can't be much worse than me. I've never had a relationship last more than four months."

Derek shifted, crossing his ankles and mumbling, "I've only had one."

"Oh..."

"She set my house on fire."

".... oh."

"My whole family died."

Well, now Stiles just felt like an unmitigated bag of raging dicks. "... awkward."

Hand falling to his jeans, Derek started to fidget with a loose thread in a manner that reminded Stiles so much of himself that he kind of wanted to cuddle all of Derek’s sadness away. It was probably too soon for corporal snuggling as a means to abolishing heartache, so Stiles kept himself rooted to his corner of the couch. Derek exhaled slowly through his nose, jaw flexing. "She was schizophrenic....insanity plead."

"... okay so, trust issues totally make sense here but I swear I'm just really ADD. I don't even like setting things on fire. In fact, I hate fire. Fire hurts. Fire sucks."

"Stiles."

"Oh-my-g o d. I'm sorry." Stiles moaned, sinking down so far into the couch that his ass was threatening to slide off completely. He hated talking about cancer because it made him think of his mom, and here he was spewing crap about how much fire sucked and Derek’s family had been essentially burned to death.

Derek made a soft, painful laughing sound that reminded Stiles of a goose being strangled with a gum wrapper. Stiles buried his face into his hands because he could NOT look at Derek right now without wanting to run into oncoming traffic out of sheer mortification at himself. He almost jumped out of his skin when Derek’s hand landed on his shoulder, giving it a firm squeeze.
“You’re a great ki- you’re smart. Stiles. You deserve better… and uh… I’m..” “Not ready.” Stiles supplied, dread filling him up to the point of suffocation.

“Yeah.” Derek agreed weakly.

“For a relationship.”

“… yeah.”

Derek sounded like someone had kicked his wolf cub across the street, shoulders tensing like he was prepared for Stiles to go apeshit and start throwing chairs into the wall or something.

Actually, he was acting like he didn’t want to turn Stiles down, but he felt it necessary. Obviously Derek had some baggage that Stiles wasn’t going to be able to relieve him of by sucking his misery out through his dick.

“I’m just going to have to convince you.” That’s right, Stiles, be the HBIC of the situation.

God, his inner voice was turning into Allison after a few too many martinis.

“Yea- what.” Derek stared at Stiles, mouth gaping.

“I need to go home and devise a working method to convince you.” Stiles stood, nodding to himself and to Derek. There was no way he was going to lose this kind of opportunity because of some crazy chick who liked to set people on fire - no way, no how.

“What.”

Now to sweeten the deal, make Derek want Stiles to convince him. Inner-Allison was starting to get a little pushy, because Stiles was crossing over to the other side of the couch before he could stop himself. Derek was watching him with wide eyes, leaning back as Stiles bent down.

Do it, just do it. Come on Stiles, don’t wuss out. Don’t be old Stiles - be new, bold, fabulous Stiles. Now was not the time to be self-loathing. Now was the time to make Derek want to regret ever having doubted what you could offer him.

Wiping his palms onto his thighs, Stiles was halfway to grabbing Derek into a kiss when he chickened out and turned tail, making a beeline for the door before he’d even processed the fact that he was five seconds away from attempting to play tonsil hockey with Derek.

“Bye, Derek!” Stiles squeaked, his voice cracking as he wrenched open the front door.

“What.”

Stiles caught a glimpse of Derek sitting on the couch with a gob smacked look before he shut the door and hightailed it to his jeep like his ass was on fire.

----

“I don’t know, Stiles,” Isaac muttered, shifting from foot to foot and wincing when Stiles started to wave the stuffed animal in his face, “Derek doesn’t like when other people mess with his truck.”

Stiles sighed in irritation, wanting to really just pelt the toy wolf at Isaac’s face in a fit of aggravated assault. Oh, the woes of security cameras monitoring his every movement. “Derek isn’t even
working this weekend, he won’t know it was you.” The drivers all worked every other weekend, which was something that depressed Stiles just the tiniest bit, but also gave him an opportunity to use his inherent Stilinski Stealth Seduction Skills (title pending) to further ensnare Derek with his irresistible charm.

“I mean, I know he likes wolves, Stiles, but I don’t think he’ll appreciate you making fun of him like this.” Isaac muttered uneasily, shoving his hands into his pockets and giving Stiles a weak shrug. Stiles scoffed, because making fun of Derek was worse than mocking a puppy by pretending to throw a tennis ball and then hiding it behind your back. The mere idea made Stiles feel guilty. Stiles didn’t like feeling guilty for no reason, especially when Isaac just assumed that he would go out of his way to do something as ridiculous as mock Derek.

Rude.

Scoffing, Stiles waved the toy again, pushing himself so far to the edge of his seat that he had to grab the desk to keep from falling over. Isaac still didn’t reach out, and Stiles huffed, “I’m not making fun, I’m wooing him.”

Isaac squinted, as if such a concept was nonexistent in his vocabulary, looking up at Stiles in confusion. “You’re what?”


“….” Isaac didn’t move - almost like he was a creepy, nervously positioned statue that had been planted in the middle of the office.

Stiles growled out another aggrieved sigh, “Just put the fucking toy in his truck or I’m making you do tire changes all weekend.”

Oh good Lord, Isaac actually had an expression besides confused! Stiles grinned in response to the irritated scowl that was shot his way, handing the wolf plushie over when Isaac reached out with a sigh. It was kind of like being a pregnant woman giving her child over - Stiles was almost sad to see it go, but then he remembered that he could have joint custody with Derek if this plan worked out.

Isaac fiddled with the stuffed animal, petting its head and turning it around in his hands. “It’s soft… how much was it?”

“Price is not a concern,” Stiles blurted airily, leaning back in his chair and snatching up his pen.

Isaac’s left eyebrow rose high up into his bangs, smothering an amused grin.

Stiles wanted to stab that grin right off his face. Isaac was not allowed to smirk at him like that. In fact, the only person allowed more than minimal smirkage at Stiles’ person was Derek, and that was only if there was a certain level of sexual frustration involved.

“Oh, okay, then…. ” Isaac slipped out the door and Stiles sighed loudly into the empty office, twirling his chair around and then glancing at his dispatch sheet to make sure it was completely filled out. Sunday night meant he had to double-check all of his paperwork so that there was no confusion when Nancy, the older woman who worked weekday mornings, opened on Monday.

The only downside to Stiles initiating the ninja-phase of operation: Wooing of the Wolf, was that he wouldn’t be able to see Derek’s reaction to the stuffed plushie on Monday. He’d have to wait.
Waiting sucked. It was more agonizing than if he was having irritable bowel syndrome and they were slammed with so many calls that he had to clench for three hours.

After glancing over the sheet one last time, Stiles dragged a bit of scrap paper over and stared down at the list he’d compiled earlier. He clicked his pen a few times - because clicky pens were awesome - and then crossed out the first item, ‘gift him with wolfy things’ before skimming down the bulleted list.

Gift him with delicious foodstuffs
Gift him with long hauls
Call him during aforementioned long hauls to chat it up
Clear his record

Stiles set his pen down when he reached that one, snagging a highlighter and going over ‘clear his record’ with hot pink. Stiles scowled - because that plan had failed miserably when he’d brought up the subject with his father - and took a second to write down next to it, mission failed: try again when Dad has been drinking.

The last item on the list was to find out more about Derek’s ex. It had taken a lot of pestering and sneaking into his dad’s office to find out that the woman’s name was Kate Argent. Stiles had been a little taken aback, the only Argents he knew of were Allison’s family, so it probably wouldn’t hurt to actually ask Allison if she was related to a crazed pyromaniac

That in mind, Stiles grabbed his phone, shooting Allison a quick text of, ‘Are you related to Kate Argent?’ and then dropping his cell onto the desk and staring at the clock and willing it to go faster. He’d barely contemplated grabbing his Nintendo DS when the phone started to ring.

“Beacon Hills Towing, this is Stiles.”

“She’s my aunt, why? What’s wrong?” Allison blurted from the other line. Stiles was momentarily taken aback, surprised she’d remembered not to call his cell when he was at work.

Good girl, Allison.

“Uhh,” Stiles began, scrambling to think of an easy way to say what he wanted and realizing it was pretty useless. “So… your aunt burned down Derek’s house and killed his whole family.”

“THAT DEREK?” Allison shrieked, so loud that Stiles had to wince at the pitch and resist the urge to ask her if she had any harpies in her bloodline.

“Small world, huh?” Stiles muttered weakly, shrugging to himself. Allison sighed loudly on the other line, dropping her pitch to talk to Scott for a second. There was a rustling sound of Allison standing and moving somewhere else before she continued.

“Okay, so… you’re head over heels for the guy that my aunt pretty much destroyed the life of…”

I’m pretty sure you should never introduce us.”

Though it was a good idea, Allison was awesome and Stiles didn’t like the idea of hiding her from Derek because of something her relative did. He loved Allison. She and Scott were the most important people in Stiles’ life. Fuck that crazy bitch, Kate, he was happy to show Allison off to Derek. Besides, now that he knew they were related, his mind was already working before he could
process the idea going through his head.

“I was uh. Actually hoping that you could introduce me to your aunt?” If he met her, maybe he could understand Derek a little better. Okay so it wasn’t the brightest idea in the world, but Stiles was pretty much on his way to becoming a freelance detective, what with how awesome he was at finding information out.

“What?!”

“I want to get him some closure or something!” Stiles cried, throwing one hand out defensively like Allison was actually there to see his ridiculous flailing. “At least find out why she did it.”

“She’s crazy, Stiles.” Allison pointed out firmly, like this wasn’t something Stiles was completely aware of. Crazy was okay, Stiles had dealt with plenty of crazy people in his life, like Jackson.

“Well, yeah, but still.” It was hard to articulate what he wanted to say, because how were you supposed to explain that the only reason you weren’t getting a little sum’n sum’n from an adorable, sexy, Adonis truck driver was because he had some sort of baggage over a woman who had ruined his life?

“She thought his family was a pack of werewolves.” Allison added.

Well, that was… only a little bit unexpected. Derek did have a tendency to growl, and sometimes Stiles was pretty sure Derek was sniffing him when he would come into the office to grab a call. Not that the possibility of Derek sniffing him was particularly creepy - it was actually kind of hot, in a weird, feral, I-want-to-breathe-you-in sort of way.

Still, werewolves?

“What?” Stiles said intelligently. Seriously, what do you say to that? Oh cool, werewolves, yeah. Werewolves are awesome and Derek totally turns into a bloodthirsty animal on the full moon.

“His family worked for the animal conservation, they always had coyotes and wolves and other animals on their property…. Kate’s schizophrenia started to come in while they were dating, I think that had something to do with it.”

That was… disturbingly informative. Stiles didn’t actually expect Allison to know much at all about Derek, or his relationship with Kate.

“How do you know all this?” Despite the fact that she knew this was kind of awesome, it made Stiles uncomfortable to know that his best friend’s girlfriend knew more about Derek than he did.

It also made him feel kind of lame, for some reason.

“She used to talk to me about him,” Allison sighed, shifting the phone, “When I was little.”

“She DID?” That just wasn’t fair, Allison totally used to hear stories about precious teenager Derek while Stiles was busy popping Adderall and dealing with his mother’s death. Totally not fair at all.

“What did she say?”

Oh, he had to know, just a little bit. Was Derek as growly as a teenager? Did he always have the little tufts of uneven hair on the edges of his eyebrows? Was he baby faced?

“Stiles, this isn’t a good idea.” Allison warned, being the typical party-pooper that she was. Just
thinking about cute little teenaged Derek made Stiles want to meet Kate even more and find out whatever he could.

“Come on, Allison. I’ve never asked for anything more than I’m asking now, please please pleeeeeease?” He whined, making sure to sound extra desperate. It would have worked out better if they were in person. Stiles knew for a fact that he had the ability to break out the puppy eyes, and that their irresistible, wide, chestnut stare could persuade even the angriest of muggers. “I’ll make you that meatloaf stuff you and Scott like? I’ll let Scott borrow my jeep? I’ll pay you? I can pay you. It’s like a transaction. You tell me what you know and I pay you what I have.”

“Stiles, seriously, Kate’s not... she doesn’t act crazy a lot of the times. She’ll get into your head, make you think things that aren’t real.” Allison actually sounded nervous, which was odd. Allison was never nervous. Allison was a walking ball of righteous womanly beauty with a spine of adamantium.

“Allison, you’re breaking my balls,” Stiles whined, breath hitching on a sob as his excitement gave way to frustrated depression. This was the best idea ever, it meant he could help Derek out without trying to wring words from the man like tears from Chuck Norris. “I’m running out of ideas and she’s the only thing keeping him from even trying with me.”

“So going behind his back is supposed to help with that?” Allison shot back, with enough fire in her voice that Stiles physically recoiled in surprise. He wasn’t going behind Derek’s back, Derek had never told him not to actually look into his past, therefore there was no secrecy involved.

What Derek didn’t know wouldn’t hurt him, it would just help Stiles better understand.

Stiles struggled to think of a way to word what he was thinking so that Allison would understand when she sighed.

“Go back to work, Stiles.”

Desperate, Stiles smacked his pen down onto the desk and rubbed a hand over his head. “Allison, PLEASE. I’m desperate here. More desperate than that time Lydia and Jackson broke up and I tried to get on her good side.”

That was a time that they pointedly never spoke of, because Stiles had spent weeks making an ass of himself, following after Lydia any chance he got to try and win her over. There had been a lot of pining and Stiles calling both Allison and Scott at stupid in the morning with inane ideas on how to get Lydia to give him a chance. When she’d finally turned him down, he’d been so depressed that Allison had actually offered to take him out for drinks. That in itself was proof enough that he must have been driving her nuts, because it was a known fact that Stiles had inherited his father’s tolerance for alcohol.

There was a pause on the other line as Allison took this into consideration. By the time she spoke again, Stiles so anxious he was ready to run buck naked around the garage and then ride off the sunset on a rainbow unicorn fueled by the shattered hopes of orphans.

“Next week I’ll bring you to see her.”

“Next week?!” Stiles cried, because it was utterly unacceptable to wait for so long just to go and visit someone in a Mental Health hospital.

“I have to get visitation rights approved by non-family members, it takes a few days for the paperwork to go through.” Allison snapped, sighing again, “her visiting days are Saturdays, so I
need to verify that we can stop by after normal hours.”

Stiles released the breath he didn’t know he’d been holding, thanking her quietly and then bidding her goodnight before he hung up the phone. Derek worked next week, so he was going to hope to the higher powers that he’d be able to shake off the meeting by Sunday morning, on the off chance that Derek came into the office. Derek had this creepy way of staring - to a point where Stiles couldn’t even control the proverbial vomit of emotions and thoughts that came spewing out of his mouth after more than three seconds of eye contact.

Staring back down at his list, he put a line through the last bullet and glanced up when the door opened and Isaac came back in.

“Mission complete?” Stiles asked, grinning in excitement. It must have taken Isaac a good few minutes to find Derek’s keys or something, because he’d been gone a good fifteen minutes to place the wolf plushie into Derek’s truck.

Isaac paused in the process of shoving a dollar into the vending machine, giving Stiles an odd look. “…. to go to the bathroom?” What?

“What? No - put the toy in Derek’s truck!” Stiles hissed. Stiles was wondering if all the times Isaac’s father had lashed out had caused some level of permanent brain damage. Wow, actually that was kind of mean. Stiles must have been projecting his frustrations to even think that. Isaac’s eyes went wide and he nodded, mashing the buttons to get a candy bar to vend.

“Oh. Yeah. It’s buckled in the passenger seat.”

He’d even buckled it in? Stiles had underestimated Isaac’s ability to apply an advanced level of ingenuity. He should employ Isaac into his schemes more often, possibly take him under Stiles’ wing as an apprentice. Stiles grinned, rubbing his hands together and grinning so widely that Isaac looked slightly uncomfortable when Stiles chuckled, “perfect,” under his breath.

“Okay well… I’m going home.” Isaac edged out the door before Stiles could even acknowledge his words. Which, that was totally okay because Stiles was a diabolical master of ingenious ideas, and he needed some time to himself in order to wiggle and fidget in his seat with excitement.

The entire week had Stiles feeling antsy and nervous. He didn’t want to text Derek about the toy, hoping that he’d get at least one message at some point and moping for a good ten minutes every time he would think about it and realize that Derek hadn’t said anything. It could be possible that Derek didn’t know what to say. It was actually entirely likely, given that Derek seemed to have a dangerous allergy to emotions - probably one that caused his throat to swell up so that all he could do was glare petulantly at Stiles for long and awkward amounts of time.

Stepping into the office the following Saturday morning and seeing no wolf toy sitting on his desk as a blatant sign of rejection, Stiles jumped up and down in place for a second before he turned the light on and set about his opening routine. He didn’t want to push too much, because Derek wasn’t exactly a weeble-wobble that bounced back when it came to being pestered about certain things.

That in mind, Stiles was scarily excited when a tow call finally came in that was out of city, lunging for the phone to dial Derek’s number. Derek had barely answered before Stiles was blurting, “are you and your little buddy ready for a big haul?”

“… what.”

Stiles felt ridiculously nervous for no reason, fidgeting with his pen and wincing to himself, “… I
have a tow for you?”

“Were you just talking about my - oh. You mean the toy.” Derek grunted, making a soft noise of understanding.

“Yes the toy, what else- oh my god.” Oh my god, seriously. Where they even on a level of association where it was okay that Derek assumed Stiles was talking about his-

I mean, Stiles thought about that sometimes… when he was alone… at night… but he had more class than to actually use it as a flirting technique.

Usually.

Derek huffed out a quiet laugh, the phone rustling and a drawer creaking on the other line before he spoke again, “Go ahead with the info.”

Stiles listed off the pickup location, car type, destination (a good hour out) and anything else Derek needed, grinning like a drunken buffoon the entire time. It left Stiles out one driver for at least two or three hours, but he was willing to deal with a bit of extra stress if it meant having a chance to make Derek happy with the haul.

“Stiles,” Derek mumbled when Stiles was finished rambling the information off, “Why’d you give me this run? Isn’t Boyd first out?” Shit.

Why did Derek have to be beautiful and brainy?

“Uh,” Stiles responded intelligently, struggling to come up with some sort of explanation, “Boyd’s busy.” Great job, Stiles, you’d pass a lie detector test in a heartbeat.

“Doing what?”

“Sleeping?” Which could have meant that Boyd had a run early in the morning, if Derek didn’t as-

“What did he get in?”

Stiles scrambled for the dispatch sheet, eyes landing on where the paper informed him that Boyd hadn’t actually gone on any runs after midnight. “Yo no say.”

Derek didn’t know Spanish, did he? Whether or not he did, Stiles would never know, because he was given a painfully long moment of silence as Derek seemed to mull over Stiles’ lack of an actual response. Stiles tensed when Derek finally cleared his throat, face breaking into a silly grin as Derek mumbled, “thanks, Stiles.”

“No problem, dude.” Stiles chirped, wiggling back and forth in his seat as Derek muttered a soft goodbye and hung up. It was the best feeling in the world, that Derek had actually thanked Stiles for making sure to give him a long haul. All drivers loved towing things out of the county, it meant they were paid for the long hours spent driving in an air conditioned truck, instead of running around the city for the same amount of money. Stiles dropped the phone onto the hook, falling back against his seat and flailing his legs.

“Oh yeah! Who is awesome? This guy!” Stiles whooped, flinging his arms up and down because he was way too happy to stop himself from acting like an excited walrus. The computer honked a second later, making Stiles yelp and fling himself forward to read the screen. It was a battery call,
luckily, so he clicked around before grabbing the phone to dial Isaac.

With how much his cheeks were aching from all the smiling he was doing, Stiles had a pretty good idea of how a botox patient felt after surgery. (This included the extra flair of fabulous self-confidence that came along with it.)

It was a little over a half hour before Derek paged Stiles to say he was in tow, and Stiles acknowledged him before grabbing the phone to punch in Derek’s cell number.

“What did you need?” Derek answered.

“Did you like the toy?” Stiles winced at how overzealous he sounded, stabbing himself in the bottom lip with his pen on accident and dropping it with a soft curse. Derek didn’t answer, and Stiles tensed up because shit, what if he’d actually just thrown the toy away entirely because he couldn’t bear to look at Stiles’ face by returning it? “I could take it back? Or I could give you the receipt, if you want. Actually, no, I already chucked it, but -” “It’s… realistic.” Derek said quietly.

Stiles jumped on it like Steve Rogers on a grenade. “I know, right? It took me forever to find one that wasn’t lame or itchy or made with that creepy crushed velvet stuff. I think it’s actual wolf fur”

“Rabbit fur.”

‘-r something. What?” Did Derek actually know what kind of animal fur was on the wolf? How did you even identify animal fur? Did he have a degree in creature pelt 101?

“It’s rabbit fur.” Derek repeated.

Stiles looked around for a second before realizing he didn’t have the receipt or anything about the stuffed animal, turning back to rest his elbows on the desk. “Oh. How did you know that?”

Derek paused, taking a deep breath though his nose and exhaling slowly with a murmur of, “I read the tag.”

Which, actually, would have made sense. Except that Stiles had spent twenty minutes sitting in the office reading every single tag on that wolf plushie to try and find what it had been made of out and finding nothing, nil, zilch, nada thing about the actual animal fur of origin. He was half a second from telling Derek this when he realized it was probably one of those awkward situations where Derek didn’t want to admit that, at some point, he’d cuddled with enough bunny rabbits to be able to identify the texture of their fur from memory.

Unable to fully cope with the mere mental image, Stiles released a strangled, “oh…. of course,” and bit down on the side of his tongue to stifle the desire to coo at Derek like a woman around babies.

“Was there something you needed?” Derek grunted, possibly in an attempt to assert his masculinity. Stiles grinned, pushing away from the desk to spin in a circle and yelping when the chord wrenched the phone base across the desk. He jerked forward, fumbling to push it back.

“Besides you?” He blurted, knocking over the pen holder in an epic fit of clumsiness. He was momentarily glad that Derek couldn’t see him flailing around like an high-strung octopus.

“Stiles.” Derek growled. Oh, even over the phone, his voice made Stiles shudder more than a hyena at the mention of Mufasa the Lion King.

“No, it’s just slow and I was calling to see what’s up.” Stiles elaborated, attempting to sound as innocent as possible. The innocent act was a false safe plan, because everyone thought Stiles as
innocent as Bambi - complete with the irresistible doe eyes.

“Are you-

“I’m not doing anything! I can’t just chat with one of my coworkers?” Okay, so apparently the innocent act wasn’t as foolproof when one merged the factor of talking over the phone, with Derek being on the receiving end. Which, totally lame, by the way. Derek never even pretended like Stiles was fooling him with the oblivious act. Once pants were optional in their relationship, they were going to have a talk about this.

“Stiles…”

“So when you get back, I was thinking about ordering a pizza or something. You game?” “…”

“I’ll get mega meat lovers?” Stiles reached for the phone book, snagging it as Derek released an aggrieved sigh that sounded more amused than actually annoyed.

“Fine.”

It was like being punched in the stomach by a magical gorilla that brought nothing but suffocating happiness, and Stiles released a soft sigh of relief before he instantly thought of something to talk about. “Okay so, my dad said they’ve got Mike in custody, I was thinking about talking to Finstock about getting a copy of the security camera to help prosecute him. I mean, I’m sure my dad will ask, but I could let him know beforehand.” Really, it was just Stiles attempting to be nosy and act like he could actually be helpful. Sometimes it made his dad more willing to do things for Stiles. Like clearing Derek’s record of all criminal charges.

“There’s a camera in the garage, probably should look at that too.” Derek mumbled.

Mother of God, he was right.

Stiles shot up in his seat, smiling wide. “You’re brilliant,” he breathed, “I could kiss you right now.”

Derek made a pained noise that sounded like it was squeezed from the back of his throat before it started to form into a warning growl. Stiles decided to nip that one in the bud, adding, “You can’t tell me you don’t want a piece of this.” Foot, meet mouth.

Stiles tensed up the second the words left his mouth, grimacing and throwing a hand up like he could somehow stop the repercussions of his cockiness (with a depressing lack of actual cock) when Derek huffed softly. Stiles was instantly talking again, trying to smooth over his words with a bit of exaggerated flair. “I mean, I totally am the-”

“I want a piece.”

“sexiest- what?” Stiles choked. Is this real life? Is this just fantasy?

Or was Derek just jerking him around by the dick again? If he was, he was using some sort of torture-device in the shape of a lobster claw instead of an actual hand. At this rate, Stiles was going to start chafing, or maybe consider an appointment with a therapist.

“-of pizza. When I get back.” Derek finished slowly, sounding so smug that Stiles kind of wished he could Stretch Armstrong his fist through the phone and into Derek’s face. “Save me some.” Derek
added, hanging up before Stiles could even say anything.

Okay, so maybe Derek wasn’t dick-jerking Stiles with some demon fist of doom. It was entirely possible that he was just horrific at flirting and was attempting to reciprocate Stiles’ equally appalling flirtation techniques with that of his own. The mere idea made Stiles’ face burn with a sudden, excited flush. Oh man, they were making awesome progress.

Even better, was that Allison had gotten approval for Stiles to visit her aunt, meaning in just a few hours, he’d meeting Allison outside of Beacon Hills Behavioral Health Facility to go and meet with the infamous Kate Argent.

“I love it when a plan comes together,” Stiles said to himself, tacking on a soft cackle for good measure. With all of this good luck he was having, there was no doubt that the future held only good things to come.

Then again…he should have realized that anything involving a schizophrenic homicidal arsonist would not bode well for anyone involved.

Especially for Stiles.

----

Stiles was halfway through finishing his closing paperwork when Derek pulled into the garage. He was one of the only white wreckers they owned, the rest being red or black, which made it easy for Stiles to apply a bit of common knowledge to deduce when his soon-to-be-bride was the one showing up. There was still a few slices of pizza left from lunch, which had been an afternoon Stiles would absolutely need to write into his nonexistent sparkly diary all about Derek.

Dear Diary, today Derek smiled at me. And stole pizza from my hand. I think we have a connection. Brilliance.

Derek stepped into the office once he was done fueling his truck up, eyes glancing longingly at the pizza box. It was kind of endearing, the way Stiles could practically see the guy’s stomach lurch in one of those moments Stiles knew very well. (He liked to call them the ‘I was really hungry but then I forgot I was hungry until I was reminded of how hungry I was.’) Stiles was out of his seat before he could think about what he was doing, opening the box and shimmying over to the microwave. For good measure, he made sure to bend at the torso and not his shoulders or knees when he went to reheat the pizza, glancing at the reflective door of the microwave to see the reflection of Derek staring blatantly at his ass.

Oh sweet jesus, yes.

Stiles’ heart had a momentary spasm, wrenching up into his throat and then stuttering for a beat as he stood up and turned. Much to Stiles’ everlasting amusement, Derek was peering innocently at some of the paperwork on the desk. He was about as subtle as a box of fireworks.

“Been busy?” Derek asked gruffly. Oh, you sly little fox. Stiles smothered a grin and sighed instead, shrugging his shoulders.

“Enough that I could smoke ten cigarettes and still feel stressed out,” he muttered darkly, trying to block out the image from earlier that day. Brian the creeper had been working all morning, and when he came into the office to pick up a call, he’d thrown up on himself in the middle of talking and had tried to play it off like nothing had happened. Stiles had barely been able to silence his dry heaving as Brian hacked and spat into the bathroom toilet while asking Stiles information about the run.
Derek scowled, eyebrows pinching in confusion together. It should have been unnerving, or at least intimidating, but Stiles was a sadist and found it nothing but utterly adorable. “You smoke?”

“No,” Stiles sighed, flopping down into the office chair, “but I’m starting to seriously consider picking it up.”

“Don’t,” Derek blurted, jaw flexing, “Don’t start.” It sounded like he was actually concerned at the idea of Stiles getting into a habit that was surprisingly common. Intrigued, Stiles rested his arms on the desk, fiddling with his pen. All he needed now was a desk lamp to shine into Derek’s eyes - maybe a pair of handcuffs to add to the effect.

Mmmh, handcuffs. Handcuffs were good, especially when you had a consenting-

Not going there.

(not yet)

“What? You smoke.” Stiles pointed out, gesturing to where a crumpled pack of Camel Lights sat in the breast pocket of Derek’s uniform. Derek reflexively brought a hand up to press it against the pack, his scowl deepening. Stiles was momentarily concerned at the fact that it instantly reminded him of the expression on Goofy’s face in Goofy Movie after Max had told him to turn left at the fork in the highway.

“Which is why you shouldn’t,” Derek shot back. Stiles scoffed, a grin pulling at his mouth as he bobbed his head with a shrug of his shoulders, peering up at Derek through his eyelashes.

“Aww, I didn’t know you cared.” Stiles didn’t understand how Derek could say and do things that made him utterly endearing, and then look all grumpy when Stiles called him out on it. The microwave beeped before Derek could even try to protest, and Stiles pushed himself out of his seat. He opened the microwave, pulling out the reheated pizza and hearing Derek instinctively sniff the air. Stiles brought him the food, handing over the paper plate and smiling when Derek’s eyes went wide for just a fraction of a second before he took the food like a homeless man being offered free beer.

Stiles was pretty sure he was grinning like a man on acid, because Derek quickly schooled his expression and grunted out his thanks so he could sit down and eat. Stiles reached out, wanting to fluff Derek’s hair in revenge for all the times he’d gotten his head rubbed, but Derek growled and swatted his hand away before he’d even brushed his fingertips against their silky black puffs. Stiles was fascinated to see the back of Derek’s neck and ears were turning pink - and not from being out in the sun.

It took all of Stiles’ self control not to just slap the pizza out of Derek’s hands and hop on his lap so he could ride the man like a Brokeback Mountain throwback - minus the angst.

Instead, Stiles returned to his closing duties, switching out the trash bags and tying up the old one to set by the door. Derek ate the pizza with a disturbing level of silent reverence - probably because he hadn’t eaten in six hours. By the time everything was shut down and Stiles was clocked out, Derek was using a paper towel to wipe pizza from the edge of his mouth - which had become stained red from the sauce. Oh, how Stiles wished he could just pretend his life was an awful Twilight fan fiction and lick and suck the stains straight from Derek’s lips without getting his ass thrown out the door for his efforts.

“Okay soooo, I gotta meet Allison for milkshakes so she can pretend I’m her gay boyfriend and complain about her real boyfriend and all of her womanly emotions and such so uh.. I’mma have to
shoo you out, now.” Just to make sure Derek understood what he meant (and because Stiles was horridly awkward when it came to kicking people out of the office), Stiles made a shoo’ing motion with his hands before he bent down to grab the trash bag. Derek stood, nodding and brushing by Stiles with the empty paper plate folded in one hand. He stepped out of the office, turning and holding the door open for Stiles to come outside. Stiles hit the light switch, stepping outside and shutting the door so he could lock it. Once the keys were safely tucked back into his pocket, he turned and totally-did-not-yelp when he bumped into Derek’s chest.

“Woah, hey… my, what a firm chest you have,” Stiles breathed, eyes going wider by the second as Derek began to lean in. Oh my god, oh my god, yes, yes yes. Just yes. This was -yes.

Derek snagged the trash bag from Stiles’ hand, leaning in to brush his nose along the curve of Stiles’ ear. Stiles was pretty sure he was going to go into cardiac arrest, his entire body flaring up in anticipation, a shudder echoing straight down his spine and pooling in the base of his tailbone when Derek drew in a slow breath through his nose.

“I’ll throw the trash out,” he muttered, voice a low rasp. Good mother of all that was holy, Stiles was going to vibrate out of his skin if Derek didn’t do something. “Goodnight, Stiles.”

Derek’s stubble rasped along the hinge of Stiles’ jaw, lips pressing against the tiny hollow where his ear met his jaw in the most blueballing form of a kiss Stiles had ever heard of in his entire life.

Stiles was two seconds away from associating his heart with an Alien chestburster when Derek pulled away, ruffled Stiles’ head fluff, and started to walk towards the dumpster.

“Th-THAT’S IT?!” Stiles cried, his voice cracking and his dick twitching in more of a depressed sag than an excited jerk.

Derek didn’t even look back, disappearing behind the gate with the dumpster with another call of, “Good night, Stiles!”

What the fuck was that, even? Was that legal? Was that evenDerek had made the first move.

Mother of Jesus.

He was willing to advance. Do not pass go, do not collect your $200 fucking dollars, you are going straight to Broadway, bitch. This must have meant that he’d worked out whatever internal issues he’d been having, it meant that he’d appreciated Stiles giving him time to figure things out, that Stiles wasn’t going to have to sit and wait and wonder, because Derek was willing to try, which meant that-

Stiles really shouldn’t be seeing Kate tonight.

Which he no longer had a choice in, because Allison had busted her ass to get clearance for him to visit in the first place.

Shitballs.

After getting into his jeep, every minute Stiles spent driving towards Beacon Hills Mental Health made his gut clench more and more until he was pretty sure even MacGuyver would have difficulty designing something that would untie the knots of stress that had become his organs. He finally released a long, nervous sigh as he pulled into the parking lot to see Allison waiting outside. Where the outside was a modest building of tan-bricks and a simple blue sign, the inside was disturbingly well-coordinated to try and be welcoming and warm.
The carpet was that irritable triangle-dot design that he was pretty sure only daycares were supposed to buy, walls lined with photographs of happy families smiling at the cameras and displays here and there filled with pamphlets about various types of mental illnesses. Allison showed him to the guest station at the other end of the lobby, grabbing the clipboard and signing them both in. The woman behind the desk placed a bin on the counter, instructing Stiles to remove his hoodie and the laces on his sneakers.

Okay, not fucking weird or creepy at all.

Allison seemed to catch Stiles’ expression, because she made this half-grimace and shrugged.

“The last time someone visited, she tried to take his shoelaces off to strangle him.”

See, this was a really important fact that Allison should have told Stiles when she was trying to keep him from wanting to visit. If Stiles had known his shoelaces were in danger of being used as a murder weapon, he would have been infinitely more convinced to just forego the visit entirely.

Instead, he sighed and kicked his sneakers off, tossing them in the bin with his hoodie.

The nurse was far too cheerful, her smile big and fake as she thanked him and stood to unlock the door that led into the patients’ guest area. Stiles tried really really hard not to take note of the fact that there was a disturbing painting of a ferocious tiger across the wall, its eyes psychotic and somewhat skewed. Apparently, they’d been on a budget when they hired someone to paint murals on the walls.

Allison placed a hand on Stiles’ shoulder, offering him a weak smile. “You’re here with me, you’ll be fine.”

“That doesn’t really make me feel better,” Stiles muttered, taking in a deep breath and letting it out as they were led into a room with a woman in her early thirties who was lounging on one of the couches.

Kate Argent.

Whatever Stiles had been expecting, it wasn’t this. Really, when he thought of Kate, he kind of dredged up this mental image of Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy pre-villain status, with crazy hair and an affinity for making people feel bad for her and then turning around and slaughtering them in less-than pleasant ways.

Instead, he saw a slim, beautiful woman with thick, blonde hair that framed her face. She was picking at her fingers - looking bored more than anything - when they stepped into the room and grabbed her attention.

She looked pleasantly surprised when she caught sight of Allison, letting out a sound of excitement when she stood to drag the younger woman into a hug. Her grin was bright, eyes completely lucid as she pulled Allison away to hold her shoulders and give her a once-over. “You’ve gotten so beautiful. I’m going to have some competition for the prettiest girl in the family soon, Allison.” Kate said, smiling with all of her teeth as she ran a hand through Allison’s hair.

Allison returned the grin with a small one of her own. Kate glanced over at Stiles, and Stiles felt himself tense up to a point where his back twinged with the sudden movement. He had this horrific feeling like he shouldn’t even blink - but then realized that Kate Argent may have been crazy, but he was pretty sure she wasn’t a weeping angel in disguise.

“Hey,” Kate nudged Allison with her elbow, head bobbing in Stiles’ direction, “Who’s the cutie?”
Allison took it as her cue to introduce them, ignoring the fact that Stiles hadn’t moved a single inch. “Kate, this is Stiles. He’s Scott and my best friend.”

Eyebrows rising, Kate crossed over to circle Stiles like a viper coming in for the death kill to his jugular. “Oh ho? Well, you’re a bit young for me, but I could make an exception.” What.

Was she even for real? Did Stiles look like he was hunting for cougars? Hell no. Especially not cougars with a penchant for setting people’s houses on fire.

Stiles locked eyes with Allison, feeling completely not better at all when she just gave him a shrug in return.

“Oh, yeah. So uhm. Lets sit down.” Stiles mumbled, gesturing to the circle of cushioned chairs and couches nearby. He sat down on the closest couch, almost jumping out of his skin when Kate moseyed her way over to sit between Allison and himself.

“So, how’s the family?” Kate turned to Allison, smiling as if she had the entire world in the palm of her hand. If Stiles was just meeting her for the first time, with no previous knowledge as to how or why she was in this place, he’d have thought she was well-adjusted and just waiting to be released after some last minute paperwork went through.

“Good.” Allison started, shrugging with one shoulder, “Dad’s good, mom is too. Uh, grades are good. How are you?”

Kate instantly released a long, loud sigh, flopping back against the chair. Her arms found their home behind Stiles and Allison’s heads, crossing one leg over the other. Stiles squirmed, because he felt far too vulnerable, recalling all of the lectures from his father telling him never to leave himself open to attack from an enemy. (that might have been in a video game, actually, Stiles wasn’t really sure.)

“I’m great, actually. I don’t know why they insist on keeping me here. I’ve pretty much shown them I’m sane. I mean, seriously? I don’t know how that whole family could hide what they were from us, and think they could get away with it.”

She sounded so fucking sure, so calm about it, that Stiles almost wanted to go back to the lobby, ask the nurse for his shoes, and strangle the woman with the laces himself.

Kate glanced to Stiles, “I’m not even crazy - and, yeah, I know that whole ‘I’m not crazy thing’ just makes me sound crazier.” Kate made a circling motion at her temple, scoffing and then gesturing vaguely. “It’s a hard thing to believe, what they were. If they’d just looked at the evidence, they’d have realized it. Instead, they’re keeping me in this place and trying to force pills down my throat. I don’t take them, anyway, they’re completely optional - the people here are total whack jobs if they think I’d willingly pop a bunch of crazy pills.”

Stiles was so fucking uncomfortable, but he was more pissed off than anything. How the hell was she so cocky about this? Did she seriously think she wasn’t insane? Stiles had never before wanted to throttle someone in his entire life before. “So you burned some guy’s entire family to death and you think that’s okay?”

Allison tensed as Kate rolled her head to look at him from where she’d been chuckling in bitter amusement at the ceiling. “Well, aren’t you just the most precious thing ever?” Sitting forward, Kate reached out to snag at Stiles’ cheek before he could withdraw, pinching it painfully between her
fingers and shaking the skin until Stiles was cringing in pain. He harbored the idea of biting her finger off, but decided that biting people was a bad idea when sitting inside of a mental institution. Kate leaned in close, expression falling into a look of dark seriousness.

“Kid… there’s a whole other world out there that you’ve got no idea about,” leaning in, Kate’s mouth brushed the shell of Stiles’ ear. Stiles shuddered, but it was in a completely different manner than when Derek had done the exact same thing. He wanted to push her away, to scream ‘bad touch, bad touch!’ and hide behind Allison like that time Scott had too many tequilas and had tried to grab Stiles’ dick for a size comparison.

Stiles couldn’t stop himself from shrinking away when she whispered quietly to him, “the things that go bump in the night? They’re real, and they’ll kill you when you least expect it.”

“Derek’s not a werewolf, and you’re just crazy.” Stiles snapped unthinkingly, “you killed children.”

Kate wrenched back, as if she was actually offended that Stiles had the capability to call her out on her crazy. This bitch was seriously a few French fries short of a Happy Meal, and possibly with the ‘3 and under’ toy included on accident.

Upper lip pulled back into a snarl, Kate reached out to grab a fistful of his shirt, dragging him in close again to snarl, “monsters! They were monsters!”

“Uh, as far as I know, Derek’s never gotten up in my shit like he wanted to bite my throat out with his teeth, unlike you,” Stiles blurted- which, okay, really bad idea because 1) yes he had, but it was a good kind of throat biting in which Stiles imagined could lead to a nice frottage session or possibly some mutual hand jobs, and b) he’d just done a very, very bad thing by pointing out that he actually knew Derek.

Actually, Allison’s expression really portrayed the exact same thing that Stiles was feeling. The feeling of which seemed to be really just a mantra of ‘shit shit shit’ because really, what else do you think of when you say something that causes the aforementioned shit to hit the metaphorical fan?

Kate recoiled like Stiles had head-butted her in the face Vinnie Jones style, eyes going wide. Stiles scooted as far from her as he could until his hip was crushed into the arm of the couch, flinching when Kate released a deafening bark of a laugh that made Stiles think of an agitated porpoise.

“Really, Allison?” Kate swiveled her head to stare at Allison and gestured to Stiles. Allison, bless her heart, attempted to look confused with a weak smile and a tiny furrowing bob of her brows, giving Kate an aborted shake of her head like she had no idea that Stiles knew Derek.

“Fucking adorable, the both of you,” Kate may have had a smile on her face, but her eyes were deader than Tom Cruise’s in a Hollywood interview. It was terrifying, how easily she could mask her emotions- it wasn’t hard to see how Derek would have never predicted she’d kill his family before it was too late. Stiles tensed when her hand came out to toy with the collar of her shirt, “So you’re fucking him, and - what? You came to see if I could give you some pointers?”

Even though her nails were pristinely trimmed, Stiles felt like he had a set of deadly claws brushing up against his throat. It took him a second to swallow properly, a ‘tsk’ing sound escaping when he finally pried his mouth open to tell her in the most clipped voice he’d ever mustered, “actually, no. There are zero orgasms involved in this.”

“Good.”

Stiles flicked his eyes from where he’d been staring at a disturbing painting of a malformed clown
with a dog that looked like it was developing mange to stare at Kate. She leaned back, dragging her hand down Stiles’ chest before letting it fall into her lap. Lifting her head, Kate stared at him with a dark look, voice dropping into a firm mutter of, “he was mine, first.”

Oh my god, what the fuck was this? A remake of Mean Girls? Because, seriously, Stiles really had a lot of attachment to Lindsay Lohan before she cracked out and started eating vagina like a Chinese Buffet.

“You killed his family, I think you lost that right.” Stiles pointed out sharply, just in case she’d lost the memo in the process of shoving her head so far up her ass she couldn’t see anything else.

It was like blaring ‘hey, look at me!’ through a megaphone, because her focus snapped back on Stiles like the auto-lock setting in Call of Duty. She snorted softly under her breath, blonde hair swaying when she shook her head. “I did him a favor, sweetheart. One little omega isn’t a threat but a beta? An alpha? He’d have killed eventually. He’s too weak to do anything now.”

“He’s not weak!” Christ, if anything, Derek was the motherfucking god of putting up with other people’s ridiculous bullshit. From the crap Kate had put him through, to Stiles forcing his way into the guy’s life, to housing Isaac and being put under the pressure of accepting or rejecting a relationship, Stiles would say that Derek was pretty goddamn strong.

Kate’s arm snapped out with blinding speed, fingers digging into the back of Stiles’ neck and dragging him close. He choked, flailing when she forced his ear to her lips and snagged his hand when he tried to pull her hand off. Good fucking god, she had a tighter grip on him than Hillary Clinton did on the theoretical testicles of masculinity.

“He’s weak, and stupid, and he’s mine. He’ll never be yours, he was mine first and he’ll always be mine. You’ll realize that the second you find out the truth.” Kate snarled, nails digging into Stiles’ neck and twisting his wrist with her other hand. Stiles could see Allison jumping to her feet, hovering between running to get an orderly and waiting to see if Kate would let him go.

Of course, Stiles had this uncontrollable birth defect in which he often said things without realizing that it would get his ass kicked halfway up the stairway to heaven, because he was talking before he could consider the repercussions of his words. “You’re just a psycho bitch who deserves to be here!”

Momentarily, Stiles could understand how Tony Stark felt when Loki chucked him out the window by the throat, only because he’d barely finished growling the words out before Kate’s hand was around his throat and he was being shoved into the back of the couch. Stiles choked, vision flaring white from the movement and sudden lack of this important thing called air. He could see Allison running out of the room as Kate started to crush his windpipe.

“You think I’m crazy? I’m not the kid who is so lovesick he decides to visit the guy’s ex. You’ll regret ever having met him when he turns you.” Kate laughed, her eyes wild. Jesus fucking christ, it was like that time Stiles had watched 101 Dalmations as a child and Cruella Deville’s crazy face had given him nightmares for weeks. Stiles scrambled at her hands, panicking worse than the time his dad had walked in on him jacking off to gay porn and he’d just sat there with his hand on his dick and the moans from the speakers as background noise to his terror until his dad had just slowly backed out of the room.

The orderlies were rushing into the room, grappling at her and trying to pry her vice grip from Stiles’ throat. (Really, they’d have better luck freeing some guy’s arm from the jaws of a shark)

“I w-wanted to know who would be heartless enough to hurt him like that!” Stiles gasped out,
thrashing when the fingers cut off the last of his air, face burning and head feeling like it was going
to pop. “I understand,” he gritted out with the last of his breath, “You’re not heartless, you’re just
ever.”

Kate didn’t even get the chance to respond before the orderlies were dragging her off of him and
shoving her backwards. Thank motherfucking Jesus. Stiles was having a moment where he was
worried he was going to die in the clutches of the Kraken’s rage. He gasped for air, coughing and
hacking as Allison rushed over to his side, a palm rubbing down his back.

He was almost grateful for her presence, until he realized what she was saying.

“I mean, I did tell you she was crazy, and it wasn’t like you even tried not to provoke her.”

“You’re horrible at this-” Stiles coughed, wheezing and gesturing vaguely, “whole, ‘comforting me
after I nearly died’ spiel.”

Allison’s only answer was a halfhearted shrug and a squeeze to Stiles’ shoulder as Kate started to
laugh as she was pulled out of the room. “I’m going to have such a story to tell him the next time he
visits!” Oh fuck.

No. Fucking. Way.

There was seriously no godamn way Derek actually still visited her, was there? She was probably
just having another one of her psycho moments in which she hallucinated that he actually would
come to see her. Who did that? Who would force themselves to visit the murderer of their family?

Stiles didn’t even realize he wasn’t breathing until Allison started to shake his shoulder, saying his
name in soft concern. Stiles jerked his head up, staring at her with wide eyes. “Can he do that?”

“Huh?” Allison helped him stand, Stiles rubbing at his throat and trying to swallow against the pain.

“Derek, can he visit?” Stiles elaborated, because he seriously needed to know this right fucking now.
Allison shook her head, shoulders bobbing. “Don’t know,” she said quietly, “we can ask the nurse.”

So of course they asked the nurse. Also, because Stiles had apparently done something to piss off the
higher powers, karma decided give him an atomic wedgie of bad mojo, he was horrified to find out
that Derek did, in fact, visit.

Every other Saturday, in fact. The Saturdays that he didn’t work. He’d been coming by for years,
like clockwork, never staying for more than a few minutes, sometimes never doing much more than
asking her ‘why’ or who had helped her do it.

Walking to the car, Stiles felt like he’d chugged an entire bottle of Nyquil, everything numb and
body moving on autopilot. He fumbled with the keys to his jeep, looking to where Allison was
watching him with concern. “That’s okay,” he breathed suddenly, “that’s okay, because Derek won’t
find out until next Saturday. We- we can play dumb. We can tell him you visited with pictures of
your friends and mentioned that I had a crush on someone named Derek, and .. And that it was just
some ridiculous coincidence. We can work with this, Allison.”

Allison looked like she just wanted to hug Stiles, brows pinching and lips twisting into a concerned
frown. “What about your throat?”

Hand flying to his throat, Stiles winced when his fingers hit the tender skin where Kate had choked
him. It hurt worse than that time he’d discovered why it was a bad idea to explore the possibility of anal play with bath soap as lubricant. “What about it?” “Stiles, it’s really red, I’m pretty sure you’re going to have bruises.” Shit.

Shit, fuck, fuck, shit. Okay, Stiles should have known that it was a bad idea to visit Kate in the first place, but there were plenty of people who got away with murder, why couldn’t he get away with a little bit of snooping? Was it really that hard to cut him a break?

“You’re pretty screwed,” Allison added as an afterthought - like the sweet, gentle, kind soul that she was.

Stiles sucked in a sharp breath, curling his hand into a fist around his keys and shoving his knuckles into his eyes. He waited until the burst of pressure made lights and colors swim in his vision before he was able to comprehensively think of anything to say. “I can tell my dad we went to see Kate, out of curiosity. That’s legal. Completely legal and within my rights. He can’t get angry, right?”

A sigh of a laugh escaped Allison, “Well, I guess you can always tell him that’s what happens when he doesn’t break the law and erase the criminal record of the boyfriend you wish you had.”

“Exactly!” Stiles cried, jerking his head up and throwing his arms out. He knew Allison understood where he was coming from, that it was entirely likely she was only dating Scott because his uneven jaw line had some sort of hypnotic power.

“I was being facetious, Stiles.”

Harsh, man. Stiles couldn’t even begin to think about the ways that Allison’s dry humor was betraying his emotions.

Okay, so it really wasn’t that bad, but still.

Huffing, he reached out to shove playfully at her shoulder. “Lydia leaves makeup in the office, I’ll figure it out when I get to work tomorrow.”

Allison looked just the tiniest bit skeptical, but she shrugged and shook her head, bidding him goodnight.

Stiles was grateful his dad was gone and pulling a double by the time he got home. He spent ten minutes inspecting the damage to his throat in the mirror before he called Scott and allowed his best friend to yell at him for fifteen more minutes. It wasn’t hard to crash into bed after a hot shower/jackoff session and sneaking a shot of his dad’s whiskey to relax, the stress driving him to such a point of exhaustion that he was out the second his head hit the pillow.

Much to Stiles’ chagrin, the last few days of September were far too warm in Beacon Hills to justify wearing a douchebag scarf to work the next day - which didn’t really matter, because Stiles didn’t own any douchebag scarves in the first place. Either way, the first thing he did the next morning was to make sure to leave a few minutes early for the office so he could search for Lydia’s emergency makeup that she stashed in one of the drawers.

Pulling down the road that lead to their garage and office, Stiles’ stomach sank at the sight of Derek’s truck sitting in the garage as Derek pumped fuel into it. Well, normally he’d be wiggling around like a puppy with a new toy, except that there was this whole issue with having to get into the office and apply the makeup before Derek noticed his throat. Stiles may have been the son of a cop, but he had the natural grace of a three-legged giraffe. He parked opposite the office, back of the jeep facing the garage, and took a second to control his breathing.
“Fuck,” Stiles flailed his hands, punching his steering wheel and jerking around in a fit of aggravation. Normally he wasn’t one for battery on his beautiful jeep, but seriously? This was just getting fucking ridiculous.

Once he’d gotten his stress out through pointless flailing, Stiles flopped back into his chair, huffed out a sigh, grabbed his laptop bag, and slid out of the jeep. He hurried to the office, tripping over his own feet and stumbling a good few steps when Derek’s call of, “morning!” came from the garage. Stiles jerked his head up, offering Derek a quick wave before skedaddling up the steps to the office and slipping inside.

He almost threw his laptop bag onto the ground before remembering that throwing a laptop bag that contained a laptop was ill-advised. That in mind, he awkwardly lowered it to the floor and then hurried to get everything turned on in the office. He pulled the phones back, fought with the computers, clocked in, fought with the computers, grabbed the message faxes, and then realized he wasn’t going to be able to get everything done before Derek came in.

“Fuck it,” he hissed, throwing his paperwork down and scrambling for the first drawer on his right, wrenching it open to rifle around for Lydia’s makeup. He didn’t have time to dick around with getting his job done, not if he didn’t want to get covered in defecation when shit hit the fan once more.

Stiles’ fingers wrapped around a bottle of concealer, his cry of triumph becoming a shriek when Derek opened the door. Stiles dropped the foundation, slamming the drawer shut and doing the first thing he could thing of. He thudded his elbows on the desk, dropping his head onto the heels of his palms like a daydreaming girl. “Hi- hey- heyyyy Derek,” he choked, clearing his throat and attempting to purr the other man’s name. Derek gave him an odd look, nodding in greeting and then taking a seat in the office chair.

In the great words of Bobby Singer…. Balls.

Licking nervously at his lips, Stiles shifted his head into one hand, turning so that his forearm blocked his throat from Derek’s sight as he looked up at the computer. “So uh- You’re up early. Had some runs?”

Derek grunted, leaning back into his chair and releasing a jaw-cracking yawn, stretching arms stained with engine crease upwards and arching his back. Stiles couldn’t help but admire the way his biceps flex and his chest expanded with his deep inhale. He was only human, after all.

“Yeah, might as well wait for another one, since I’m up now.”

“Ah,” Stiles, pursed his lips thoughtfully, nodding and then freezing when he realized it could draw attention to his neck. It was like trying to hide a fucking vampire bite or something, only minus the actual vampire… or bite. He shifted, fiddling with his pen and then nodding again before he started scribbling down run information. Derek pulled out a cigarette, lighting it while Stiles kept his head ducked down to fill out the paperwork.

All he had to do was keep his head down until Derek left, and then he’d be able to apply the makeup. The only problem was that keeping his head down required not talking, and the longer the silence went on, the more Stiles felt like he was about to rupture a kidney or something from trying to contain himself.

“You have the remote?” Derek asked softly. Stiles peeked up through his lashes, nodding and fumbling around in the desk drawer. He slid the remote control over without looking up, breath
hitching with a momentary ‘ohjesuschristmyloins’ when Derek’s warm hand landed over the top of his, gripping for just a few seconds before dragging the remote out of his grasp.

Stiles started to bounce his legs, clicking his pen every now and then because, yeah, he was afraid of Derek finding out about the visit… but more than that, he was mad. He was mad that Derek would bother to see the person who killed his family, mad that Stiles had been left hanging so many times over baggage that Derek legitimately refused to let go of. He didn’t actually know which of the two matters was more pressing, really.

The computer honked and Stiles instinctively jerked his head up to dispatch the call. He clicked around, grabbing the pad to scribble the info for the tow down for Derek when he felt the hairs on the back of his neck start to rise in that creepy 6th sense sort of I’m-being-stared-at-with-theintensity-of-a-thousand-angry-wives. Stiles turned his head, trying his damned hardest not to react when he realized Derek was staring at his neck with wide eyes.

In situations such as this, Lydia had taught Stiles that acting stupid was always the easiest route to go… given that it had worked for her all through high school, it wasn’t a bad idea.

“Something on my shirt?” Stiles blurted, looking down at his tee for good measure and pulling at it like he could see the nonexistent stain. Good God, his heart was thundering so hard in his chest, he’d be surprised if Derek couldn’t hear it

“What happened to your neck?” Derek growled, pushing forward in his chair to lean against the desk and stare like a creeper. He dragged in a deep breath through his nose, nostrils flaring and eyes narrowing like some kind of angry dog.

Stiles’ hands betrayed him, flying up to the bruises as he blurted out the most innocent sounding, “This?”

Derek didn’t even blink, an action of which Stiles only considered acceptable if they were in a state of post-coital bliss. His fingers were digging into the desk, nails making a scraping sound across the wood as he curled them into fists.

Shifting awkwardly, Stiles shrugged. “Well, you know- I read this thing on auto-erotic asphyxiation and -”

“Those are fingers.”

“I have two hands!” Good one, fucktard.

Derek’s upper lip pulled back in a twitch of anger, pushing himself off the desk to lean into Stiles’ space with only the desktop between them. “Those are fingers from. someone. else.”

Oh god, Stiles. Think of something else, think of something believable, something you’d want to hide from Derek in the first place. Think of something that didn’t sound like a blatant li-

“Oh no I’m actually not as good at fighting off muggers as I thought.”

Stiles’ brain would like to inform the audience that it is currently filing for a divorce with Stiles’ mouth, and that the dispute over custody of his dick will be put into effect immediately.

Derek’s eyes flared wide, sucking in a sharp breath through his nose and barking, “Don’t LIE to me, Stiles!”

“I’m not lying!” Stiles cried.
Jerking back, Derek carded his hands through his hair, breath hitching when he sighed and making Stiles’ heart do all kinds of crazy things. He felt like a flock of pigeons was going to burst out of his chest when Derek growled, “I know when you lie - you have a tell.”

Stiles had never heard Derek sound so upset before. He sounded like he’d been fatally wounded, and that he’d found out his lover had died in battle as he lay bleeding out across the floor. Stiles didn’t like it. In fact, he hated knowing that it was his fault that Derek sounded so distraught, because Derek wasn’t supposed to have those kinds of emotions, not because of Stiles.

“Seriously, some guy tried to-”

“Stiles, just…” Derek sighed, rubbing a palm over his face, “tell me.”

“Why do you keep seeing her?” Stiles blurted, which - where the fuck did that even come from? Why would he do that? Why? WHY, Stiles? We’ve already established that you don’t have a Tardis to go fix your fuckups, why would you say these things.

Derek whipped his head around, confusion spread across his face. “What?”

Stiles’ internal monologue was picking up it’s previous mantra of, ‘shit. Shitshitshitshitshit,” as he kept talking before he could shove his fist into his face.

Derek was around the desk before Stiles could finish, (also: wow, Flash Gordon had nothing on him) and he was hauling Stiles to his feet by his shoulders and slamming him up against the wall. The photos lining the wall rattled, phone ringing as Stiles tried to swallow his heart back somewhere into the vicinity of his lungs because Derek looked fucking furious.

“You went to see her?”

Jesus christ, Stiles was going to die. He was going to die, and his dad would be left alone to drink himself into a coma, and Allison was going to get pregnant and Stiles would never see his god babies and- Derek was shaking him, because apparently Stiles hadn’t actually said anything in the past few seconds. He jerked Stiles forward, shoving him against the wall again.

“Why would you do that? Why would you go see her?! Why would you go behind my back like that?!”

“I wanted to know!” Stiles cried, struggling to keep his breathing even. In any other situation, Stiles would have assumed that there would be a lot more bodily contact of a happy and sexual nature involved, and less of his head smashing into the wall. One of the pictures (metal frame, no glass, thank god) slipped from it’s nail, hitting the ground with a clatter.

“You could have asked! You could have asked me!” Derek cried, eyes wild. His fingers were curling into Stiles’ skin, digging in like tiny needles of pain and making Stiles writhe harder to try and get free. Derek dragged in a deep breath through his nose, eyes going wide and an inhumanly deep growl coming from his chest. If Stiles’ head wasn’t swimming from possible shaken-babysyndrome, he’d have sworn Derek’s eyes were glowing bright blue.

“Fuck! Ow! Let me go, dude! That fucking hurts!”

Derek released a low snarl of anger, swinging Stiles around and practically throwing him back into the office chair. “Don’t fucking call me, unless it’s for a tow.”

He was out the door before the phone had even finished it’s final ring. Stiles couldn’t even bring
himself to answer it or check the caller ID. He couldn’t muster the energy to look at the computer or touch his paperwork. His throat hurt, from the night before and the recent yelling, a dull burning ache that was unpleasant. What was more unpleasant, was that Stiles could still feel Derek’s hands around his arms like the imprint of the man’s fingers were seared into his skin.

That was when Stiles was struck with the realization that, one day, Derek was going to walk out the door and never come back. Stiles dropped his face into his hands, biting down on the inside of his cheek and wiping at his eyes. He glanced up, hesitating when he saw the scratches on the other side of the desk where Derek had been clawing at.

What the hell?

"Dude, seriously, he left gouge marks in the desk! I'm surprised he didn't rip his nails off!" Stiles sighed, fumbling with his veritable rainbow of sticky note apologies. "He was madder than mad, he was totally Ivan Drago 'I vill break you' all up in my shit." Stiles attached the notes over every expanse of Derek's timecard, smoothing them out so that the entire thing fit back into the slot. Derek hadn't answered any of his text messages, had sent every call from Stiles straight to voicemail and making Stiles increasingly desperate to fix things. It had already been a week since their argument, leaving Stiles fretting for an insurmountable amount of time because Derek only worked on-calls every other weekend.

"Man, you did kinda go behind his back." Scott muttered weakly. Stiles scoffed, because if he was a pot, Scott was the biggest kettle in the international kettle house of blackened, hypocritical, perpetually confused looking kettles.

"That is all a matter of perspective, buddy-boy. So, I was thinking of investing in a bottle of some nice whiskey tonight and -"

"Dude, no." Scott interrupted, sounding surprisingly firm in his conviction to deny Stiles some self-prescribed alcoholic therapy. "My house is not the drinking house every time you have a problem. You're gonna turn into like, Amy Winehouse or something." Seriously, was that the best comparison Scott could come up with?

How were they even friends?

"Okay, first of all, drinking away my depressions is not habitually partaking in a veritable drug cocktail and turning into the human version of Jack Skellington. Second, dude. You owe me." Stiels stared down at his mournfully scratched out checklist from last weekend, each line reminding him of the exact moment he could notice Derek slowly opening up.

None of it really mattered anymore, not when just one setback had the chastity belt to Derek's emotions locked up and the key shoved all the way up Robin Hood's colon.

"Do not," Scott shot back petulantly. Okay, so technically he didn’t really owe Stiles anything, but they were best friends and Stiles had totally put up with that month during high school in which Scott had asked him for help figuring out how not to have an asthma attack while performing sexual favors for Allison. It had been the most grueling, over informative month of Stiles' junior year. He'd needed internet therapy sessions via MMORPGs for weeks.

"Do too." So it wasn’t the best method of argument on the face of the planet, but Stiles wasn’t really debating with the brightest bulb in the pack. Scott sighed in aggravation, mumbling under his breath
as if being friends with Stiles was the more difficult than trying to teach Helen Keller how to drive.

"I’m gonna finish my homework, dude. Go back to work."

"Traitor."

Scott hung up and Stiles returned the favor, slamming the phone into the receiver with a little more force than completely necessary. He pressed his face against the desk, rocking the office chair back and forth and dragging his cheek along the polished wood. Derek wouldn’t talk to him, and it wasn’t like he had any friends or family that Stiles could call for help. His emergency contact list.

By God.

Stiles shot up, hissing in pain when his knee smashed into the side of the desk. He scrambled to his feet, running straight for the file cabinet that sat underneath the machine that clocked people in. Did those machines even have a name? Stiles had no idea, he just knew if he stuck his card in, it punched in the time that he clocked in, which worked just fine for him. He grabbed the drawer with everyone’s files, almost pulling over the entire cabinet because the damn thing was locked. The phone rang and Stiles cursed, hurrying back to the desk to answer it.

"Beacon Hills Towing," Stiles breathed, fumbling with the desk drawer that held various sets of keys.

"Hi, uh. I need a tow?"

Stiles bit down on another curse, because he was pretty sure all the profanity escaping his mouth was just creating a huge metaphorical pot of bad karma that had probably gotten him in this situation in the first place. "Yeah, where are you broken down?" Snatching up a pen, he took the woman’s information down, giving her a guestimate of how long it would take for a truck to get there and then hanging up to page one of the drivers.

The second he had a free moment, he rifled through the pile of labeled keys in the drawer, crying out in triumph when he found the one labeled ‘file cabinet’ and jumping up to go and unlock it.

After a few seconds of flitting through the proverbial mine-field of paperwork, he snatched up Derek’s emergency contact sheet, muttering, "pleasepleaseplease," under his breath as he skimmed through it for a name.

Laura Hale

Relation - Sister

Brooklyn, NY What.

Derek had a sister? An older sister? She was literally on the complete opposite half of the entire country, but he had a sister who had survived the fire. A sister with an address and a phone number.

Things could have only been better if naked baby angels descended from the sky right then to give Stiles a hamburger made of light and happiness.

He grabbed the phone, halfway through dialing the number when a thought struck him. Was this going behind Derek’s back? Was he doing – no. Laura was his sister, and Stiles was only asking for advice. It was just like if Stiles fought with Scott and then went and asked Allison or Ms. McCall for help on winning him back over. This wasn’t the same as going to find a crazy murdering psychopath, right?
Stiles finished punching in the number, leaning back into his seat and playing with his pen as the phone continued to ring. It was four in the afternoon, so New York time was something around six or seven, which meant that it was entirely likely nobody would answer.

"Hello?"

Sweet Jesus fuck.

Stiles wrenched forward in the chair, blurtling, "Uh hi, is this Laura?"

"Yes? Is something wrong? Is Derek okay?"

"What? Yes. Yeah, he’s fine- uhm." How the hell did he even phrase what he needed to say? He should have written a mini-script before calling her, holy god.

"Did… did he get fired?"

"No!" Stiles cried, flailing a hand out and knocking the stapler off the desk. "No, he’s. there’s nothing wrong. Uhm. I just, I work with him and I only wanted to ask you something, is all."

There was a long, thoughtful pause on the other end before Laura spoke again. "… is this Stiles?"

"He talks about me?" Stiles squeaked – only he was a man, and men don’t squeak, so his voice just cracked a little bit at the end and hitched up the pitch of his voice by five or six decibels.

Laura laughed loudly on the other end and Stiles could feel his face burning furiously.

"A little bit. Should you be calling me? Last I heard, he was pretty mad at you."

"I know!" Stiles moaned, bending to the side to grab the stapler. "He’s so mad and he won’t talk to me. You have to help me, you’re his sister, you know him. What can I do to make him un-mad at me?"

Laura hummed thoughtfully under her breath, pausing to pull the phone away and talk to someone else in a childish voice. Stiles was about to ask if he’d heard her when there was a child releasing an earsplitting howl that made Laura burst into surprised laughter. Stiles winced, though he kind of wanted to coo because the kid sounded utterly adorable, mimicking the sound of a wolf perfectly.

"I guess Derek’s not the only one with the whole wolf thing, huh?" Stiles asked weakly, because it seemed like a great segue into a conversation.

"Excuse me?" Laura barked. Stiles stiffened, because he was totally not game for making Derek AND his sister mad at him.

"Uh, with the wolves. Derek has a collection and stuff, and y’know.. your kid’s howling. I mean, maybe they just like to howl, that’s totally okay. I just thought maybe uh- you know. It was a family thing, and."

"Oh, no, it’s fine. I thought you meant something else." Laura interrupted, chuckling under her breath. Stiles was pretty sure if he could see her, she’d be the type to shake her head and pat Stiles on the hair fondly.

"Ah." It was entirely likely that a combination of Stiles’ habit to talk a mile a minute, coupled with his nervous mumbling, had made her think he’d been talking about something else entirely. He felt like his mouth was full of angry squirrels running around and making his tongue flop uselessly every
time he tried to say something comprehensible.

"So, you want my help, huh? What do I get out of it?"

"Uh," What could Stiles even do for her? He could attempt to order her something online and ship it to her, but he had a feeling that wasn’t what she was talking about. "Well, uh," "I’m kidding."

"Oh."

Good lord, there was no way Derek and Laura weren’t related. It was like the life goal of the Hale family was to make Stiles flounder uselessly until they took pity on him. He was 88% sure that Laura was also smirking at him, even though he didn’t have any supervision to look across thousands of miles and into her home.

"Did you apologize?"

"Many times!" Stiles cried, flinging his arms out and knocking the stapler off the desk for the second time. He sighed, reaching down to pick it up and set it out of range from his exuberant flailing. "I left him text messages and voice mails and I just covered his time card in sticky notes!

I’m running out of ideas!"

"Hmm, looks like you kind of dug your grave, didn’t you?" Laura teased, the background filled with the sounds of a child barking and laughing, accompanied by the clatter of things being tossed around. "I could try talking."

"No!" Stiles blurted, because if Derek found out Stiles did this a second time, he’d have lost all chances entirely. The computer honked and Stiles clicked around to dispatch the call. "Please don’t, he’s already mad at me, I don’t want him to know I called you. I just uh, I just need to figure out some way to show him I only did it so I could y’know, at least understand him better. Trying to talk to him is like trying to get Tim Burton to make a movie without Johnny Depp, dude. It’s practically impossible."

Laura snorted, sighing quietly. "You did something that put your life in danger. Did you think maybe he’s worried you’re going to get yourself hurt for his benefit?"

"Oh my god," Stiles breathed, eyes going wide. Was that it? Had he scared Derek away? Sweet Lord, it was entirely possible. Derek only had Laura left, and Stiles going and getting himself strangled by the very person who had killed his whole family – "I am such a dick."

"Mhmm."

"I’m a really huge dick."

"Yes, you are." Laura agreed happily.

"You’re not helping."

"Probably not."

Stiles groaned, dropping his face into his hand and sighing into the phone. "I’ll…. I don’t know, I’ll figure something out."

"Why don’t you text me sometime with a status update? I don’t talk to Derek all that much, I could use a spy to keep me informed about his life." Laura offered over the sound of a laughing child and
the clatter of objects being thrown. Stiles decided right then that he much preferred Laura over Derek. Laura was nice, and informative, and she just needed to be male and rugged looking and scowl all the time, and maybe-

Okay, so maybe there wasn’t many other people who Stiles would prefer over Derek, but it wouldn’t hurt the guy to open up a little.

"Yeah, yeah. That’s fine. Thank you so much."

"You’re welcome, kiddo." Again with the kid thing, of course they were related. Stiles bid his farewell, promising a second time to text Laura on his cell phone before he hung up. He winced, seeing that the call was ten minutes behind and he’d yet to send anyone out, hurrying to use the radio and dispatch the closest driver.

By the time Stiles had closed up that night and gotten home, his dad was reclined on the living room sofa and flipping through the stations on the television for something to watch. There was paperwork scattered on the coffee table, as well as half a bottle of whiskey with an empty glass sitting beside it.

Engage operation: clear Derek’s record.

"Hey pop," Stiles greeted, closing the front door and flipping the lock. He sidled up to the couch, fiddling with the strap of his satchel, "So I was wondering—"

"Nope."

Right through the heart, man, not even a chance to finish his sentence. Indignant, Stiles jerked a hand out, "I didn’t even tell you what I was wondering!"

Stiles’ father turned away from the television, giving Stiles a flat look. Stiles stared back, and his dad rolled his eyes. "I’m not doing it."

"Come on, dad!" Stiles cried, "It’s not like he’s a felon or anything!"

"Stiles, it isn’t like you’re trying to protect him, and it isn’t like I’d do it if you were. So… the question is: why do you keep pestering me?"

"I made him angry, dad, really angry." Stiles gripped to the strap of his bag, wringing it between his hands. It wasn’t like he was asking his dad to go to the zoo and run around in the nude, freeing animals and screaming quotes Braveheart. He was just asking for a couple tweaks to some measly criminal records. Stiles’ father sighed, sitting up and grabbing the whiskey to pour himself a fingerful.

"Well y’know, most people don’t appreciate when you go behind their back to visit their crazy exes who happened to burn down their home and kill their whole family. I would suggest not doing that in the future."

Harsh. Harsher than the time he’d arrested Stiles for breaking into a crimescene and had sat outside the cell for ten hours doing paperwork and listening to Stiles whine about the cleanliness of the toilet.

"I have no future if he doesn’t forgive me!"

"Have you tried apologizing?" His dad muttered, peering at Stiles over the rim of his tumbler.

"Yes! I even drew a smiley face on the sticky note, and I made all those ridiculous sad face emoticons in the three text messages I sent him!" Stiles crossed over, reaching for his dad’s whiskey
bottle and having his hand slapped away for his efforts. He rubbed the back of his palm, shooting his father a dirty look.

Stiles’ dad sighed grievously, rubbing at his left temple and murmuring, "Did you think that maybe explaining yourself might help?"

"I did that." It was the first thing he’d done!

The look his dad gave him wasn’t really reassuring. "Did you apologize for being an idiot?"

Offended, Stiles scoffed. He hadn’t been an idiot about it – sure he’d been strangled a little bit – but he’d actually considered himself quite clever about finding more information on Kate and having the chance to talk to her.

"...right. I forgot you’re deathly allergic to admitting you were wrong," Stiles’ father said dryly, taking a swig of his whiskey.

"Dad, not helping." Stiles pointed out, just to make sure his father understood that he was utterly lacking in the whole ‘parental mentor’ department.

"Stiles. I’m not your counselor. I can’t tell you what to do and what not to do, but if you seriously want him to forgive you? You might want to think about him and not about yourself. Think about how he feels, not about how bad you feel."

"..."

"Sucks, doesn’t it?"

"Worst father ever." Stiles groused, giving his dad the best scowl he could muster and earning a grin and raise of the tumbler in response. Obviously their relationship was currently no better than Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, sans the whole… arm chopping off-ness. Stiles went up the stairs, taking them by two and bursting into his room. He flopped onto his bed, sighing into his pillow and kicking his legs up and down in a fit of frustration worthy enough to contend with a Nicholas Cage freakout. Once his legs were tired, Stiles rolled off of his bed and to his desk, snagging an old notebook with a few spare pages left and grabbing a pen.

Obviously they were going to have to communicate the good ol’ fashioned way of snail mail.

Stiles spent two hours constructing an apology letter, having to scrap two of them because he got sidetracked halfway through and started to doodle in the margins. By the time he was done, Stiles was all too happy to toss his pen down and crawl into bed so he could wake up refreshed and ready for school the next morning. (More like refreshed and hopefully ready to at least devise a way to get the actual letter to Derek without going all Edward Cullen and stalking the guy until Derek acknowledged him long enough for the note to exchange hands.)

Sadly, during the five hours of classes and subsequent three hours of moping around the house afterwards, Stiles had difficulty finding the balls to actually do anything with the letter that was folded into an envelope inside of his satchel. He was making his third trip into the kitchen for the routine ‘check the fridge, sigh, close the fridge, go back upstairs’ excursion when his father’s voice came from the office.

"I can’t do paperwork when you’re leaking feelings everywhere. Leave."

"But-"
"Leave."

Obviously his dad wasn’t in the mood for emo Stiles 2.0. (Emo Stiles 1.0 had made his debut back in middle school, which was a very taboo subject in the Stilinski household. The mere mention of Nickelback or Linkin Park had Stiles’ father cringing in memory.)

Stiles sighed dramatically, shut the fridge, and jogged upstairs to grab his things, texting Scott with, ‘coming over. ETA 10 minutes.’

‘Dude, you have to stop with the driving jargon.’

Stiles snagged his keys and satchel, taking the steps by two and bidding his father farewell. ‘they use ETA in the military, too.’ ‘don’t care.’

What was it with everyone battering at Stiles’ fragile psyche with a meat cleaver of indifference? If he were a teenage girl, he’d have cried at least four times about how nobody cared. (Unless that teenage girl was Lydia, in which he’d probably just force everyone to care or suffer the consequences.)

Scott’s house wasn’t much better than his own, save for the fact that Scott had the latest Call of Duty game for Xbox, which meant that two hours were spent brutally slaughtering anyone on their map.

After their umpteenth game, Stiles blurted, "what if I showed up at his house and I told him I was sorry?"

"That sounds like a good idea, dude." Scott replied, sniping Stiles from across the map. "You should do that now, because I'm tired of hearing you talk about how much you suck. I already know you suck, you don’t have to keep reminding me."

Stiles elbowed Scott in the ribs, earning a wheeze and a punch to the arm. Scott jumped him and they wrestled for a second before Stiles squawked when Scott knocked him off of the couch and onto the floor.

"I hate all of you. All of you." Stiles hissed vehemently, flailing for a second before he was able to right himself and stand.

"Yet you keep coming back." Scott replied, voice smug when he grabbed his controller and resumed playing.

"Dude."

"Dude." Scott echoed. Stiles rolled his eyes, reaching beside the coffee table to grab his bag. Scott was the worst person to talk to about relationship issues because the only girl he’d ever had was Allison, and after a few bumps in the road at the beginning, they’d essentially become the most disgustingly perfect couple that Stiles sometimes wondered if Allison had been birthed from Candyland itself.

"I’m gonna head out, and I’m stealing some of your tape." Stiles said, grabbing the aforementioned roll of tape that was resting inside of a drawer on the coffee table. Scott feigned disinterest, mashing buttons on the controller.

"Have fun."

"Fuck you."
Scott’s laughter followed Stiles straight out the door. The trip to Derek’s apartment didn’t take too long. Stiles knew he was working, which meant it was a perfect time to employ his spur-of-themoment idea and tape the letter to Derek’s front door. He jogged up the stairs to the apartment, first taping the corners and then setting about taping every single side just to ensure that the letter didn’t fall and get lost in the abyss of wherever lost things went.

"What are you doing?"

Stiles jerked his head around, eyes landing on a girl who was probably around his age. She looked achingly familiar, blonde hair falling around her shoulders in soft curls and red lips pulled back into an amused grin.

"Do I know you?" Stiles blurted, because he lacked any manners what-so-ever. The woman laughed, crossing her arms and leaning up against the door to the apartment next to Derek’s.

"Didn’t expect you to know Derek," she muttered, brows rising high. Stiles slowly pressed down another line of tape.

"Do I… know you?" He repeated. Granted, he was pretty sure he’d remember a chick like this, what with her breasts half-popping out of her shirt. The arms across her chest helped to amplify her cleavage to a point where she could have easily starred in a number of films involving the 17 century with a rack like that.

"We went to school together." She supplied, pushing away from the wall and taking a step closer. Stiles didn’t really recall any girl who was as drop-dead gorgeous as the one before him, but then again, he’d mostly been focused on Lydia for the entire duration of his pubescent life.

"Ah." Stiles said intelligently.

"Erica. My name? It's Erica."

A first name wasn’t entirely helpful, given that Stiles knew of at least four Ericas that had gone to Beacon Hills High, but none of them had been a blonde bombshell like the one standing before him. He must have passed her a few times in the hallway, but never held conversation long enough to know her name.

"Ahhh…” Stiles made sure to sound like he knew exactly which Erica she was, and then turned back to continue taping the letter to Derek’s door. Erica approached, hair swishing and reeking of a sickly sweet perfume that was just shy of overpowering.

"You sure you won’t wanna just give me that letter? I can give it to Derek when he gets off work."

Stiles was halfway to turning her down before what she said actually struck him. A sharp spike of panic shot through him and he whipped his head around to stare at her. "You talk to Derek?"

Erica hummed under her breath, leaning against the door frame and entirely way too close into Stiles’ space. "We’ve had a few dinner dates." Her grin was wolfish, crooked and oozing a smug coil that made Stiles want to hit her in the face with something metal and heavy. He resisted the desire, because such assault was a ridiculous concept. Stiles was a complete gentleman. He did, however, panic just the tiniest bit because shit, what if he’d really pushed Derek so far away that he was looking for someone else who could make him happy?

"When?" Stiles swallowed heavily, trying to feign disinterest and probably failing miserably – which
was something he was good at. Failing, not acting.

Erica looked at Stiles for a long moment, shrugging one shoulder. "I made him some chicken with rice last night. They say the best way to a man’s heart is through his stomach."

Oh hell no. She was not feeding Derek. Stiles was the one who fed Derek, who bonded with him over foodstuffs and pointless conversation. Though Derek had never previously mentioned a potential sex-goddess of a neighbor, he’d also been giving Stiles the could shoulder for over a week. It was entirely possible…

Stiles pursed his lips, turning back to the letter and adding another layer of tape. The entire thing was starting to look like it had become mummified in layers of the stuff, only the middle section with Derek’s name in messy scrawl left safe from sticky doom.

Erica, apparently, was perceptive enough to take note of Stiles’ silence, and laughed softly before cooing, "aw, you like him. How cute."

"I didn’t ask for your opinion." Stiles replied, his voice clipped with an edge of frustration. He hoped this chick got a serious case of the shits from her own cooking, and that the next time Derek came over to eat with her, he was scared off from the stink coming from the bathroom.

"I guess we’ll just have to see who gets him first, then." Erica chuckled with a shake of her head, pushing herself off of the wall and patting Stiles on the head. She turned, swaying her hips and returning to her apartment. Jesus, what was she, Catwoman?

It took a second for Stiles to do much more than stand awkwardly on Derek’s doorstep before his irritation hit a sudden peak. Snarling, Stiles flung the roll of tape across the hallway with a hiss of, "fuck you, bitch," before realizing that the tape wasn't actually his. He cursed again, jogging after it and then stomping all the way to his jeep. He was seriously getting sick of possessive women who acted like Derek was just some kind of thing that they could stake claim over.

It was especially ridiculous because Stiles was practically bending over backwards like some crazy contortionist act just to get Derek to forgive him. He clambered back into his jeep, heading straight for Scott’s house.

Stiles was barely in the living room before he threw his bag down and growled, "I think there’s a newcomer to this battle."

If so, he’d just have to TKO the bitch all the way back into 9th grade.

"Whut?" Scott looked away from his game, brows furrowing at Stiles in confusion before he shot a few more grunts that were squealing and running around the screen. It was the sound of glorious CGI carnage that helped to sooth Stiles’ frazzled nerves just the tiniest bit.

"His neighbor," Stiles supplied, taking a seat next to Scott and reaching for another controller so they could start up a 2 person match after Scott finished his level. "I guess they’ve had dates or something together."

Scott paused the game, eyes going wide as he stared at Stiles. "Wait, what?" Stiles shrugged and Scott gestured wildly in hopes that Stiles would elaborate. "Wait, did she say they dated?"

"She said they had dinner dates. She made him chicken." Chicken was obviously some sort of secret
code for sex. Like Fondue.

Stiles would not be pleased to find out that Derek had done Fondue with Erica. Not one bit.

It was apparent that Scott had trouble processing the information, because he was doing that squinty Neanderthal eye thing that always meant Stiles was confusing him. It was kind of depressing that Stiles could actually identify Scott’s level of incomprehension by the expression on his face. "Okay. So. Does Derek even like chicks?"

"... I would assume so, given that he has been visiting his crazy ex girlfriend for the past twelve years after she immolated his entire family."

"I think immolated is when you set yourself on fire, dude."

God dammit, Allison. Did you have to expand Scott’s vocabulary?

"Oh my God, Scott. SO not the point." Stiles groaned, flopping back against the couch with a sigh.

"Sorry, man." Scott didn’t sound particularly sorry. He sounded more like a serial killer apologizing to the public before going on death row.

Watching Scott save his game and return to the menu, Stiles tapped the toes of his sneakers together, brain wracking over itself for ideas. "What if I just decapitated a Barbie head and wrote Palin on her face and tied it to the grill of his truck?"

Scott’s pinched expression came back with a vengeance, turning to stare at Stiles like he’d grown a third nipple on his forehead. "What?"

"... wouldn’t hurt to try." Stiles murmured as the game started up.

Pausing the game, Scott gestured to Stiles in a motion that demanded elaboration. "Wait what? What does Palin have to do with any of this?"

Palin had everything to do with it, obviously. "Derek thinks she’s the devil."

"What are you even talking about?" Scott cried, because he liked to yell when he was really confused, since yelling seemed to make things easier to understand, apparently.

"Do you have any rum left?" Stiles asked instead.

Scott sighed, growling under his breath, standing, and heading for the kitchen to retrieve the bottle.

It wasn’t until Stiles was heading to class the next day that he got any form of contact from Derek.

Even then, it was just a single text message that read, ‘I got your letter.’

What did that even mean? Did Derek always have to be this vague? Would it physically pain him to bother adding some sort of opinion on the matter at the end? Stiles took his seat in the corner of the class, staring at it for a good minute before he typed back, ‘...’

The teacher came in, asking for the weekend essays to be handed in. Stiles grabbed his paper, sending Derek another text of, ‘...? Well?’ and then giving his essay to the girl sitting in front of him.

Ten minutes into the class, Stiles’ phone went off with Derek’s response. ‘I’m still pissed at you.’
Okay, like that wasn’t blatantly obvious. The only way Derek could have been more obvious was if he’d come to Stiles’ house and written ‘I’m still mad at you’ in toilet paper across his front lawn. Stiles’ chest clenched, and he swallowed heavily to try and keep the lurch of panic at bay. ‘I’m sorry.’

It was impossible to concentrate on anything their instructor was saying when he was on the verge of flipping desks out of sheer anticipation for Derek’s reply. It came five minutes later, curt and short like everything Derek said.

‘Sorry doesn’t take back the fact that you went behind my back.’

Shit. Okay, so it was the truth, but Derek was making it seem way worse than it totally was. ‘I was afraid to ask you :('. So it was a partial truth, because Stiles was afraid to ask, he just neglected to mention that also just tired of trying to wean information from Derek.

‘But you weren’t afraid of getting yourself strangled half to death.’

Derek sent back. Stiles hit reply, halfway through typing a response when a second message came in. ‘If you’re afraid to ask me now, what am I supposed to expect if we were to start dating?’

Oh sweet Jesus, Derek wanted to date him. Wanted, as in past tense, as in Stiles may have just completely destroyed any chance he had. This was a fuckup almost epic enough to rival Briony’s in Atonement, except that nobody was going to die. Hopefully.

Dying of heartache was entirely possible.

Ten seconds to freaking out, Stiles quickly mashed in his reply. ‘I’m sorry, I won’t do it again, I swear. Allison’s her niece and I just didn’t think about it. I wanted to meet- ‘

He hit his character limit, cursing and sending the message before typing in the rest, ‘-the kind of person who would be so fucked up they would do something like that. I couldn’t understand it. D:

D: D: ‘

Almost the entire class passed by before Derek responded, making it impossible to focus or even to keep still without checking his phone every few seconds in case the vibrate mode malfunctioned. When he did finally text back, Stiles scrambled to open up the message before he died of anticipation. ‘if you don’t trust me, I won’t be able to trust you.’

Was it okay to cry? Probably not – especially in class. He didn’t think the instructor would appreciate if Stiles broke down and started blubbering like a baby. He couldn’t even think of what to say, so instead he opened up the emoticon option on his text program and slammed Derek with a slew of frowny and crying faces.

It became apparent in the last half hour of class that Derek wasn’t going to reply, and Stiles was hit with this debilitating wave of depression and self loathing. He felt worse than the time he’d been four years old and threw Scott’s Labrador puppy off the top of the slide at the playground because he thought it was Krypto the Superdog. Biting down on the inside of his cheek, Stiles sent another text of, ‘maybe you’re better off with Erica anyway. I’m pretty sure she’s not an epic fuckup like I am,’ because a little self-depreciation never hurt anyone.

Stiles put his head down on the desk, making sure to angle his head so the instructor could see he was still awake. Derek’s response came surprisingly quick, his text sending a small burst of hope into
Stiles’ battered emotional wellbeing. ‘what are you talking about.’

‘I know you and her have gone on a few dates…’

Stiles grabbed his pencil, tapping it against the desk and staring at his phone. He only stopped tapping when someone prodded him in the back and hissed for him to stop on pain of stabbing. Stiles wasn’t really in the mood for being stabbed, so he set his pencil down and softly drummed his fingers against his notebook. Derek’s reply text made Stiles’ face break out into a ridiculous grin as he read, ‘she makes me food and I proof-read her books for free. She’s not my type.’

Oh thank God. There was someone out there that must have been praying for Stiles. Either that, or maybe he hadn’t completely ruined any chance he had. Stiles couldn’t stop himself from asking the question that came to the forefront of his mind. ‘What is your type?’

The seconds passed by so slowly that Stiles could have stabbed himself in the appendix with a toothbrush and felt like he was in less agony than the time it took for Derek to message him back.

‘People who don’t know when to quit, apparently. And use too many smiley faces.’

Stiles couldn’t even control himself from shrieking, "YES!" and throwing his fist into the air, attracting the attention of every single one of his classmates. The instructor fell silent, hand halfway to writing on the dry erase board as she watched Stiles with a quirked eyebrow. Stiles suddenly felt like Cleavon Little’s character in Blazing Saddles when he had first showed up in the old western town and everything had come to a complete stop to stare at the man in abject horror.

"Uh, my bad," Stiles croaked, sliding down into his seat and hiding his phone under the desk, face burning. Regardless of the fact that he’d become the center of attention, Stiles couldn’t stop smiling like a madman. He sent Derek another explosion of emoticons – this time ones with smiles and grins.

‘Stop that.’

Oh no, Derek. It was far too late to stop Stiles – not when Stiles was now aware that he still had a chance.

All he had to do was prove himself.

----

“Maybe if you didn’t dress like you were still in the 7th grade,” Lydia suggested, gesturing across the desk to Stiles’ person. Stiles had initially thought it a good idea to seek advice from the one girl he knew was notorious for ensnaring men into her clutches, but now he was starting to reconsider going to her for advice. He stared down at his clothes - a t-shirt, a red hoodie, jeans and some old sneakers. How did 7th graders even dress? Didn’t they all take fashion advice from Miley Cyrus or something? Stiles was pretty sure he didn’t look anything like Miley Cyrus.

“What’s wrong wi-“

“-and talked less,” Lydia added thoughtfully, clicking her pen and glancing skyward as if mulling over her words with interest. Okay, harsh. Sure, Stiles had a tendency to let his mouth run a like a 5 year old high on pixie sticks, but Derek didn’t seem to complain.

“He likes when I talk.” Stiles protested, sitting forward in his chair. The office had been slow all Friday night, which made it easier for Stiles to pester Lydia into tips on how to get Derek to
overcome his reluctance - and also forgive him.

Lydia scoffed, resting her elbow on the desk and giving Stiles a fond look like one would give a baby sloth trapped in a blanket. “Honey, nobody likes when you talk. They just put up with it.” Rude.

“Thanks, Lydia.” Stiles shot back dryly. Lydia gave him a bright grin, her hair bobbing as she sat up just the tiniest bit to peer at Stiles analytically. Stiles suddenly felt like he was under the burning gaze of Ru Paul, waiting to be judged as he showed the whole world his inner Queen.

“You’re welcome.” Lydia swept her gaze down Stiles’ body, humming, “ -and, maybe wear tighter clothes? You should emphasize your assets.”

Assets? What assets? Did Stiles suddenly grow a pair of breasts overnight? It would have been nice if someone had let him know, because Stiles was rather certain he could have been groping himself for a good few hours, if that were the case. On the other hand, she could mean his exquisite derriere, which Stiles knew for a fact was nice and plump from years of running around during Lacrosse practice. “My ass is nice,” he agreed, smiling lewdly.

Lydia scoffed, sitting back in her chair and rolling her eyes. “Assets, darling, not ass. But it wouldn’t hurt, I suppose.”

It was entirely probable that WWIII could start if someone tried sticking Lydia in a room with Simon Cowell - given how horrifically talented they were at completely annihilating a person’s self-esteem with only a few choice words. Stiles pinched his face in frustration, sighing and flopping back into his chair. “Maybe I should keep doing what I’m doing.”

The sound that escaped Lydia was a cross between a groan and a snort, her lips pursing as she waved her hand around - maybe in hopes to dispel the pungent air of idiocy that Stiles was apparently exuding. “Please. You’ve been trying for at least two months - and I know for a fact that you, my dear,” Lydia pointed a finger at Stiles, “Did something very bad that made him extremely unhappy with you.”

“How-”

“Cameras.”

“oh.”

Oh, of course. How could Stiles forget that Finstock was the creepiest of creeper managers and probably spent his free time lurking on Stiles just so he could find the perfect chance to jump on him for anything under the sun. It was entirely likely that their manager took some sort of sick pleasure from Stiles’ self-induced misery. The man seemed like a sadist.

“So anyway,” Lydia, pushed her hair behind her shoulder, rubbing her lips together, “You’re obviously not bringing your ‘a’ game, and your little caveman needs a push in the right direction.” What.

Caveman, really? If anything, Derek was a wolfman. A very sexy, perpetually scowling wolfman who Stiles wouldn’t mind getting a little animalistic with. In the biblical sense.

The phone rang and Lydia ignored Stiles’ uncomprehending look to answer it, taking down information and then dispatching one of the drivers before she hung up. For a second, she looked ready to lecture Stiles a bit more on how much he failed at getting into Derek’s pants, before her eyes seemed to light up and she reached for the phone again, putting it on speaker and dialing.
“What?” Derek’s voice blared over the speaker. Stiles sucked in a sharp breath, waving his arms around frantically because oh god no, Lydia wasn’t so soulless as to actually call Derek and talk about how pathetic Stiles was, was she?

Lydia shot Stiles a warning look as she dropped her voice into a seductive roll. “I was wondering if you’d like to get something to eat after work tonight, big guy.”

No way. No damn way, she was not asking him out on a date. He didn’t really mean it when he’d considered her soulless, really. She had a soul, somewhere deep down under piles of Prada shoes and apathy, right?

She was totally encroaching on Stiles’ territory. The only way that Stiles could claim Derek any more than he already had would be to use a cattle-prod and brand Derek’s ass with his initials. Which probably wasn’t a good idea, actually. If anyone saw ‘SS’ tattooed into Derek’s ass, he’d most likely get lynched by people thinking he was a neo-Nazi.

The longer Derek was quiet, the more anxious got until he was on the edge of falling out of his seat when the man finally spoke.

“Sorry. You’re not my type.”

If Stiles could articulate the emotions he was feeling beyond an incomprehensible keysmash, he’d happily do so. As of now, all he could feel was relief, anticipation, fear, and hope all pulverized together in a disgusting pot pie of emotions.

“I’m everyone’s type.” Lydia scoffed, looking at Stiles with an expression that clearly read, ‘I’m willingly allowing myself to be rejected for your sake,’ as if the concept of Lydia facing rejection was as foreign as the American Government allowing gay marriage in all 50 states.

“No mine.” Derek shot back grumpily.

Stiles clutched to the arms of his chair, holding his breath the second Lydia hummed and asked, “and what is your type?”

“…. people who talk to much and don’t understand the concept of privacy,” Derek mumbled.

Stiles was so far on the edge of his chair that the wheels shifted and he slipped off, flipping it to the side with a clatter so loud that it almost drowned out Derek’s soft muttering of, “and probably detrimental to my mental health.”

Stiles sucked in a sharp breath because holy mother of fried ice-cream, Derek was talking about him. Okay so it was probably insulting to be considered detrimental to Derek’s health, but apparently he was a masochist and liked it.

Lydia was staring at Stiles with wide eyes that easily conveyed the, ‘are you out of your mind, you crackhead?’ thoughts that must have been going through her head. Stiles shrugged helplessly, struggling to get his chair upright again with as little noise as possible. He apparently failed miserably because Derek was dead silent on the other line.

“… Stiles?”

Stiles jerked up, staring at the phone and then at Lydia. Lydia snapped her eyes to his and Stiles flailed his arms around, shaking his head to try and silently plead, ‘no, for the love of god, don’t tell him I’m here.’
Lydia pointed at him - a point that Stiles knew quite well to mean that he would be owing her some sort of fee in the future - and sighed dramatically. “Stiles? Really? That’s your type?”

Derek’s lack of response was enough for Lydia to give a disappointed hum of, “you have horrible taste,” that earned an annoyed grunt from Derek. Lydia seemed to take a malicious pleasure in laying the insults on thicker than a slice of butter in the hands of Paula Dean. Stiles stared at the phone, as if waiting for Derek to climb through it like some crazy anime film in which Stiles would wonder if he’d taken acid drops to the eyes. Lydia rested her chin on the heel of her palm. “I mean, it’s not like he’s anywhere near your league. Why not go with a girl like me? At least I know when to keep my mouth shut.”

“Lydia,” Derek growled. Lydia’s eyes were practically melting into Stiles’ face like Superman’s laser vision as she released another theatrical sigh.

“Whatsoever. It’s your funeral. I don’t see why you’re pulling him around by the dick - he’s head over heels for you.”

Good god, could Lydia paint a more pathetic picture of Stiles? She made it sound like he was one knife away from cutting his ear off and sending it to Derek wrapped in a blood-drenched napkin.

He shifted, fidgeting so badly that his chair was making obnoxious squeaking sounds like a dying rabbit.

“It’s none of your business.”

Lydia’s eyes went wide, a grin pulling at her glossed lips and flitting her gaze back to the phone. “Derek, honey. I’m just trying to understand here,” she cooed complacently, “I mean, if you’re not going to try, I might as well see what all the hype is about. He’s kinda cute. I have been wondering if he’s a talker in bed.”

Five years ago, Stiles would have eagerly offered Lydia the opportunity to find such things out on her own. Possibly multiple times, on multiple surfaces. Even now, it was hard not to fall back on the old habit of taking any bit of interest she doled out. Instead, he sat back down and clasped his hands together, chest tight for a reason he couldn’t explain.

“Lydia.”

“Derek.” Lydia echoed cheerily, mocking Derek’s warning growl with a teasing note of her own.

“I’m not having this conversation with you.”

Huffing, Lydia sat back. “Maybe I should just be a lesbian. Men are emotionally constipated.”

Derek grunted and hung up. The second Stiles heard the line go dead, he jumped out of his seat, hands pumping into the air and shrieking when the running fan bashed into his fist. He wrenched both arms back, cradling his injured fingers tenderly.

“I expect a nice pair of shoes from this,” Lydia pointed out, watching Stiles rub his hand. He stared at her, eyes wide. Did she actually expect payment for hitting on Stiles beau-to-be? How… American.

“You didn’t even do anything,” Stiles muttered, watching Lydia’s eyes roll so violently that it reminded him of a zombie for just a split second.

“Either way, whatever you’re doing is working, so stop being so self-deprecating. You’re oozing
hormonal teenager all over my office. Now shoo." She swiped a bit of imaginary dust from her desk, looking up when Stiles didn’t move and making a shooing motion.

Stiles grinned, thanking her and hurrying out of the office. He needed to concoct a plan that would help Derek realize how much of an awesome boyfriend he could make. Which meant he needed to do something to make Derek smile.

Hopefully by tomorrow, he’d have a better plan than attaching a mutilated Barbie doll to the grill Derek’s truck with Sarah Palin’s name scribbled on the forehead.

Twelve hours later, Stiles shoved a mutilated Barbie doll labeled ’Sarah Palin’ at Isaac, eyes intense. “Do it when he’s in the bathroom.”

Isaac stared at the doll, pursing his lips. “This is creepy,” he pointed out quietly, looking up at Stiles, “really creepy.”

Okay, Isaac obviously didn’t understand the concept of humor, because it was totally not creepy. In fact, it could possibly be hilarious if Derek didn’t take it the wrong way and instead try to return the doll to Stiles via suppository.

“Oh my God, dude. Just do it. I can always find you some tire changes, if I have to.”

Isaac snatched the doll out of Stiles’ hand. “Why does he always ask me to do the weird gayboyfriends stuff?” He whined under his breath, shoving the doll into the pocket of his trousers and leaving the office. Stiles was tempted to yell after Isaac that if he and Derek were, in fact, boyfriends, then Stiles wouldn’t have to coerce Isaac into doing aforementioned weird gay things.

Not weird gay like touching Stiles’ nipples or something. Just tying a doll to Derek’s truck.

He drew in a long, shuddering breath, wiped his clammy palms on the hips of his jeans, and headed back to his desk to sit down and pretend to look busy. A half hour of inactivity went by before the office door opened and Derek walked in with the doll clutched in his hand.

Derek stared - the stare of a man trying to suddenly acquire telepathy so he could pick Stiles’ brain apart like a T-Rex with a dead carcass.

“Did you laugh?” Stiles blurted, setting his pen down before he started to frantically click it. “I laughed.”

Not even a twitch. Stiles was pretty sure he could break Derek’s kneecaps with a tire iron and still get the same dead-eyed stare that he was receiving at that very moment.

“No laugh?” Stiles ventured, because he was seriously starting to wonder if Derek would actually consider Barbie-doll suppositories. “Not funny? No?” Turning on his heel, Derek left the office.

Fuck.

Stiles exhaled, burying his face in his hands and ignoring the computer honking at him with a call. That had been a totally awesome plan. Granted - not his best, but still awesome. Maybe Derek was just still angry at him, even though he’d acknowledged Stiles’ apologies and has seemed to at least begrudgingly accept them. Didn’t that mean they were ready to move on? Wasn’t it a coupley thing to say ‘you’re an ass but I want to bone you anyway’ or something along those lines?

The office door opened and Stiles peeked up to see Derek standing there sans-Barbie and looking like he was suffering from Vader’s death-choke.
“Why do you keep trying?” That was… unexpected.

“What?” Stiles said intelligently, his head bobbing low like a confused owl.

“You keep… doing things…”

“To… make you smile?” Stiles offered, because it looked like Derek was struggling to admit he felt anything other than mild annoyance or an embittered rage at life in general. Derek jerked his head in something that could have been a nod - or just an attempt to keep from looking like a robot that had been frozen in place.

“I want to.” Stiles pointed out, chest tightening just a fraction as he gestured to Derek. “Dude, I really do. I want to make you smile. Seriously, man, you’re pretty awesome when you’re not doing the whole, dark and mysterious deal that makes most people think you’re in some sort of cult biker gang.”

“What.”

Derek’s eyes were marginally wider than they had been a few seconds prior - and seriously, he had some sexy eyes. They were a pale teal that was not-quite-green, but not-quite-blue. If Stiles were any creepier, he’d want to put them in a jar just so he could marvel at their color any time he wanted. Instead, Stiles just gave Derek his cheesiest smile that he could manage without crying hysterically out of anxiety.

“If you smiled, I should totally get a reward,” he pointed out seriously. If he’d spent the past two months stumbling over himself to get Derek to notice him, there wasn’t much he could do now that could make him look anymore desperate than he already was.

Derek’s face went expressionless, shoulders tensing as he asked tightly, “What kind of reward.”

Oh, Derek. Dear, sweet, ignorant Derek. That was not a question you asked a man you’ve spent weeks blueballing and waving your ass in front of like a fertile woman begging to be mounted.

Stiles needed to stop reading internet porn.

“Be creative?” Stiles suggested, grabbing his pen and clicking it. He licked his lips, swallowing heavily at the pensive expression that crossed Derek’s face. It was followed by a lot of expressions, and a lot of eyebrow shifting that reminded Stiles of the creepy Cadbury commercial that had those two kids and the balloon.

Derek was around the desk in the beat of a heart, startling Stiles so badly that he jerked back and almost flipped his chair over. Derek snagged the back, steadying it and then grabbing Stiles’ arm.

“Ohgod,” Stiles breathed, stumbling to his feet and really hoping this wasn’t going to end in some form of bodily harm.

Addendum: bodily harm that didn’t coincide with sexual gratification.

What Stiles wasn’t expecting, was for Derek to drag Stiles into his chest and hug him.

Oh sweet glorious Narnia, Derek was hugging him.

Derek nosed against Stiles’ neck, breathing in deeply through his nose and tightening his arms enough where Stiles couldn’t help the soft grunt that left him. Being hugged by Derek was like being wrapped in the warm embrace of a hairless, cuddly sasquatch made of nothing but love and
happiness. Stiles inched his arms around Derek’s hips, grin pulling at his lips. This wasn’t exactly what he’d expected, but it was far better than anything he’d gotten so far. The only way this could have been better is if there was more kissing and orgasms involved.

Preferably a lot of orgasms.

“This works.” Stiles muttered into Derek’s jaw, trying not to shudder too much when Derek’s head moved just the tiniest bit and made his stubble scrape against Stiles’ skin and send a tingle straight down Stiles’ spine.

Stiles really hated those moments when a single touch could turn him on so fast it made his ass tickle. This was one of those moments, because he couldn’t stop himself from squirming just the tiniest bit like an excited rabbit.

“What did you have in mind?” Holy God, Stiles could feel the vibrations of Derek’s voice straight down into his bones. It made his toes curl inside of his sneakers, head shifting just the slightest bit when Derek started to pull away - cheeks brushing and making Stiles’ dick twitch at the faintest sting of bristly stubble scraping his skin.

Down boy.

“Me?” Stiles croaked, fingers drifting from Derek’s back to land on the offensively sexy dip of Derek’s waist. “N-nothing. No, nothing. Me - I don’t plan ahead. My mind was totally, completely blank when I suggested that. Nope, not a thing in my head that, uh, I wanted.” Was Stiles talking? He couldn’t remember if he was supposed to be saying anything else because Derek’s fingers had somehow decided to sneak their way up to his jaw.

Oh fuck.

Was he-

Derek dipped his head down and Stiles choked on something that might have been words, but sounded more like a ‘hhhuuueeeeee’ noise that had probably originated from some extinct species of animal. He was surging upwards before he could stop himself, lungs freezing in his chest the second he pressed his mouth to Derek’s in a sudden, impulsive kiss.

He pulled away almost immediately after, because this wasn’t Italy, Stiles, you couldn’t just run around kissing people without permission. “Sorry,” he blurted, mouth brushing Derek’s with each syllable, “jumped the gun there… my bad.”

Any notion that Derek may not have wanted to kiss him was thrown out the window faster than a good show on Fox when Derek huffed out a laugh, rolled his eyes, and hooked his hand behind Stiles’ head to drag him into another kiss.

Oh god, his heart was going to burst. He was going to fracture into tens of thousands of pieces made from confetti hearts because he couldn’t even comprehend that this was really happening. It was a dream - a hallucination. He was tripping balls again and his brain was coming up with a crazed fantasy in which Derek’s hand was cupping his face, calluses scraping the lobe of Stiles’ ear as he coaxed Stiles’ mouth to work against his own.

Stiles couldn’t breathe, he couldn’t do anything but kiss back helplessly and try not to smile like he’d been injected with enough morphine to knock out an enraged elephant. His fingers tangled in the fabric of Derek’s uniform shirt, only able to remember to breathe through his nose when Derek drew back just for a second before diving in for another kiss, sucking Stiles’ upper lip between his own
with a scrape of teeth.

It was electrifying, more exhilarating than anything else Stiles could ever recall experiencing. To have this, just this one moment after so long trying and telling himself that he would succeed - but somehow feeling as if he couldn’t. It was the most gratifying kiss of Stiles’ entire life.

He inhaled sharply, overwhelmed with the scent of sweat, oil, and bar soap that must have come from Derek’s shower earlier that morning. The hand that Derek wasn’t cradling Stiles’ face with fell to his neck, squeezing the junction of his shoulder and making Stiles’ knees quake when they toed the edge of a pressure point.

He almost jumped out of his skin when Derek released a soft, rumbling moan into his mouth. Stiles was always the one making sound, always moving and talking and generating noise - but he’d made Derek moan. Not only had Derek moaned, but he’d done it before Stiles had. Not that Stiles wasn’t having so much fun that he couldn’t moan. On the contrary, he was so into it he’d forgotten how to even use his vocal chords.

Speaking of which….

“Holy God,” Stiles breathed into Derek’s lips, speech muffled when Derek chased the words with his mouth, dragging Stiles’ body flush against his own. May the Archangel Michael grant merciful passage of Stiles’ soul to the afterlife because he must have died and gone to heaven.

The phone chose that time to ring and remind Stiles that no, his life was not a perfect romance film with happiness and sex and wonderful musical montages to help pass the boring moments along.

He drew back, breath hitching when Derek swept forward to steal one last kiss before letting Stiles twist in his arms to answer the phone with a breathless, “Beacon Hills Towing.”

“What did I tell you about getting nookie with Derek in the office?!?” Finstock roared from the other line.

By the gun of Han Solo, could this get any more mortifying?

“Ohmygod- OH MY GOD. Don’t fire me! Why are you even watching the cameras, oh my god dude,” Stiles cried, swatting at Derek’s hand because of course now Derek would choose to be handsy and run his palms all over Stiles’ sides. Stiles’ extremely sensitive sides that could sometimes earn people elbows to the face when they hit the ticklish areas.

“Get the fuck back to work!”

Derek, smiling wider than Stiles had ever seen him do in the time they’d known each other, reached over Stiles’ shoulder to pluck the phone out of his hand. “Make me third out tonight.”

“Bullshit.” Finstock spat from the other end. Derek snorted, pressing the flat of his hand against Stiles’ back and slowly creeping his fingers under Stiles’ shirt. Oh god, now was not the time for a boner alert because his manager was watching the cameras at that exact moment.

It was apparent that their manager was on the cameras because he made a pained noise on the other line and grunted, “You’re third out until ten. I don’t wanna see any more of that gay crap in the office.”

“Deal.” Derek grunted, hanging up the phone and pulling his hand out from under Stiles’ shirt. He looked down at Stiles, who was resolutely focusing on disassembling his pen and reassembling it
because only a limited few people could maintain erections while trying to put a pen back together. Stiles was not one of them.

Wrestling the pen from Stiles’ hand, Derek rubbed his nose into Stiles’ temple and drew in a deep breath through his nose. “We’ll talk about this tonight,” he murmured.

A thought crossed Stiles’ mind and he frowned in confusion. “Why not Monday?” Which Stiles totally didn’t want to wait for, but it made more sense because Derek got off the clock at eight on Mondays and Stiles only worked weekends. Derek scowled, pressing the pen back into Stiles’ hand.

“I’m busy Monday.” Derek jerked his head to the calendar and Stiles peered over his shoulder to see that Derek had written his name in the one corner that wasn’t occupied by the ridiculous print depicting the full moon phase of the lunar cycle. Derek’s hand writing wasn’t hard to recognize, given that it was a meticulous scrawl that was more androgynous than Stiles in a pair of pumps with a cocktail dress and feather boa.

That wasn’t a time that we spoke of, though.

Stiles turned back to Derek, grinning. “I’m okay with tonight, anyway. Tonight is great, tonight’s awesome. I’m doing absolutely nothing tonight, except maybe you.” Oh god, did he really just say that?

Derek snorted, reaching out and giving Stiles’ head an affectionate shove before he stood up and headed for the door.

The second Derek was out of sight, Stiles counted to five before he jumped up with a triumphant shout. He had tamed the beast! He had conquered the frigid ice king of ‘I don’t have emotions’ and had totally almost frenched with him.

Stiles couldn’t help from doing a quick victory thrust, humping the air and then cursing when his foot caught on the chord for the fax machine and he tripped over the chair. Stiles grappled for something to stop his fall, hand hooking on the edge of the radio and dragging it and the phone off of the desk and onto his back and shoulders in a violent clatter of destructive flailing.

For a long moment, Stiles sat there and wished he could Sorcerer’s Apprentice everything back into order. When that didn’t work, he climbed out of the disaster like a phoenix reborn, taking a minute to reset everything and only knocking the phone over two more times. He needed to tell the world about his newest achievement.

Well, he at least needed to tell the people who had suffered along with him.

That in mind, Stiles tugged his phone out, pulling up a mass text to send his father, Scott, Allison and Lydia, informing them that ‘beauty is now boning the beast.’

Scott responded with a puking emoticon, Allison with a smiley face, and his dad with ‘use condoms.’

Oh god, had he really sent that to his father?

Of course he did, because there was a little check next to Papa-bear that notified Stiles that yes, he had just informed his father of his impending sex life. Stiles texted his father back with an incomprehensible keyboard smash and returned Scott and Allison’s emoticons with a slew of happy faced ones, because there really was no way to recover from that.
By the time Stiles finally got a call in for a tow he could send Derek on, he’d gotten into a heated debate with his father that the term ‘boning’ was obviously slang for ‘courting’ and that there was no actual dick-to-butt action imminent. Granted, if their relationship was going to move as slow as it had been, Stiles should look into ordering a fleshlight to keep him company on lonely nights.

Stiles paged Derek into the office, scribbling down the information for the run on the dispatch sheet and then tearing it off as soon as the office door opened. He grinned at the sight of Derek wiping oil from his hands and onto his thighs, handing over the paper as Derek approached.

Taking the slip, Derek hesitated for a split second and then bent down across the desk to snag Stiles’ lips in kiss that barely lasted more than a few seconds. Stiles instinctively closed his eyes against the action, flickering them open again when Derek drew back and barely catching a glimpse of a smirk before the man was already out the door.

Holy balls, Batman. Stiles was not going to survive the rest of the day knowing they were going to be eating dinner together in just a few hours.

---

Derek didn’t end up coming into the office for the rest of the day, because they were slammed with calls that kept Stiles scrambling to dispatch and the drivers running all over town. He was fretting like a madman by the time the last hour rolled around, almost jumping out of his skin when his phone went off with a text from Derek, telling Stiles, ‘Meet you @Applebees.’

Yes, Applebees. Stiles knew Applebees very well. It could perhaps be considered the location of their first unofficial date - only this time it would be significantly more official. Possibly with a substantially higher potential for orgasms, as well.

Great, now Stiles was thinking about rushed sex with Derek in a public restroom.

He glanced at the clock and then around the office, contemplating if it would be a good idea to just lock himself in the bathroom and rub one out. Just to make sure he didn’t get any emergency boners during dinner. Knowing his luck, the manager was creeping on the camera again, and there was no lie he could tell that would explain why he was locked in the bathroom for longer than a minute or two.

Closing up and accepting the fact that he wasn’t going to be able to utilize his normal de-stressing method of stroking his pocket rocket, Stiles texted Derek a smiley face and, ‘on my way’ as he climbed into his jeep.

Derek was hovering just outside the door to Applebees when Stiles pulled into the parking lot, taking idle drags from a cigarette, one hand in the pocket of a leather jacket he must have changed into at some point. Stiles stared down at himself, suddenly feeling awkward and out of place with a bullseye t-shirt and an old suit jacket his mother had once sewn a hood to the inside of, back when she’d been bored in the hospital and had wanted to try her hand at making clothes for Stiles. It hadn’t fit, at the time, but now that Stiles had grown into it, he made a habit of wearing the thing at least once a week. Sentimentality was great and all, but Stiles knew for a fact that it looked like he’d taken fashion cues from Lady Gaga.

Cursing, Stiles struggled out of his jacket and set it on the passenger seat before he stumbled his way out of the jeep. Given that they were just in tail end of September, it was already starting to cool off by the time the sun went down. He had to take a moment to shake off the initial chill that settled into his skin, shutting the door and digging his hands into his pocket as he made his way to the door.
Derek caught Stiles’ gaze, nodding and crushing the remainder of his cigarette into the ash tray. Stiles shifted, feeling ridiculously awkward. Should he kiss Derek ‘hello’? Should they hold hands? At what stage were they, even?

“Come on,” Derek reached out, his hand surprisingly warm from where it settled against the middle of Stiles’ back, ushering him through the door. Stiles couldn’t help but lean just the tiniest bit into the touch, and then instantly jump out of it when he caught the gaze of the same exact host that had seated them the last time.

The man didn’t even bat an eye, grabbing two menus and leading them across the restaurant towards a very familiar booth seat. Derek sat down first, and Stiles instinctively slid into the bench across from him. Wait, was he supposed to sit across from Derek, or should he have sat beside him? They were both pretty tall, so it was likely that, if they sat next to each other, their elbows would just bump together when they were eating and potentially annoy Derek.

Stiles was halfway to giving in to impulse and switching sides when he felt the toe of Derek’s boot rub up against his calf. Intentional or not, it was like sending a calming shot of liquor through Stiles’ system, enough that he was able to settle back into his seat with a soft exhale. He grabbed the menu, mimicking Derek’s position and skimming over the options. It was difficult to keep from vibrating out of his seat with anxiety, Stiles’ thumb methodically flicking back and forth over the laminated edge of the menu with each passing second. When Derek’s leg slid forcefully up the side of his own, Stiles had to bite down on his tongue to keep from audibly choking. There was no way it was accidental, not when it rucked Stiles’ pant leg up to his calf and Stiles could feel the bone of Derek’s ankle press into his shin.

Stiles peered over the top of his menu, trying to be subtle in an attempt to gauge Derek’s facial expression.

Absolutely blank. Of fucking course. Derek had a poker face that was flat enough to rival Kristen Stewart on a good day.

“Are you wearing your steel-toed boots?” Stiles blurted, because he had absolutely no sense of finesse. Derek glanced up, tilting the edge of his menu down just enough for Stiles to see the twitch in his mouth.

“No.” Derek’s foot moved up Stiles’ leg in one long, slow slide.

Sneaky little shit.

Despite the fact that Derek had apparently taken a great pleasure in his favorite pastime of torturing Stiles with self-inflicted doubt. Stiles couldn’t help but grin just the tiniest bit, even going so far as to purse his lips in an effort to hide it. He shifted, twitching his foot and attempting to reciprocate with a wiggle of his sneaker against Derek’s calf when Derek snagged Stiles’ foot between his ankles with a quick snap of his legs.

Jesus fuck.

Stiles jerked, stifling a yelp of surprise and struggling to free his ankle. He could see Derek shift the menu up to cover his mouth - eyebrows unmoving but his cheeks shifting enough that he must have been hiding a smirk. Stiles grabbed the table, wriggling his foot back and forth because holy God, Derek’s legs were strong.

Idly, Stiles wondered how strong they really were. Like, if they were strong enough to lift Stiles up against a wall and fuck into him.
Bad thoughts, bad thoughts. Bad Stiles. Focus on freeing your trapped leg.

Stiles brought his other foot into play, using it to shove at Derek’s shin in an attempt to dislodge him. It was to no avail, not when Derek’s leg moved so fast that Stiles suddenly found his ankles held hostage, crossed forcefully together.

When the hell had that happened.

“Oh my god, dude. Give me my feet back!” Stiles cried breathlessly, choking on a laugh because this was just getting ridiculous. The man had the legs of a kangaroo or something. He could have been a kickboxing champion in a past life, or a Titan. Both options were entirely possible, because Stiles was practically flailing his legs in their captivity and Derek had yet to even act like he was affected at all.

Peering up at Stiles, Derek quirked one solitary eyebrow, devious bastard that he was, and Stiles attempted to give the man his most piteous stare ever.

“Please?”

Ignoring Stiles’ plead, Derek’s gaze flitted right back to his menu. Stiles cursed, because now it was just ridiculous. His legs were starting to get uncomfortable and he couldn’t stop thinking about how muscular Derek’s thighs must be, which led to thinking about the muscles in Derek’s ass. Thinking about Derek’s ass was the worst possible thing to do, because then he just wondered how it looked when flexing or twitching and especially how nice it would look with a bright red mark from Stiles’ hand - because there was no way this relationship was ever going to continue without at least one good spanking session.

Stiles had totally earned himself a spanking session.

Jerking his legs, Stiles was able to slide his feet at just the perfect moment where his right leg came free. His leg snapped up, knee smashing into the underside of the table--FUCK, that hurt--and knocking their drinks over.

Derek dropped his menu, grabbing both cups and putting them upright - but not before Stiles’ soda practically shot off of the table a path of carbonated fury that was hellbent on splashing all over Stiles’ shirt and pants.

The first half second wasn’t that bad, Stiles was already passing his napkin to Derek when everything actually absorbed into his clothes and he released the unmanliest of unmanly shrieks. He could feel his nipples tighten and his balls shrink up as the icy soda from hell absorbed into his clothes.

“I am so sorry, dude,” Stiles breathed, watching Derek quickly swipe the napkin over the table, cleaning up their drinks as quickly as possible. “I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean t- oh god, my nipples are hurting, this soda was so cold. I can’t feel my ba–uggh.” Stiles choked his words off, stuffing his index knuckle into his mouth before he could do something stupid like tell Derek that his testicles were now so cold that only Derek’s mouth could warm them up.

Derek glanced up, setting the soiled napkins aside and gesturing for the waiter. “Stop apologizing,” he barked, though there was little anger in his voice. The waiter swung by, muttering something about refills and handing Derek a fistful of paper napkins from his apron before grabbing their cups and flitting off again.

“Sorry,” Stiles croaked, holding his shirt away from his chest and fanning it in an attempt to dry it off
just the tiniest bit.

“Stiles.”

“Sor--uh--ffffnnn--so--” Stiles slapped his hands to his face to shut himself up. Apparently he had no concept of actually listening to what Derek was telling him and applying it to any form of conversation. This was the worst night ever - he was making a total ass of himself. Derek was going to regret ever having agreed to do anything involving Stiles for the rest of eternity. He sucked so much, and he informed Derek of this as well, just for good measure. It was bad enough that they’d barely patched things up over the crap with Stiles visiting Kate - now he was messing up all over again by just being a total klutz.

Strong fingers encircled his wrists, and Stiles allowed Derek to slowly tug his hands from his face. Stiles locked eyes with Derek, frozen in place by the frighteningly serious expression on Derek’s face.

“I’m not mad at you.” Derek said slowly, firmly. Which, there were a lot of things that Stiles had done to make Derek angry at him, so it was entirely possible that he could have meant something else besides just spilling the soda. It sounded like he was implying other things, at least. Then again, Stiles was a horrific judge of what someone said and what they actually meant.

“You’re… not mad anymore?” Stiles asked weakly. Derek pursed his lips, forcing Stiles’ hands against the table, but keeping hold of his wrists.

“About the drinks? No. About Kate? Yeah, I’m still pretty mad, because it wasn’t your place to go behind my back because you wanted some answers. Most people would never forgive you for something like that.” Shit.

Stiles felt his stomach drop faster than a Nord off a cliff in Skyrim. He struggled to keep his breathing even, skin burning where Derek’s fingers clasped firmly around the thin bones of his wrists. He wanted to pull away, wanted to look anywhere but at Derek, but when he tried to draw his arms closer to himself, Derek wrenched them back into the middle of the table.

Sighing, Derek stared down where his hands held tightly to Stiles’ arms. “I also think it’s my fault that you did it.”

“Dude, no- I shouldn’t-”

“I shouldn’t have kept pushing you away.” Derek interjected. Apparently Stiles’ brain was doing that thing again where it started to hallucinate without telling him. The waiter returned with their refills, but took one look at their hands before he turned and promptly dipped out with the excuse of allowing them to think over their orders a little while longer. Stiles twisted his arms closer to himself, Derek wrenched them back into the middle of the table.

Sighing, Derek stared down where his hands held tightly to Stiles’ arms. “I also think it’s my fault that you did it.”

“Dude, no- I shouldn’t-”

“Oh no, there was no way Stiles was going to let Derek get out of this one. Stiles had absolutely no capacity for self control when it came to satiating his curiosity. It was like dangling a cocaine bag of answers in front of an addict. Was it possible to be addicted to answers? According to Hitchhikers’ Guide, nobody could have all the answers. This could possibly mean that being an answer addict was a dangerous and unfulfilling life that would end with Stiles being the creepy man at the end of
the street with lots of books and a penchant for pointing his lawn hose at fashionably dressed teenagers on skateboards.

Stiles didn’t want to hose down hipsters on skateboards.

“No, I like talking. Talking is good. Talking makes understanding. Understanding stops bad things from happening.”

Whatever Derek was going to say was put on hold when the waiter swung by again, shifting awkwardly like he wasn’t sure if it was polite to interrupt or not. Derek pulled his hands from Stiles’, grabbing up the menu and doing the waiter a favor by reciting his order. Stiles did the same, folding his menu afterwards and then handing it over with Derek's.

Sipping at his drink, Stiles watched as Derek took a second to gather his thoughts, eyes focused on the napkin that Stiles was meticulously ripping into shreds. “I don’t want you to do anything like that again. If you have a problem, come to me about it.”

“…..” Seriously? Did Derek actually think that was going to work? Any time Stiles remotely tried to pry any iota of information from Derek, it was like trying to pull baby teeth from a full grown rhinoceros. Given that rhinoceros didn’t have baby teeth when they were full grown, it also meant that getting Derek to talk about anything was utterly impossible. Also somewhat dangerous, considering he apparently had a penchant for always looking ten seconds from inflicting bodily harm.

Regardless of whether or not Stiles would actually be able to get Derek to talk, it still didn’t take away the fact that he was apparently going to continue visiting the very woman who had burned his entire house down and killed the majority of his family. How was it okay for Stiles to sit by and twiddle his thumbs while Derek spent a day a week going back to the woman who had pretty much ruined his life?

“Okay?” Derek urged.

“Only if you don’t see her anymore.” Stiles shot back, because it has clearly been established that he had no sense of self-preservation or when to keep his mouth shut and his feelings shoved deep down into the dark crevices of his bottomless heart.

Derek stiffened, brows twitching up in surprise, and Stiles laid his hands out across the table like he was presenting an invisible diagram “Just listen, okay? I don’t know what kind of noose she has around your neck, but it’s not going to get any better if you keep seeing her. You can’t let go if you keep holding on.” That made sense, right? It was hard to know if half the things he said were even comprehensible sometimes, especially when Stiles’ mind was having it’s own Boston Tea Party, only with coherence instead of tea.

“She killed my family, Stiles.” Derek said. Stiles shook his head, but quickly turned it into a nod of agreement when Derek’s brows furrowed. He was seriously starting to reconsider this entire situation if it turned out that Derek suffered a bonafide case of relationship Stockholm syndrome.

Stiles may have been a walking social disaster, but he wasn’t that masochistic.

“A lot of people kill other people, but…she’s not sane, Derek. I talked to her--she strangled me, even.” Okay, so maybe mentioning the strangulation wasn’t the brightest method, because Derek was starting to look particularly livid. Stiles pushed forth quickly, unwilling to stop until he’d said his piece. “I saw nothing in her eyes but psycho bitch hatred. How can you live with yourself by going back there?”
Derek pursed his lips, drawing his hands back and letting them rest at his sides beneath the table as he slowly responded, “I want to understand why. I want to find out who helped her.”

“You know why.” Everyone knew why. It was hard not to when she went around preaching psychobabble about her ex-boyfriend being a werewolf. “And dude, seriously? Like. It’s been what-ten years or something? If she hasn’t told you by now, she never will.”

Releasing a heavy exhale, Derek clenched his jaw so hard that Stiles could see the muscle twitching with the force of it. Was it that hard for the guy to accept change? Hopefully, this meant that Derek wasn’t likely to grow tired of Stiles too soon. Stiles didn’t like when people got bored of him--it usually made him want to do things like free wild animals from the zoo in a fit of emotional instability.

Obviously, Stiles was going to have to crack open the vault to his emotions and elaborate a little, if it meant getting Derek to at least understand him. “Okay. Dude? I like you. I like you a lot more than I’ve liked anyone else in my entire life.” Derek’s eyes went wide, but Stiles didn’t give him a chance to speak. “You put up with me, you let me talk about absolutely nothing, and you don’t make me feel like shit when I forget what I was even talking about in the first place…but me liking you? That means I don’t like knowing you’re basically torturing yourself every time you go back to her.”

“Stiles--”

“No. seriously Derek. Just listen, okay?” Derek fell silent, thank baby Jesus - because Stiles barely had enough resolve not to completely change the subject and ignore the problem entirely - and watched Stiles draw in an uneven breath. “She told me I could never have you.”

Derek made a small sound in the back of his throat, like he wanted to protest, but Stiles was on a roll. He was on so much of a roll that he could have been cast in Raiders of the Lost Ark instead of that giant boulder. “I don’t know if I can, honestly. I don’t know if I only have you until you get sick of me and leave, just like everyone else…but I want to try. I really do, dude. More than I ever tried with Lydia or Danny or anyone else.” Not that Stiles had tried very hard with Danny. Danny was nice, but the guy wasn’t one for pity dates or trying to make a person feel better if it meant lying to them. Stiles had taken months to get over his self-doubt after that entire fiasco. Anyway.

“She told me you were hers. And I didn’t get that, I didn’t get that possessive shit that she was going on about, not until I found out you keep going back to her.” At this, Stiles gestured to Derek, only to have his hand captured in a tender, but secure grip.

“She doesn’t have me.” Derek objected lowly. Stiles wanted to pull his hand away, because Derek’s fingers were really nice and now was not the time to think about all the places on his body that Stiles would like those fingers to touch. Or how much he just wanted to press his lips into Derek’s knuckles and kiss his hands like the lovestruck creep he was.

“You visiting her? Yeah, dude, she has you. She has you wrapped around her finger and you don’t even realize it. You’re letting her win, by doing this.”

“You don’t understand.” Each protest made Derek sound more and more annoyed, but all Stiles was hearing from him was the cry of a child that had no real reason to protest putting his shoes on, other than ‘I don’t wanna!’. He kind of wanted to just push Derek into a corner chair and deny him lollipops until he agreed to actually listen to what Stiles was saying. Then again, that method didn’t even work for children, so Stiles wasn’t really sure how he could even consider it working with a grown man. Either way, Derek was still doing that thing where he argued his point without actually giving Stiles much of a reason at all.
Jesus, this must have been what his father felt like throughout Stiles’ entire high school years.

“I don’t have to understand, Derek!” Stiles snapped, squeezing Derek’s hands as tightly as he could before his knuckles started to ache. Derek seemed taken aback, eyes going wide and hands lax in Stiles’ grip. “I don’t have to hear about how much you loved her, about how perfect you two were together.” Why did his eyes burn? They ached like he’d smoked an entire blunt to himself, face red and voice uneven.

When he blinked and felt tears on the edge of his lid, Stiles realized that maybe he was a little more emotionally invested in Derek than he’d wanted to believe. “I don’t have to know about any of that to know how wrong it is for someone to keep visiting the person that killed their entire family. Don’t you see that?”

Derek’s fingers twitched in Stiles’ grip, his eyes almost comically wide. “You really care that much?”

Wha--was Derek that much of an idiot? Or did he honestly consider himself unworthy of another person’s affections?

“Yes, I fucking care that much!”

Their entire second of the restaurant fell silent, conversation lulling as people turned to look for the source of yelling. Stiles slunk down into his seat, chest tight and face burning in mortification. Derek looked dumbstruck, obviously taken by surprise at Stiles’ vehemence. Knowing that people were looking, Stiles dragged his hands away from Derek’s, bringing them down until he was sitting on the backs of his palms and bouncing his legs nervously.

This was so far out of his comfort zone that Stiles was pretty sure he could be on the brink of discovering another solar system if he kept it up.

Dragging in a deep breath and telling himself not to have a panic attack for absolutely no reason, Stiles shut his eyes, focused his thoughts, and opened them again. “Yes. Okay? I’m not asking you to reciprocate or any of that fairy tale crap. I’m just asking you to stop doing this to yourself.”

Stiles couldn’t even look at Derek - much happier with trying to x-ray his gaze through the table than maintain any form of eye contact. “I don’t…I don’t want to still be with you in three, five, ten years, and know that I’ll never have all of you when you still go and see her. What does that make me?”

Finally looking up, Stiles felt like he was a video game character waiting for the epic and bloody fight that always happened after a monologuing cut-scene as Derek seemed to process what he’d said. Stiles wished real life allowed him to break into random crates and find health packs for the bruising his ego was inevitably going to take.

Reaching out for his glass, Derek took a second to sip at his water and then looked pointedly at Stiles.

“This has nothing to do with you.”

Stiles stiffened, could actually feel some of the muscles in his back twinge from it. What was he supposed to say to that? Was he supposed to vomit rainbows of understanding and peace? If Stiles had listened every time someone tried to force him out of an issue by pointing out the fact that he was completely uninvolved, he was pretty sure that his dad would probably have a lot less cases solved and there wouldn’t have been that month in which he’d been the former Sheriff.

Yet another situation that nobody ever spoke of.
Still trying to at least muster any form of response, Stiles’ mouth snapped shut when the waiter approached, sliding their plates onto the table. Stiles grabbed the ketchup, slathering it over his fries and then digging in. If Derek was going to be like that, Stiles knew exactly how to even the playing field.

There had been enough arguments with Scott to know when it was time to dish out the silent treatment. Whoever had said the ‘cold shoulder’ was a tactic used only by women must have lived a very lonely life in which they never got their way.

“I didn’t mean it like that, Stiles.” Derek quietly muttered after a few minutes, having yet to touch his food. Stiles didn’t particularly feel like responding, he was at the point where ‘ignoring the problem until it goes away’ seemed like a viable option to go with while his brain regrouped. He took a bite from his burger, washing it down with soda and another mouthful of French fries. The only upside to the entire process of eating was that Derek could somehow sense that Stiles wasn’t happy with what he’d said, because he was trying to shift his head around and catch Stiles’ eyes.

Unluckily for Derek, Stiles was the master of avoidance.

“Stiles.” Derek urged, apparently giving up his previous effort of forcing eye contact.

Success.

“Stiles, that’s not what I meant to--”

“What did you mean, then?” Stiles put his cup down, thumbing ketchup from the corner of his mouth and sucking on his teeth. “I’m pretty sure there’s only one thing a guy can infer from a statement like that, so I’m having a pretty hard time figuring out any other meaning, other than ‘stay out of my life’.”

Derek sighed, again, like he was trying to deal with a toddler that had a penchant for slamming their head into walls when they were angry. Stiles was so beyond that phase, by the way, and he’s pretty sure he’d only done it because his dad let him watch Powerpuff Girls when he was a baby.

Stiles watched Derek card his hands through his hair, exhaling unevenly. “It’s hard to explain.”

“Explain it.”

“I can’t.” Derek protested. Really, it just made Stiles want to throw his food down and flip the table over like some sort of reaction image from the internet. Instead, he gestured to himself.

“Fine. This is me, not getting an explanation.” Both hands went to grab his burger so he could show it to Derek. “I’m going to eat this delicious meal, and then I’m going to go home,” Derek’s eyes snapped up to watch Stiles bring the burger close to his mouth and continue talking, “and the next time I see you, you better figure out a way to explain it because dude, I want this--us? I want it to work. I really, really do.”

Derek hesitated from where he’d been poking his steak with a fork, glancing up and frowning at Stiles. “Why me?”

And the Olympic Winner for Stupidest Question goes to: Derek Hale, ladies and gents!

“Why me?” Stiles shot back, waving a hand in a circular motion around his face just to make sure Derek understood the vast difference between his inhumanely attractive face, and Stiles’ painfully boring face.

Derek didn’t seem to get it, given that a constipated look crossed over his face, hand clenching his
fork so tightly that Stiles was pretty sure he was bending the metal. Stiles gestured again, because there was no way Derek couldn’t understand that if Derek thought Stiles was worthwhile, that obviously Stiles saw the same exact potential in Derek.

Sighing, because it seemed as if Derek needed time to process their conversation, Stiles returned to his food. They ate in silence, keeping their hands and feet to themselves and the conversation so dead that Stiles’ heart sank lower and lower as the meal went on.

In the end, Derek footed the bill, leaving Stiles to pick up the tip with some spare cash as they left. Stiles made a beeline for his Jeep, because he really just wanted to go home, steal his dad’s whiskey, and drink himself into oblivion. He could feel Derek’s presence following him, making him tense like a robber waiting for Batman to deal the finishing strike. It took Stiles a few tries to get his keys from his pocket, unlocking the Jeep and turning to finally face Derek.

Hovering less than a foot away, Derek kept his hands shoved in the pockets of his jacket, watching Stiles with an unreadable expression. Of course his expression was unreadable, the guy was about as easy to read as The Question, only with actual facial features.

“I guess…goodnight,” Stiles muttered awkwardly, fumbling with the door handle. He’d nearly opened it when Derek sniffed once, reached out, and set his hand over Stiles’.

Stiles froze, breath hitching. He felt disembodied, watching in a daze as Derek pulled his hand from the jeep’s door to hold it loosely. “I can’t stop right away,” Derek said quietly.

What.

“What?”

Okay, so, in theory, putting his foot down meant compromise. However, in actuality, most of the time that Stiles tried to be firm with the things that upset him, he was blown off entirely or left in the dust just days later. What was he supposed to do when someone--when Derek--actually agreed with him? Was he supposed to thank him? Was he supposed to protest and act humble? Hell, no! Stiles knew when he was right about something; why would he act like he wasn’t right? What the fuck should he do?

Derek stared down at Stiles’ hand, bringing it up to his face and running his nose along the inside of Stiles’ wrist. It was a gesture that was so intimate Stiles could do little else but stand there like an idiot, watching Derek inhale deeply through his nose and mutter, “I’ll see her less, but I can’t stop the second you want me to. I can’t.”

Helplessly, Stiles tried to swallow back the ridiculous noise that was bubbling up in his chest. Half of him wanted to just rip Derek’s clothes off and gobble his dick down like it was his goal in life, and the other half wanted to wrap himself around Derek and never let go.

He settled for swallowing the lump in his throat and weakly saying, “That’s…that’s good enough for me.”

Derek’s eyes caught the headlights of a car that must have been driving by, flashing bright for just a split second as he dragged Stiles forward by the wrist, giving no warning before he was pressing their lips together in an open-mouthed kiss. Stiles could barely keep up, could barely breathe as he was shoved back against the door of his Jeep, wrist trapped in Derek’s grasp and his other hand clutching Derek’s jacket to keep himself grounded. His head spun, lips parting against the press of Derek’s tongue sliding forward with a claiming persistence and twining against his own. There was nothing but Derek’s hands, lips, body and tongue, all surrounding him, filling him, suffocating him
with such an insistent passion that Stiles was starting to forget where he ended and Derek began.

Derek pulled Stiles’ hand down to his hip, finally releasing his wrist to bring both palms up against
Stiles’ jaw, coaxing his mouth open with a scrape of his teeth. Stiles was only human, and he was
only a human who really lacked control on his vocal chords, because he released a low, piteous
moan when Derek crowded him against the door of the Jeep. Derek growled, chest vibrating with
the sound and biting down on Stiles’ bottom lip in retaliation. His teeth cut through the soft skin,
igniting a sharp jolt of pain and the taste of copper flooding his mouth.

As painful as it was to have someone chomp on your lip like Cujo, Stiles was somewhat unsettled by
how turned on he was at the same time. Derek’s tongue flitted out, pressing into the cut and causing
another burst of pain that made Stiles jerk his head back. Of course, Stiles forgot he was crushed up
against his car door, and stars burst into his vision like some sort of children’s cartoon when the back
of his head smashed against the window.

Yelping, Stiles wrenched a hand up, knuckles bashing accidentally into Derek’s chin when he tried
to hold his head. Derek jumped, apparently startled, and then he had the gall to look sheepish and
concerned about the fact that Stiles had cracked his noggin because Derek apparently had the
repressed sexual desire of a vampire.

Tonguing the cut in his lip, Stiles rubbed his head and sucked the blood from the wound, lips tender
and swollen from their impromptu kissing session. Derek reached up, thumbing Stiles’ lower lip and
then tugging it out from between Stiles’ teeth to examine the cut. “Sorry,” He said quietly, brows
furrowing. In all honesty, Stiles was very happy to mark off ‘lip biting’ from his bucket list--because
this was totally the biting-est of lip biting, in his book.

“What’s a little pain without pleasure?” Stiles said, grinning as crookedly as he could when Derek
was still holding his lower lip captive. Derek’s eyes flitted up to his own, still looking troubled.

Stiles was tired of angst and manpain--they’d both had their share for the evening. Besides, it was
Stiles’ turn to take charge, right? That in mind, he surged forward, trapping Derek’s thumb between
their lips and kissing Derek slowly, encouragingly.

Leaning into Stiles’ mouth, Derek was quick to pick up on the mood of the kiss, lips parting into
slow, teasing presses with every chance he could get. It wasn’t long before things started to get
heated again, Stiles’ fingers curling into Derek’s jacket and dragging him in close while Derek
pawed at the hem of Stiles’ shirt.

Stiles was a good five seconds away from asking Derek about his policy on car sex when Derek
wrenched back with a gasp of air and faceplanted right into the curve of Stiles’ neck and shoulder.
“Someone could see,” he gasped out, inhaling deeply through his nose and mouthing wet kisses
against the skin of Stiles’ throat.

It wasn’t like Stiles was using all of his brain synapses, anyway, so it was totally okay for Derek’s
mouth to do things like fry his thought process with just a quick scrape of his teeth and a rolling suck
from his lips and tongue. It was like a string was attached between his dick and his neck, pulling him
from half-mast into full on raging fuck missile within the span of one breath to the next. “Fuck,” he
croaked, clawing at Derek’s back and trying not to whine needily. “You’re the one who started it.”

Shrugging, Derek pulled back before he’d even released Stiles’ skin, sucking the meanest hickey into
his neck and then releasing it with a wet pop. It looked like he was about done, until his eyes stared
at the apparent mark and he leaned down to lap at it, kiss it, nuzzle it with his lips and nose, and then
finally stand up straight. Possibly the weirdest reaction Stiles had ever seen to giving someone a
hickey, because Derek looked like he was torn between biting more marks and just petting the one
he’d already made.

Stiles was torn between both options, as well.

Finally lifting his eyes to Stiles, Derek stole a quick kiss, followed by a second and then a third.

“T’ll see you tomorrow,” he rasped, kneading Stiles’ upper lip between his teeth. Jesus Christ, if Derek was like this within the first day -

... 

Stiles was going to have to start jacking off at least three times a day if he wanted to build up any stamina before the third date. He was also going to have to invest in a lot of lubricant and possible butt-cushions for work (just to be on the safe side).

Scrambling for the handle to his door, Stiles pressed his lips into Derek’s one last time before cursing under his breath and slipping into his jeep. His legs shook as hard as his hands, breathing uneven as he watched Derek walk awkwardly back to his truck. It was a walk Stiles knew well—one he had labeled the ‘boner-strut’ and had experienced many a time on his own.

It made something burn deep inside of Stiles’ gut to know that it was his fault Derek was subjected to such a gait. He turned the key in the ignition, cranking the window down to stick his head out, calling Derek’s name with a grin on his lips. Derek paused halfway to his truck, turning and looking at Stiles in confusion.

Giddy, Stiles’ grin widened - crooked with smugness as he called out, “I knew you had a heart!”

Even from across the parking lot, Stiles could see Derek roll his eyes as he gave Stiles a halfhearted wave. “Goodnight, Stiles!”

Laughing, because that was the Derek he knew—who put up with Stiles and still somehow managed to sound completely unaffected—Stiles pulled out of the parking lot. When he passed Derek’s truck, he palmed the horn for a second and then pulled out to head home. He cranked up the radio, trying to soothe the bursting feeling in his chest with heavy bass from the local rock station. Stiles felt like he was a pinata stuffed with rainbows and happiness, fit to explode at any second.

Recalling the brighter events of the day, Stiles finally released a loud shout of triumph. He beat the steering wheel, bouncing his head violently to the music and then snagging the wheel when he almost swerved off the road during his flailing.

“Okay, shit. Stiles. Focus on driving,” He breathed to himself, mouth wiggling for two long seconds until he couldn’t contain his smiling any longer. He bounced in his seat, tapping the steering wheel to the beat and trying not to spontaneously combust before he got home.

He barely put the jeep in park when he got home before jumping out and jogging up to the front steps. The porch light was on, which meant that his father was home. This was most excellent, because Stiles had a lot of feelings and he needed to channel them before he started creating portals or something. His dad, seated on the couch with a beer in one hand and the remote in the other, barely had time to look up before Stiles was behind the couch and hugging his face.

“You’re awesome,” Stiles breathed, crushing his dad’s face to his chest, grinning, and pressing his cheek to the top of his father’s thinning hair. “Best dad ever.”

Stiles’ dad raised a hand, petting Stiles’ elbow and muttering, “I’m starting to miss the pining Stiles,” from where his face was crushed into Stiles’ arm.
“Uh!” Stiles cried, “Fine!” Pulling away, he couldn’t really even feign hurt, petting his father on the head. He just really loved his dad, okay. The guy put up with Stiles’ crap all the time and he didn’t even get mad when Stiles forgot to do the dishes or racked up his electric bill.

“Seriously, dad,” Stiles said, because he knew that sometimes dudes sucked at talking about feelings and that he needed to abuse the overload of emotions before it was too late, “thank you. I love you.’

Glancing up, Stiles’ father leveled Stiles with an amused quirk of his brow. “I love you too, no matter what.”

Stiles broke out into another grin, because yeah, feelings. Lots of them. In fact, it was possible this could rival that time when he was six and he had been trampled by a stampede of loving corgi puppies. He turned, heading for the stairs so he could call Scott when his dad called his name.

Turning, Stiles caught sight of his father taking a languid swig of his beer and then nodding at Stiles. “I’m happy for you, kiddo.”

Stiles leaned against the railing to the stairs, fiddling with it for a second and nodding. “Me too, dad.”
Chapter 2

Given that Stiles had, essentially, pined after Derek for nearly two months, it should have been substantially easier to deal with the epic case of sexual frustration that had begun building up for the past two weeks since they’d finally gotten together. He was starting to contemplate the possibility of having his blood tested for Frost Giant heritage, given that he was at least eighty percent certain that his testicles were actually starting to get a slightly blue tint to them. Then again, inspecting your balls at three in the morning with only the light from your laptop was probably not the most effective method of gauging their hue.

It was becoming a very real possibility that Stiles would have to start buying some kind of moisturizing lotion to deal with the very real possibility that his dick was going to chafe from all the jacking off he’d been doing.

 Granted, Stiles knew for a fact that Derek was trying his hardest. With conflicting schedules, it wasn’t like they had time to really get beyond a few heavy petting sessions - unlike all those gay romance novels Stiles has read online would often lead him to believe. Even then, there was the issue that Derek was very prone to chickening out halfway through. Stiles thought he was going to die of mortification last Wednesday when they’d been working their way towards to orgasm potential when Derek had suddenly jumped off of him and practically ran to the other end of the room in two seconds flat.

Three minutes of forced conversation later, Stiles discovered there were certain things he was going to do - intentionally or not - that inevitably bring up some sort of correlation with Kate the she-devil. Apparently, Kate was the only person that Derek had ever been sexual with, and it was going to take time to get Derek used to Stiles’ body and reactions without dredging up memories.

Memories that broke the mood faster than a fist through a china display.

So, yeah, Stiles’ balls were on the brink of shriveling up and falling off, but at least he didn’t have suffer ‘Houston, we’ve lost erection’ the way that Derek did.

Okay, so the sexting was great - even when Stiles' ADD sometimes caused it to devolve from sexting into actual emotional conversations or discussions on random things like how to escape zip tie handcuffs that would span on for hours and hours. It was pleasant enough to discover that Derek was far more willing to divulge personal information through text than over the phone or in person. Stiles assumed it was because Derek was actually suffering from an ancient Shaman curse in which he couldn’t vocalize any sort of human emotion on penalty of death.

“Are you going to see her tomorrow?” Stiles asked quietly, lounging across the couch - because Derek’s couch had obviously been sculpted from the rear ends of a thousand luscious nymphs and prodding Derek in the stomach with his toes. Derek had this habit of wanting to hold Stiles’ feet in his lap and rub them (which, totally not complaining, because foot rubs were amazing, okay?), only to forget if he was distracted by something on the television or in a book.

Currently, his fingers were half-curled around Stiles’ ankle and his eyes were intensely focused on watching Balto desperately struggle to find the path he’d made with claw marks on the trees. Derek, knowing his cue, brought his palm back up around Stiles’ foot and dug his thumbs into sole of Stiles’ right foot. Stiles bit down on a groan, his toes curling instinctively against the lovely sensation of Derek massaging out the soreness that he didn’t even know he had.

“Not for long,” Derek said quietly, pinching the webbing of Stiles’ toes before dragging his fingers
down. Scratch that, Stiles was going to marry and then divorce Derek in order to file for a civil union with Derek’s fingers. Maybe it was the fact that he had mechanic’s hands, all strong and commonly used for fixing engines or working lifts. “I barely went for a half hour last week,” Derek added for good measure.

Stiles tried not to point out that visiting, in general, was an altogether bad idea. He didn’t know why Derek insisted on trying to talk to her, didn’t know what he was so hell bent on finding out that would even provide him closure of any sort. There was a lot of things about Derek he still didn’t understand, but he hoped it would be cleared with time.

Like the sniffing thing.

Also how Derek liked to rub his hands all over Stiles’ face and throat every single time they were ready to part ways. That one made Stiles wonder if Derek was part German, because the German porn never made sense half the time - much like Derek.

Derek was glancing back at Stiles nervously from the corner of his eye, increasing the efforts of his foot massage like he could somehow apologize for the fact that he was suffering Stockholm Syndrome over his psychotic ex by making Stiles into a squirming pile of needy goo.

That had only worked the first three times, by the way.

“Awesome,” Stiles muttered dryly, slouching into the arm of the couch and resisting the urge to sigh. Derek pursed his lips, stared at Stiles’ toes, and then shifted in a startlingly quick movement that went from a blur of limbs to Derek straddling Stiles’ legs. Stiles had a half second to register what was happening before Derek lowered himself onto his hands and knees and slowly began crawling his way up Stiles’ body. Be it known that Stiles was well aware of such a thing as deathby-sexy, and that the aforementioned sexy was currently sliding one hand up Stiles’ chest and pushing his shirt up along the way.

“I’m sorry,” Derek mumbled, lowering his body down against Stiles’ so slowly that Stiles could feel every single ounce as it pressed him into the cushions of the couch. “Just a little more time.” Derek pressed his lips into Stiles’ throat, finding his favorite spot in the entire world and nuzzling against it. Stiles couldn’t remember what they were arguing about, couldn’t really think past Derek’s warm hand pressed into his naked side, his other palm cradling the back of Stiles’ head, and the way their hearts seemed to thud together in sync. It was nice, really nice, because Derek loved to touch him and mark him and pretty much make Stiles completely forget why he ever lacked confidence in his own sex appeal.

“That’s what they said about Osama and it took like, four years, dude,” Stiles said faintly, hissing when Derek’s thumb brushed his nipple at the exact same time he felt the tiny scrape of Derek’s teeth along his throat. Derek’s teeth were awesome, by the way. It had taken a while to really get him to smile big enough for Stiles to see, but he had this tiny overbite that gave him the most adorable beaver teeth known to man. Even better was when Derek got really into kissing, because he loved to scrape and nip them all over Stiles’ mouth and throat.

“Our relationship is more communist than democratic,” Derek said into Stiles’ skin, rocking his hips in a slow grind - because he was an utter bastard who took some sort of sick pleasure in making Stiles squirm. Sties really shouldn’t have been turned on by inane political jargon, especially because he wasn’t as invested in politics as Derek was. It was the fact that Derek so easily slipped in such amusing, offhanded comments that made Stiles want to rip his clothes off like Tarzan on ecstasy.

Stiles, of course, spread his legs wide so Derek could slot nicely between his thighs, instinctively arching up just the tiniest bit into the touch. He reached for Derek’s hair, grabbing a fistful because
the guy seriously had some TRESemmé shit going on - and forcing Derek’s head back.

“If we were a democracy, I’d vote you spent more time making it up to me. I expect lunch tom-” Stiles’ words broke off when Derek pressed their lips together in a wet, open-mouthed kiss that left nothing but fizzling brain synapses in its wake.

Oh yes, Stiles was totally on board. The only way he could not be any more on board this ship were if it was the Titanic - because Stiles already had blue balls, he didn’t need them to be frozen, too. Stiles sucked on Derek’s tongue the instant it made a cursory swipe between his lips and along his teeth, nipping the very tip before shifting his hips up into Derek’s. He was already halfway to creaming in his pants like a cowboy at a Clint Eastwood autograph signing, and would be completely shameless to admit that pants-jizzing was not something he was entirely opposed to, if it meant the experience was one shared with Derek.

Stiles curled his fingers into Derek’s shirt, the Henley’s fabric soft as it shifted against his skin. Oh yes, this was nice - this was very nice. It was so nice that Stiles couldn’t help the choked off groan that left him when Derek shifted just enough so the outline of his cock pressed hot and hard up alongside Stiles’, their jeans acting like God’s natural chastity belt when it came to proper frottage. Given that Stiles was very against chastity belts at this point in time, he shoved his hands between their bodies and fumbled with the button to Derek’s fly.

Derek hissed into Stiles’ mouth, nipping the corner of his mouth and turning to bury his face in Stiles’ throat to do his mandatory lick-sniff-kiss routine that Stiles was beginning to get accustomed to. Stiles wrested the button free, dragging down the zipper in a jerky movement because it was really hard to concentrate on trying to get Derek’s pants off when Derek himself was more focused on thrusting their bodies in a slow, rhythmic roll of his hips.

“Derek- gfffg, Derek, c’mon you’re giving my fingers rug burn,” Stiles gasped against Derek’s ear when a downward grind trapped his hands between their hips. Derek huffed out a moan of a laugh - one that rocked straight through Stiles’ core and made his cock twitch painfully - and pulled away to stare down at Stiles with pupils so wide that there was barely a ring of pale blue circling around them. The light from the television made them seem all the brighter in the otherwise dark room, and Stiles leaned up to steal a kiss and mutter, “Come on, man, pants disengage.”

At first, Derek didn’t move, just kept pressing soft, firm kisses against Stiles’ mouth, until he was satisfied enough to sit back and stare down with his lips twitching into an almost smile. Stiles felt like he was under a microscope, like Derek was looking into his mind and under his skin to find every flaw possible. It made him want to push Derek off of his lap and hide in the bathroom like a virgin princess chastened. He squirmed, hands sliding towards his own fly because, hey, just because he felt really really uncomfortable when Derek stared at him like he was a delicious meal, didn’t mean his dick hurt any less trapped inside of his jeans.

If possible, Derek’s eyes went wider when he watched Stiles start to fumble with the clasp to his jeans, expression blank in the way that Stiles very well knew meant he was mentally overloading on one emotion or another.

“Little help?” Stiles asked, grinning when Derek instantly was batting Stiles’ hands out of the way to do the job for him. It was always the best thing ever when Stiles got Derek riled up - except when he was riled up and thought of Kate, because then Stiles had to usually spend a fair amount of time informing Derek that Stiles wasn’t angry that he wasn’t in the mood anymore, and that he was actually happy that thoughts of her deflated Derek’s dick faster than a dirigible versus a skyscraper.

Until that point, however, getting Derek riled up meant he got rough enough that Stiles couldn’t help but feel ridiculously turned on when he got a wee bit manhandled.
Derek wrenched Stiles’ jeans down his hips, the muscles in his arm flexing when he pulled them off so fast that Stiles’ legs flailed and the jeans went sailing somewhere over the couch and into the darkness of the apartment. Both of them could see the giant tent in Stiles’ boxers, the tv’s light making the outline of his erection painfully evident.

A pained, needy sound came from somewhere deep in Derek’s throat and Stiles reached out to drag him down into a kiss - because Derek’s mouth was sin itself, okay. Having to kiss him every send of every day was totally justified.

One hand slipped between their bodies, and Stiles could feel the movement as Derek trying to pull himself out of his jeans. It made Stiles’ entire body shake with excitement and anticipation and just ohgodyes.

Which was, obviously, why Derek’s cell phone went off and they both froze - because Derek was the third out on call that night, and his phone only rang if it was Stiles, or if he was being sent on a run.

“Derek.” Stiles whined, because Derek was totally pulling away - although he was doing it in the same manner when you sent a dog away and they went very very reluctantly. “Derek, no, let them wait - it’s probably Asurion or something.” Stiles reached out for Derek’s shirt but Derek was already reaching for his cell phone on the coffee table.

“This is Derek.”

Well, at least Derek sounded like he had been painfully cockblocked. It made Stiles feel a little better - well, no, he actually felt a lot better because now Derek had to go and deal with someone’s broken down car while Stiles got to jack off on Derek’s bed or something. That in mind, it would be a good thing to really get Derek riled up before he had to leave, so Stiles sat up the second Derek climbed off of him to find a pen and paper. Really, Stiles was only human, so he couldn’t be blamed when Derek wandered out over to the kitchen table to bend over it so he could write his info down and Stiles felt it necessary to follow him so he could get a couple gropes in before Derek left.

Derek stiffened, his pen jerking a line across the paper when Stiles reached around, pushed his open fly out of the way, and cupped him through his boxer-briefs. Oh, that was quite nice, he could even feel Derek’s dick jerk against the heel of his palm.

“What kind of car is it,” Derek choked out over the phone, half grinding back into Stiles’ crotch, half rocking forward into his hand. Stiles pressed his mouth against the back of Derek’s neck, taking a note out of his boyfriend’s book and lapping up a few beads of sweat that had gathered at the base of his hairline. Derek shuddered violently in his arms and Stiles dragged his hand up and down the outline of Derek’s cock. He couldn’t be blamed for wanting to return the favor of being forced to work under extenuating circumstances. (read: being so horny it was hard to even focus.)

“Eastbound or Westbound,” Derek gritted out, sounding so strangled that Stiles couldn’t help but give a quick bite to Derek’s neck. Derek jumped, hips bucking into Stiles’ hand and the pen falling from his fingers so that he could grip the table. Stiles went to wriggle his fingers down the elastic band of Derek’s underwear when his wrist was caught. Startled, Stiles had a half second to register movement before Derek turned and kicked his feet out from under him, knocking him to the ground. Jesus fuck, the guy was like Jackie Chan on steroids.

Stiles wheezed from his prone position on the living room floor, Derek’s bare foot pressing down on his chest to keep him there while he finished writing down the information for the run. For good measure, he wrapped his hand around Derek’s ankle, thumbing the outline of the bone and getting a
toe jabbed into his sternum for his efforts. Derek finished up the call in record time, hanging up and staring down at Stiles with an almost wild-eyed expression.

Hot.

Derek pulled his foot back, reaching down and grabbing Stiles under the arms to haul him up like he was some kind of non-green Hulk. Stiles bit down on the shout of surprise at the action, half tempted to go utterly limp when Derek pushed him against the kitchen table.

“I’m going to do this run,” Derek began lowly, shifting his grip to Stiles’ hips, “and when I get back, I’m going to make you regret that.”

Oh man, if Derek wanted Stiles to regret the impromptu molestation, he was clearly going about it the wrong way, with these sexual implications and his hands dragging their bodies together. Stiles opened his mouth to tell Derek exactly that, but was silenced when his lips were claimed in a bruising kiss that robbed Stiles of his voice and breath.

By the time Stiles had processed the situation enough to reciprocate, Derek was pulling away and heading down the hall to change into his uniform. Stiles, having been prepared for the likelihood that Derek would get a call that night (it wasn’t entirely uncommon when he came over) went for his laptop bag sitting next to the couch.

Derek came back into the living room a few minutes later, looking far less ruffled and tense than he had leaving it. “I’ll be back in an hour or so, it shouldn’t take long. It’s just a tow down the road to their house.” Bracing his hand against the back of the couch, Derek leaned in to press a kiss to the arch of Stiles’ cheekbone, adding, “I suggest you text your dad to let him know you’re staying the night.”

Oh sweet Halo III.

“Okay,” Stiles breathed, staring up at Derek with a dumbstruck look - because staying the night totally implied a bit of horizontal tango, which also implied that Stiles was about to get some nookie. He was totally game, he was so game that he had his controller already charged up and ready. (pun intended)

Derek rubbed the short fuzz of Stiles’ hair before he pressed both palms to Stiles’ cheek and dragged them down Stiles’ throat in his weird touchy-face-grope thing. Stiles stood there and took it like a man, nipping Derek’s thumb when it passed by on the upward sweep. Derek tweaked his nose before he backed away, grabbed his truck keys from the coffee table, and slipped out the front door.

Staring forlornly at the door for a moment, Stiles searched for his jeans, pulling them back on but leaving the fly open, and then sat down on the couch. He opened up his internet browser and pulled an online game from his bookmarks. It wasn’t hard to pass an hour or two if mindless games were involved. Derek would be back in no time, and Stiles couldn’t help but feel endless excitement at the prospect.

At some point, between the fifth and sixth hour mark, Stiles drifted off completely against his own free will. He didn’t know how long he slept for, only that he woke up to the sound of the front door opening and the feeling of Derek gently lifting the laptop from where it sat on his stomach.

Groggily, Stiles cracked an eye open to see that Derek looked utterly exhausted.

“Wh’time’s’it?” Stiles mumbled, letting Derek take his hand and help him to his feet. Derek steadied Stiles when he swayed, one hand pressed between his shoulder blades to gently guide him towards
the bedroom. Stiles was all for sleepy sex - he’d read enough smutty romance fan fictions to know it was totally something he’d be up for - but he was rather hoping his first time with Derek would be with a little more coherency.

“Little after three,” Derek said, giving Stiles a gentle shove that had him toppling face first onto the bed like a rag doll. Stiles grunted, spreading his legs to let Derek know that he’d have to be doing all the work if he wanted to get any action - Stiles was not a morning person. It usually took him an hour to actually wake up completely, and rushing the process could easily put him in a foul mood.

“S’more’n an hour,” Stiles pointed out, eating the comforter unintentionally. It was like being encased in Derek’s scent, the bed a practical nest of quilts and pillows that rivaled the room of an affectionate four year old.

“There was an accident on the highway. It caused three wrecks in four hours.” Derek explained from somewhere in the room. Stiles turned his head, watching as Derek kicked his boots off and stripped down to his boxer-briefs. Stiles buried his face halfway under the comforter to hide the fact that he was unabashedly watching Derek practically shimmy out of his underwear on his way into the attached bathroom.

Stiles crawled his way up onto the bed, struggling to get his socks off using only his toes, and then curling up over the half that was furthest from the bathroom so the light coming from it didn’t bother his eyes. Snuffling into the pillow, Stiles listened to the sound of Derek puttering around in the shower, door left open for steam to drift into the bedroom.

By the time Derek was out of the shower, Stiles was already starting to doze off again. It was such a domestic feeling that Stiles couldn’t help but feel safe enough to drift somewhere between sleeping and waking. He vaguely registered the sound of a drawer opening, of shifting clothes, before the bed dipped and Derek was pulling the comforter off of him. Oh hell naw, it was now time for sleep, not time for getting jiggy in the sheets. Stiles clutched the quilt, whining his protest when he heard Derek chuff out a laugh.

“You can’t sleep in your jeans, Stiles,” Derek mumbled.

Oh.

Ohhhhhhh.

Stiles released the comforter and Derek drew it away before coaxing Stiles to lie on his back. He unbuttoned Stiles’ pants, pulling the zipper down and then tugging them over Stiles’ hips. The drag of denim along his hipbones was enough to wake Stiles just a tiny bit more and actually glance down at where Derek was tugging on the ankles of his jeans. This was most excellent, because Stiles didn’t even have to put any effort into taking his pants off. Derek was doing it for him.

Granted, Stiles would have muchly preferred the de-pantsing were due to a completely different situation than the one at hand, but beggars can’t be choosers.

The second Stiles was divested of his jeans, Derek grabbed his limp arms and pulled them up so he could tug Stiles’ shirt off with little interruption. Stiles kind of maybe made himself a bit on the noodly side on purpose, because it wasn’t every day someone randomly undressed you for bed.

He was going to milk this for all it was worth.

Soon enough, Derek climbed into the bed and pulled the comforter over the both of them, wrapping
an arm around Stiles’ stomach and dragging him back against his nice, sinfully firm chest. Stiles’ stomach did a little tumble, his heart hiccupping when Derek’s face buried itself into the curve of his throat and shoulder. It was probably the most comfortable Stiles had ever felt as the little spoon, which was surprising, given their close proximity in height. Derek tucked his legs up behind Stiles’, heart slow and calming where Stiles could feel it against his back.

Absently, Stiles wondered if Kate ever had this with Derek, or if this was something so new that Derek didn’t have anything to tie it with her. He really hoped that it was the second one, because he was getting a little tired of having to fight for him when she wasn’t even around.

Quietly, Stiles said, “I don’t know what you’re trying to get out of her…but I’m pretty sure whatever it is you want to know, she won’t tell you after this long.”

Derek, voice muffled and arm tightening sleepily around Stiles’ stomach, mumbled, “I want to know how she did it - what made her feel justified.”

So he wanted closure. Which, okay, didn’t really make a lot of sense because you can’t justify a crazy person doing crazy person things. Stiles tried to shrug, but he was impeded because Derek was snuffling his throat like some kind of sleepy, loveable puppy.

“Well, she thought everyone was a werewolf, for one.” Stiles pointed out, just to make sure that Derek remembered that particularly important tidbit. Derek paused, body stilling for a long moment that made Stiles wonder if he had possibly crossed a line.

“…right.”

Derek’s breathing slowed, tickling the tiny hairs along the nape of Stiles’ neck, which was kind of awesome but kind of not at the same time, because it made Stiles want to squirm to get away from the sensation. A thought occurred to him, and he opened his eyes to stare blankly at the wall.

“How did you survive?”

Breath stuttering for a second, Derek yawned just the tiniest bit and hooked his chin over Stiles’ shoulder, mouth touching the hinge where Stiles’ ear and jaw met. “My sister and I were at school.”

Shit, Stiles had completely forgotten about Laura. He honestly had no clue whether or not Derek even got along with his sister. Laura had been distant, and Derek had never said anything about it before now… before Stiles had just thought to ask straight out.

Dammit, Stiles.

Here, in bed with Derek, nearly three weeks later, you finally realize you had never needed to pry so much.

Great job.

Stiles didn’t know if he was just Sherlock levels of obsessed with finding the answers, or if it was his own fear of being ignorant that made him do stupid things - like everything involving Kate’s existence - but Stiles’ chest ached with the realization that Derek would have told him everything eventually, if he’d just been patient.

In his defense, Stiles spent three years after his mother died watching Lifetime movies before he realized that they were completely not helping with his depression.

“I didn’t know you had a sister,” Stiles lied, heart thumping in his chest when Derek stillled in the
process of rubbing his nose along Stiles’ jaw line. It sounded a lot more sensual than it was, because, in reality, it was a lot of Derek breathing heavily into his ear and tickling Stiles’ skin with each brush of his nose.

“She’s in New York,” Derek said after a moment, arm tightening so much that Stiles nearly wheezed for breath. “She blamed me for a long time, it’s why she left. She has a family there, but she visits sometimes.” Wait.

She blamed him?

What the hell? How could you even blame anyone but the person who had actually set the fire? It wasn’t like Derek knew she had a first class ticket for the crazy train. Laura had seemed a little more sound of mind over the phone, but, then again, so did Mr. Betances when he would call in asking for jump starts on days that Isaac worked because his car either a) had a faulty battery system or b) had nothing to do with it and Mr. Betances just wanted an excuse to creep on Isaac while he was testing the battery system.

“How could she do that, dude? I’m pretty sure it wasn’t your fault that you were dating the psycho Stepford wife from hell.”

“There are some things about my life that you need to know.”

Stiles felt something lurch in his stomach, because if that wasn’t a foreboding sentence, he seriously needed to rethink his life choices. He could only hope that Derek wasn’t actually some sort of master assassin who was undercover as a truck driver in order to get a lay of the land so that he could better slice people’s throats and make a clean getaway.

It wasn’t a good idea to voice this concern (just in case Derek actually was a hitman) and so he simply placed one of his hands over the back of Derek’s and softly replied with, “…okay.” “Just not yet,” Derek murmured, kissing Stiles’ throat placatingly, his chest rumbling in contentment. It was nice, but it was also just the tiniest bit on the creepy side because what if Derek was actually feeling for the pulse point so he could stab Stiles in the jugular with one of the pencils on his night stand and leave him to bleed out all over the sheets?

Okay, so maybe Stiles had been spending way too much time on creepy pasta, because he really didn’t mind it that much. He did mind the fact that Derek didn’t feel it pertinent to tell him the problem now, when they were actually talking about it.

“…okay?” Stiles said slowly, hesitantly. Derek brought his other hand up, using it to coax Stiles into tilting his head so Derek could awkwardly lean in and kiss the corner of his mouth.

“I just need you to give me time, I need to be sure.” Derek pleaded.

Derek really did sound so nice when he begged.

Though, Stiles had a feeling that, whatever it was Derek was hiding, was something he wasn’t entirely going to ever be ready for - not if Derek was still keeping it so tightly under wraps. Knowing Derek wasn’t going to run the opposite way like a politician met with a gay sex scandal meant that, for Stiles, he was going to try. That alone was one of the most amazing things Stiles could ask for.”…okay.”

Thanking Stiles softly, Derek held him tight, held him like he was afraid Stiles was going to disappear at any moment in time.

Stiles drifted off feeling like he was in the safest place in the world. (Which essentially meant that he
The alarm on Stiles’ phone went off promptly at 7:00 am, jerking Stiles out of the warm, drifting
dream world that he’d been happily nestled in. He was able to lift his body a half inch off the bed
before realizing a dead weight was essentially crushing him into the mattress. The alarm kept
buzzing, trilling off that stupid morning song that Stiles couldn’t remember the name of, but it even
had chirping birds to add to the effect. He needed the noise to cease entirely. He had to stop it, he
had to—

“Dude,” Stiles said, because he was effectively being held hostage.

Derek grunted, shoving his face between the tiny definition of pectoral muscles that Stiles barely
possessed and leaving a long burn of stubble across Stiles’ right nipple in the process. Stiles hissed,
groggily staring down at the top of Derek’s head and then wheezing when the arm around his middle
gave him a tight squeeze that was easily translated into: ‘my pillow is not allowed to speak.’

Although this seemed like a very nice prospect, Stiles actually needed his job to continue saving up
to pay off his eventual student loans. He had a life plan. He had a future. He also needed to turn off
his alarm before he had a coronary.

Part of that future involved a lot of sex and cuddling with Derek. However, that was not the future he
was trying to achieve at this moment. The future he was trying to achieve had less shrill music and
midis of chirping birds, effective immediately.

“Derek.”

“Mmh.” Derek mumbled, shifting and compressing Stiles’ breath out of his very lungs when he
draped the entire upper half of his body over Stiles’ stomach and chest. Stiles wheezed, because he
liked being covered by Derek, but he also liked breathing. Breathing was important, and could only
be eliminated during a particularly kinky bondage session in which mild asphyxiation was a factor.

Not that Stiles had ever contemplated breath play. No. Never.

“Come on, dude.” Stiles growled halfheartedly, reaching down to shove Derek’s face from his chest,
because the guy’s stubble rubbing against his nipple was seriously starting to affect his partially
attentive morning wood. He did not need to go through his pre-work routine at anything more than
half-mast, thank you very much.

Derek lifted his head, staring at Stiles with droopy eyes that only drooped more when he scowled at
Stiles like he’d just thrown Derek’s favorite wolf toy into the wall or something. Stiles choked on air,
because Derek had the most adorable first-thing-in-the-morning grump face ever. He almost, almost
wanted to just get himself fired if it meant he could spend the entire morning in bed with Derek.
“You can go back to sleep, you know,” Stiles pointed out, because Derek had only gotten maybe
three hours of sleep. The alarm went into snooze mode and Derek made a snuffling noise, nose
smushed into Stiles’ chest, before he pushed himself up enough to climb up the bed and faceplant
right into Stiles’ neck and shoulder.

“So’okay.” Derek said throatily, voice hoarse with sleep. Stiles shuddered when he felt the rush of air
as Derek drew in a long, deep breath through his nose, sniffing up behind Stiles’ ear like the dogman
he was.

Stiles squirmed, because that shit tickled, okay? It wasn’t sexy or pleasant, even though it did make
him kind of what to roll on top of Derek and lay on top of the guy. It was one of the oddest sensations Stiles had ever experienced with another person. Stiles brought one hand up, shoving at Derek’s shoulder. “Aggh, Derek, dude, seriously. I need to like, I need to eat breakfast and I can’t even shower because I don’t have any extra clo—”

“You c’n wear some of mine,” Derek rasped, tongue flitting out and licking a long, wet stripe up Stiles’ neck. Stiles’ words trailed off into an unintelligible mash of syllables, his dick completely ecstatic with this development. While Stiles’ boner tried to focus on what Derek’s tongue and teeth were doing to his earlobe, Stiles’ brain zeroed in on the fact that Derek wanted Stiles to wear his clothes.

Somehow, Stiles wasn’t really surprised at how eager Derek had sounded when he’d offered.

“Okay well. I still have to shower and get ready and leave in like, a half hour. So. As much as I love you crushing me with your massive girth, I really need to get up and aaaaauuuuhhh—”

That was Derek’s thigh pressing up under his dick while nibbling the shell of Stiles’ ear. Yep. Totally Derek’s thigh sliding upwards and making Stiles’ body half-curl and forget how to English.

“Oooohhh my God,” Stiles croaked, reaching out to grab Derek’s shoulders and try to fit in some morning hanky panky before Derek was awake enough to possibly think about Kate and fall out of the mood. That was when Derek pulled away enough to peck Stiles on the lips and then roll off the bed to go to his dresser.

What.

Stiles stayed prone on the bed as Derek approached with a pair of jeans and a shirt, dumping them on Stiles’ face. “Go shower.”

He left the bedroom and Stiles’ dick wept.

Stiles nearly, nearly regretted having essentially done the same thing to Derek the night before, but he didn’t. Mostly because Derek had a fantastic ass and Stiles had been more than happy to do some appreciative and much-needed grinding into it.

Grabbing Derek’s clothes, Stiles slipped into the bathroom, hesitating when he realized the only towel Derek had left was his wolf-print beach towel. Granted, Derek had a lot of stuff with wolves, but he’d explained to Stiles that he bought most of them when he was bored, and that he pretty much had no hobbies, and collecting wolf-related things had become the only hobby he’d ever had. Stiles knew for a fact that the majestic wolf staring at him from the 30x60 beach towel was one of Derek’s favorites, given the amount of wear on the material.

He opened the cabinet under the sink, hoping there was maybe a spare towel there and double taking at the sheer plethora of first-aid kids. Stiles could easily recognize rubbing alcohol, betadine, peroxide, bacitracin, and Neosporin scattered on one side, the other filled with bandages and gauze and medical tape. There was enough here for a small army… or one very destructive man. It reminded Stiles of that day in the office, when Derek had gotten into his space so inhumanly fast, or how he’d been able to drag Mike out after that fight like the guy weighed nothing. Derek had huge muscles, yeah, but it was like he didn’t even know how strong he really was or something, like he— Mother of God.

Derek was in an underground Fight Club.

Stiles shut the cabinet, pushing himself to his feet and hurrying to turn the shower on. It would
explain why Derek requested off one day a month, he was probably going to some crazy fight ring. Half the time Derek would call out the next day. Once, Derek had called in sounding like death warmed over, just to let Stiles know that Jackson was covering his shift.

Dude totally was in an underground Fight Club.

Climbing into the shower, Stiles’ mind tried to line up the scenarios, thinking of any situation which could have helped solidify his deduction. He soaped up and rinsed off, taking a fleeting moment to just sniff Derek’s shampoo bottle, enjoy the smell, and then he shut the shower off and climbed out.

Staring at the wolf towel, Stiles shrugged and grabbed it, drying himself off quickly and getting dressed. If Derek really was in an underground Fight Club, Stiles hoped that using the guy’s favorite towel wasn’t going to get his ass pummeled into the ground in any way other than a completely sexual one.

Stiles half hoped that the apartment would smell like freshly cooked breakfast before he remembered that Derek was actually really lazy and hated cooking unless properly persuaded. The man could cook like he was goddamn Paula Deen, sans the butter, but getting him to do so was like… was like getting his dad to eat celery or something. Instead, Derek was sitting at his behemoth of a desktop, the thing clicking and creaking as it tried to process google’s existence.

“Looking for another majestic wolf?” Stiles teased, coming up behind Derek and giving in to the urge to hug him from behind, chin plopping on the top of Derek’s head. Derek adjusted his hold on the old mouse, chord catching on the worn and curled edge of his mouse pad—lovingly adorned with a howling wolf, because Derek was predictable like that. Derek grunted, turning and pressing his nose into Stiles’ shoulder to breathe in deeply.

“No. Paying my phone bill.”

“Online bill pay? Impressive.” Stiles laughed when Derek growled and nipped his shoulder, drawing back enough to stay away from the guy’s biteyness and making a beeline for the kitchen to grab himself a bowl of cereal.

Stiles sat on the couch, eating and watching Derek wait for the page to load, because his internet was so slow it was on the brink of being dial-up.

“You want me to wash these clothes after I bring ‘em back?” Stiles asked, voice garbled through a mouthful of cocoa puffs (because Derek was unnaturally obsessed with chocolate, Stiles had discovered) and stabbing his spoon back into the bowl to snag some more. Derek grunted, clicking around and shrugging halfheartedly.

“It’s fine, you don’t have to,” he said quietly, reaching for his wallet on the desk to grab his worn and battered debit card—the only sign that he actually lived in the 21st century. Stiles chomped happily on his cocoa puffs, content with allowing the both of them to drift into silence while he finished eating. Derek was still in his boxers, shoulders hunched over the desk while he punched in his card number with slow jabs of his finger. It was adorable, really. Stiles could tap in a phone number in half the time it took Derek to put in the first three digits of his card, because Stiles was like the manliest secretary ever to have manned a desk. Or something.

"You sure? My dad got this awesome fabric softener—"

“I’m sure.” Derek interrupted suddenly, halfway to having blurted the words like Stiles washing his clothes could mean inevitable doom. Maybe Derek was allergic to fabric softener? It would make sense, the guy didn’t seem to do warm and fuzzies very well if he was more than half awake.
“Okay.” Stiles responded intelligently, because seriously, what was he supposed to say to that? Maybe Derek wanted to preserve his scent on the clothes by sealing them in a Ziploc bag before he took them to some kind of wolf reservation or something so that if Stiles ever left Derek (not likely, HA!), Derek could hella track him down with his majestic creature friends.

When he finished eating, he rinsed his bowl out and stuck it in the near-empty dishwasher before stumbling about Derek’s apartment in search of all of his belongings. He still had twenty minutes to get to work, but knew he needed to allot a good five minutes for Derek’s weird face-rubbing thing that would occur before he left.

Speaking of which, Derek was standing at the doorway when Stiles came out of the bedroom after putting his shoes on. He looked groggy, one hand idly scratching at the patch of hair that was leading down from his navel and into the elastic of his boxer-briefs. Oh, how Stiles wanted to trace that path with his tongue.

No, bad Stiles. Go to work.

Snagging his laptop bag from next to the couch, Stiles shouldered it and approached Derek. “I’ll try to let you sleep before I call you in,” Stiles offered, grinning crookedly. Derek grunted, reaching out and curling his hand into the front of Stiles’ shirt to drag him in for a kiss. He still looked sleep-groggy, eyes drooping even as Stiles leaned in to press their lips together.

“You can’t play favorites,” Derek warned against his mouth, rubbing his nose over Stiles’ cheekbone and then going for his designated creeper zone, mouthing the hollow of Stiles’ neck. Stiles obediently let him, indulging Derek until he felt a warm, wet tongue laving over his collarbone.

“Okay, okay. Stop that. That’s wet.” Stiles grimaced, squirming until Derek pulled away with a mildly put out look. Like the guy hadn’t just been going to town on Stiles’ throat.

“Don’t give me that look. I seriously should have invested in a puppy when I started dating you. At least then I’d be used to being a giant salt lick.”

Derek frowned, looking ready to ask Stiles if he should stop. Granted, half of their relationship was pretty much doing what they wanted and hoping the other liked it, but Derek should know that Stiles would have said something earlier if he really minded. Right now, however, he just didn’t feel like being tongued before he had to go into work.

Derek’s tongue did things to him. Sexy things.

Things that made Stiles want to take his pants off.

“Things that made Stiles want to take his pants off. Stiles needed pants to go to work, okay?”

“I’m seriously buying you some suckers when I get off work so you don’t go through tonguing withdrawals when I’m not with you.” Stiles teased. It was time to reciprocate, because Stiles wasn’t really much of a licker, but if Derek liked to do it, he probably liked to be on the receiving end as well. That in mind, Stiles stepped forward and tilted his head (because they were pretty much the same height, which had resulted in many a forehead bumping at times) to kiss Derek’s throat. Derek stiffened, and Stiles heard a sharp intake of breath.


Stiles curled his lips over Derek’s pulse point, dropped his satchel, grabbed Derek’s biceps, and crowded him up against the wall. Derek’s pulse jumped against his mouth, and Stiles sucked, tongue
darting out to taste the salt of Derek’s skin. It was empowering, to know Derek—who had a good twenty pounds of sheer muscle on Stiles—could so easily let Stiles take control. Stiles knew it was because, in some way, Derek trusted him not to take it too far, and that really just made Stiles want to go nuts on the guy.

Derek’s pulse roared, which only gave Stiles incentive to pin his boyfriend further into the wall, pressing their bodies together and then dragging his tongue up Derek’s throat before biting a wet kiss into his jaw. Derek shook beneath him and holy God, did Stiles really just want to forego work completely. Derek was literally the only thing besides online RPG games that made him consider losing his job just to keep doing what he was doing.

“Fuck,” Derek said intelligently.

“I can totally see why you like licking me,” Stiles really could, because Derek’s skin had a saltiness to it that was more appealing than anything. It was less bitter and more like a sudden burst on his tongue, one that made his jaw ache.

Derek’s hands grabbed to Stiles’ waist, flipping them around so that Stiles was the one pressed back into the wall. Stiles’ dick twitched, because it really was an excitable little fucker, and then Derek’s hands were smushing against Stiles’ face and dragging down his jaw and throat, rubbing everywhere before finishing off with a tweak to Stiles’ nose.

Standing back, Derek gave Stiles a chance to process what had happened, because the guy really liked to take Stiles by surprise with the sudden face-molestations.

“I’m going to work now,” Stiles said blankly, cheeks hot from the friction of Derek’s palms practically rubbing their existence into his skin.

“Bye.” Derek smirked, turning to head back towards the bedroom. Oh no, a smirk like that was entirely unacceptable, because it meant that Derek had won their unofficial game of leaving the other stunned and horny. Stiles was too competitive to just let Derek walk away with his cocky ass swaying in that tight underwear like he owned the place. Okay, so it was his apartment, but that was so not the point.

Stiles scrambled forward, rearing his hand back and slapping Derek right on his asscheek. Derek wasn’t even entirely done whirling around before Stiles had bolted out the door, cackling loudly at the sound of Derek’s startled and angrily aroused, “Stiles!” that followed him.

Oh yes, there were going to be repercussions for that. Very sexy repercussions, most likely. Ones in which Stiles would definitely have Derek’s curvaceous booty beneath his fingertips in a much less violent manner.

Until then, he had a towing company to open up.

Derek ended up not being called in until nearly noontime, the morning slow and filled mostly with jumpstarts and unlocks that kept Isaac running all over town. When he finally did swing by the office, it was right in the middle of the afternoon, and with an armful of fast food. Sometimes Stiles wondered if Derek was his spirit animal, especially when he did things like pull out a giant container of curly fries and pass them over.

Stiles happily gorged himself, halfway through his burger when a thought struck him. “I never really was around animals very much.”

Derek lifted his head, lips curled around the straw of his soda like it was their job.
“I had a dog, but after mom died… my dad was working so much, and I was in school, so we ended up giving it away.” Stiles wasn’t really sure if it was something necessary to share, but since Stiles had spent half of their UST buildup going behind Derek’s back to find out his past, he might as well be forthcoming with his own.

Nodding, Derek finished up his own burger and started to fold up the trash. “I always used to have animals around. I like… the stuff I buy… because it reminds me of my pack.”

Aw, how cute. He couldn’t even admit that he collected wolf paraphernalia like a lonely obese man living by himself in the middle of suburban Georgia. Stiles had seen the wolf shirts, and Derek couldn’t even deny it because Stiles had come over one morning, unknowingly waking him up from a late work night, and Derek had forgotten to take it off before answering the door. Cutest pajamas ever, just so you know.

However, a single word was what really caught Stiles’ attention in that sentence.

“Pack? Really? You guys were way into that nature stuff, weren’t you?”

Derek stiffened, trash crinkling in his hand, and then shrugged. “I’d have a dog if my apartment didn’t charge me sixty bucks a month extra,” he replied edgily, standing up and grabbing Stiles’ trash to toss both in the can. The way he spoke, stiff and uneasy, was enough for Stiles to know that Derek wasn’t particularly in the mood to talk about his family or their habits.

The look on Derek’s face was just downright depressing, though. It was totally time for a subject change before Derek drowned in his own feelings. “My mom died when I was 13.”

Derek’s head snapped up, cigarette pack crinkling just the tiniest bit in his hands. Stiles shrugged absently, fiddling with his pen. "But… it’s okay. I’m fine now, anyway. It was ten years ago, right?” Stiles didn’t bother looking up, just because eye contact was painful to maintain when talking about anything relating to his mother or his personal issues. “I used to have to take medication in high school, not the Adderall—well, I took that, too, but I also had to take stuff for anxiety. She died right before I started high school… I used to have these crazy panic attacks for no reason, and let me tell you, buddy, they suck big time.”

“What’s it like?”

Stiles’ eyes flicked over to stare at Derek, because it wasn’t every day that someone asked him about the attacks, or about anything in general. He usually got the typical ‘I’m sorry’ story, or, more annoying, the ‘oh, I had someone die too.’ Which was sometimes okay, but not when it was being said by a person who was just competitive for the ‘shittiest life’ award. Seriously, if Stiles had a gold star for every time someone tried to one-up him on personal woes for no damn reason, he could recreate the entire Milky Way across his bedroom wall.

Derek kept staring and Stiles had to remember to breathe under the intensity of his stare. He was almost afraid to blink, like Derek was actually one of those crying angels from Dr. Who or something. True facts.

“You can’t breathe,” Stiles said quietly, staring down at his pen, “and you want to die, just to make it stop.” Just remembering having an attack made his chest tight, and Stiles didn’t like that feeling at all. In actuality, he would much prefer having his hair brushed with the talons of a falcon. “So… you still owe me, because, y’know, you really didn’t follow through with your promise last night.”

“How did you get over them?”
“The raging hard-on you gave me last night? I totally jacked off on your bed.” Stiles shot back, computer honking angrily at him. Stiles dropped his pen to pull up the call and dispatch it.

“Did not,” Derek said grudgingly, like he knew this for a fact and was entirely disappointed as a result. Stiles grabbed the phone, giving Brian a call to send him on the tow that had come through.

When he hung up, Derek was staring at him again.

“What?”

“You didn’t answer my question.” Oh, because of course Derek was going to pester Stiles about something stupid like telling him how he got over debilitating panic attacks that sometimes left him curled up on the floor for substantial periods of time until he didn’t feel like his entire chest was caving in. So not happening. What was more likely to happen, was that Stiles was going to attempt to get some nookie in the office, because no self-respecting man was going to reject sexy times for talking about gooey feelings.

“I learned to breathe,” Stiles answered shortly, clicking his pen and scribbling down the information from the run that Brian was on. Derek released a low sigh, the one Stiles knew very well to mean that he was feeling particularly miffed, and stood up to walk around the desk. Stiles looked up instantly, fully prepared to present his lips with a little extra purse to make them look particularly kissable, when Derek cupped the back of his head and bent down to kiss Stiles’ forehead.

What the hell.

Derek was not a benevolent Jesus, this was unacceptable. This was far too G rated to be the end result of talking about their pasts. Stiles had seen enough movies to know they were supposed to have a passionate, heartfelt make-out session on the desk, where Derek would shove everything out of the way so he could properly ravish Stiles.

Porn = totally a form of movie.

“I know it doesn’t get better.” Derek said, pulling away. Stiles scowled, because he knew that. They both knew that. The only point would be to… to acknowledge and agree that Stiles had gone through his own share of difficulties.

Mother of God, this was like a telanovella, without the surprise relation to one another or pregnant men.

“Do you think boss is watching the cameras?” Stiles blurted, practically feeling himself smile when Derek cracked the tiniest of grins and ducked down to snag Stiles’ mouth in a kiss. Oh yes, this was nice. Stiles wanted to have many of these times, in many positions. Maybe even—

The phone rang and Stiles dragged himself away to answer it. “Beacon Hi—"

“Don’t even THINK about it, you two screwballs!”

Stiles choked on air, fumbling with the phone as the manager’s voice rang in his ear. “I was just kidding, sir!”

Derek, apparently, was less inclined to help Stiles’ protest, because his face had found its home at the curve of Stiles’ shoulder to rub along his throat. Stiles elbowed at the man’s brick shithouse of a chest, because that shit tickled and turned him on at the same time, and Finstock was still yelling on the other line.
“I swear to God, Stilinski, keep it in your pants!”
“I’m sorry!”
“No you’re not!”
“Yes I—"
The phone line went dead and Stiles turned to slap Derek in the face with the receiver. “You’re going to get me fired!”

Derek, who was obviously a robot, because his face hadn’t even moved and was now bearing a red mark, looked like a puppy after being yelled at for peeing on the carpet (he looked like that a lot, actually). Stiles, however, refused to give in and instead turned so that the back rest of his chair bumped into Derek’s chest. “Oh no, buddy, I know you’re making that face because that face does things to me. Not this time, pal. This is me, being completely unaffected.” Stiles grabbed his pen, because the only way he was going to avoid looking at Derek when the guy was lurking Nosferatu style was if he pretended to write something substantial down.

“Okay,” Derek said plainly, walking back around the desk, sitting down in his chair, and pulling out his pack of cigarettes to light one up.

Rude.

Two could play at that game. Stiles was going to play it so hard that not even Master Chief would be able to compete with his ability to bring it like a batch of cookies to a bake sale.

The CB radio crackled to life, Brian informing Stiles that he was on location, and that Stiles needed to call the customer to come out to their car. Stiles dropped his pen, pulling up the data on the computer and reaching for the phone. He was halfway through dialing the number when Derek’s finger mashed down on the receiver button, effectively cutting the line off.

“Uh, dude.” Stiles sniped, because that was just uncalled for. He started to dial again, only for Derek to snag his fingers in a gentle, but firm hold. “Excuse you, I have a job to do.” Derek set his cigarette in the ash tray, holding up a finger. “One.”

“What.”

“Two.”

“What are you—"

“Three.”

“Dude, seri—”

“Four.”

“Der—”

At the exact same time Derek said, “five,” Brian came on over the radio to let Stiles know he’d found the customer on his own. Stiles couldn’t even stop himself from laughing, because he’d never really made the connection before, with how many times he’d had to hang up during a call because Brian or another driver had made him dial their number without bothering to even look around. Stiles set the phone down on the receiver, grin splitting his face as he laughed again at the memory, and
then tangled his fingers together with Derek’s. He kept them there for a second before finally pulling away with a shake of his head, a wry smile, and an amused look shot at Derek. Derek, looking smug as all get out, quietly said, “Every time.”

Snorting, Stiles wrote down Brian’s time, knowing, without a doubt, that they were making some fucking awesome progress in their relationship.

It was another few days before Stiles really got to spend any time with Derek. Between studying for his mid-terms (granted, it was the tail end of October, but you could never study too soon!) and Derek’s erratic on-call schedule, it was hard to find a chance to do anything other than talk to one another via text or on the occasion that Derek was doing a job at Stiles’ school or neighborhood and was able to swing by for a few minutes.

Wednesday rolled around, finding Stiles at Derek’s apartment, trying to show him how to build exhibits in the copy of Zoo Tycoon he’d brought over. If Derek wasn’t allowed to have a pet dog, Stiles figured he could at least provide Derek with some form of animal interaction. He’d spent half an hour dusting and cleaning off the disk before it was even playable, but Derek didn’t need to know that.

“Get the yeti, dude. You totally need the yeti. No, that’s the yeti,” Stiles jabbed his finger on Derek’s monitor, trying to mentally force the cursor away from the bongos and to where the small icon of the yeti was.

Derek clicked the bongo, like the bastard he was.

“Come on, Derek, what’s the point of having the expansion pack if you’re not going to at least get a yeti?” Stiles cajoled, trying to reach for the mouse to change Derek’s selection. Derek smacked his hand and Stiles wrenched his arm back with a hiss.

“My zoo has animals from Africa, Stiles. I can’t have a yeti in a zoo that’s in the Serengeti.”

Derek said irritably, pushing Stiles away when he made another grab for the mouse. Apparently Derek didn’t understand the finer aspects of computer games, like when Stiles had showed him how to let the animals out to eat everyone in the game, he’d pitched a fit and had started over entirely upon realizing his score would never recover from such a grievous situation. It would have been cute, but to Stiles, it hurt him deeply. It hurt him ore than a paper cut on the webbing between his fingers, and those were the worst.

“Derek, seriously, it’s a game. Come on, look at that yeti,” Stiles gestured to the monitor, other hand slowly sneaking for the mouse again, “he wants a home.”

“Stop that,” Derek barked, snarling when Stiles was able to snag the mouse during a moment of weakness. “Give that back!” It would have been the funniest thing on the planet if Derek didn’t sound like the world would end if he didn’t create the perfect habitat for his currently unhappy bongos.

Stiles jerked his hand back when Derek reached out for it. Oh, how nice it felt to be the one holding something above someone else’s head. It was empowering, it made him feel like Thor, and the mouse was his mighty hammer. Derek must have been poor Loki, who could never truly harness the power of—

—tackling Stiles into the ground with an animalistic battle cry.

Stiles wheezed for air, mouse clattering out of his hand and across the living room. Derek was up in
a flash, scrambling over Stiles’ body to get it. Stiles reached for his ankle, grabbing and yanking so
that Derek tripped and fell just a few feet from his prize. There was no way Stiles was going to lose,
not when he’d already come so far with torturing Derek and forcing him to show actual human
emotions.

Actual human Derek Hale. Who’d have thunk?

“Stiles!” Derek yowled, because hey, Stiles realized that hooking his hands into the back of Derek’s
jeans and pulling made it easy to drag him a few feet back. Sure, now Derek’s ass was half hanging
out, but that meant nothing in light of the fact that Stiles was officially leaping over his boyfriend to
make a dive for the mouse.

That is, until Derek grabbed wrapped both arms around Stiles’ knees and Stiles went down about as
gracefully as a tranquilized hippo. He twisted, trying to at least get the mouse under his body when
Derek was suddenly on top of him and pinning his wrists down to the ground, grip tight and
breathing heavy.

Oh.

Stiles was pretty sure he could feel his pupils dilate, eyes wide as he stared up at Derek and felt the
weight of Derek’s body pressing him into the ground. He could also feel the way his pulse was
thundering in his wrists, pounding against Derek’s palms like he was about to go into cardiac arrest
and woah, hey—Derek was kissing him.

Actually, it was more like Derek was assaulting his mouth, teeth clacking and nipping and pushing
until Stiles could barely keep up. His wrists were freed so Derek could clutch Stiles’ jaw and face,
hands holding desperately to him like he was afraid Stiles was going to disappear at any moment.
Stiles arched up, because holy fried twinkies, this was intense. Derek’s breath was rushing against
his cheek and Stiles was pretty sure his head was swimming, eyes crossing just the tiniest bit when
Derek dragged Stiles’ bottom lip between his teeth, scraping and biting as if it was the last thing left
on his bucket list.

One minute, Stiles was horizontal. The next, Derek was standing, shoving his hands under Stiles’
arms, and hauling him up like he literally weighed ten pounds. Stiles had a half second not to utterly
bust a nut at how turned on he was by the fact that his boyfriend is the fucking Hulk and wrapped his
legs around Derek’s hips just to keep from falling. Derek was, apparently, firing on all pistons. He
pressed a hand on Stiles’ ass to keep him in position, the other holding the back of Stiles head just so
that the kissing could resume. Which, really, Stiles had no objections. He quite enjoyed the kissing.
In fact, he could kiss Derek all day and give no fucks.

Derek eagerly walked them towards the couch to press Stiles down into it without a single word.
Apparently Derek hadn’t not gotten in his neck-fetish quota for the afternoon. Stiles had a half breath
to catch movement before there was suddenly a set of teeth scraping and nibbling at his throat,
quickly licking at the red marks left behind.

“You know,” Stiles rasped, trying his hardest not to just grab Derek’s dick and suck him off right
then and there. “I bet yetis wished they had a place in your zoo to get jiggy with it.”

Derek wrenched back, and Stiles had to laugh at the startled (actually extremely blank) expression on
his face. Stiles smiled brightly and Derek’s brows furrowed. “They would have kept breeding and
eventually they’d have taken over my zoo.”

“Oh my God.”
Stiles covered his face, because there was no way Derek was actually serious. That was too much, Stiles couldn’t handle it. He needed Derek’s dry wit and sarcasm back, he was being too literal.

“We’re never getting a pet, you’ll keep it fenced in the house and feed it table scraps all day.”

Derek was silent, and Stiles pulled his hands down to find himself the subject of a wide-eyed stare. It was like Derek had realized Stiles was some sort of new species of animal, lips parted just the tiniest bit and eyes flicking all over Stiles’ face like he could just pull him apart and analyze his every word. Actually no, that sounded creepier than what was actually happening.

“What?”

“A house?”

“Huh?” Stiles said intelligently. Derek swallowed, and Stiles suddenly got it. “I mean. one day, if… if that’s okay?” Because if it wasn’t okay, this would get really awkward. Stiles may have thought with his dick half the time, but he really couldn’t see himself with anyone else but Derek. He kind of really wanted to adopt some kids and have them climbing all over Derek like demonic monkies when he’d come home from work. He wanted to learn how to cook (at least beyond microwave dinners and pasta like he did now) and have Derek crowding around him in the kitchen to try and steal bits of food before it was ready. He just really, really wanted the whole domestic shebang shit.

Because…

… because he was in love with Derek.

Like. A lot.

More than really should be advisable when he’d only known the guy for three months. It was terrifying. It was really fucking scary. What the fuck was he supposed to do with that? How badly was he going to fall in a few more months? A few years? What would he do if Derek grew tired of him? If he—

Derek exhaled sharply, curling his fingers into Stiles’ shirt and pulling him up for a kiss. It wasn’t just a kiss. It was something more than that, because Stiles swore his entire body was going to catch fire and burn until there was nothing left but a pile of ashes floating in the air. Stiles clutched to Derek’s arms, lips parting easily beneath his, because he didn’t want to stop kissing Derek. He didn’t want to stop touching Derek, feeling him, talking to him, holding him, watching him laugh and frown and try to hide the pair of wolf slippers that Stiles knew he kept under his bed. Stiles was so far in over his head and he was going to drown in it.

Stiles had no idea how to even begin to tell Derek any of this, so, instead, he pushed away just enough to gasp out, “Dude, your remote is digging into my ass. As much as I like things in my ass, your remote is not one of those things.”

Derek’s nostrils flared and Stiles was airborne once more. It would be cool, but they were pretty much the same height and Stiles just felt the tiniest bit emasculated that he was the one always getting thrown around. Then again, he really didn’t fucking care right now, because Derek was carrying him down the hall and straight for the bedroom—complete with kicking the door fully open and everything. Sexy lumberjack montage, anyone?
Dropping Stiles on the bed, Derek’s hands went straight for the fly of Stiles’ jeans, and yeah, that was kind of hot. Like, hotter than anything Stiles could fathom. He was actually pretty sure he’d already died and gone to a heaven filled with massive penises and wonderfully sculpted abs and butts. Oh, no, that was just Derek pausing in de-pantsing Stiles to wrench his own shirt off and scramble out of his jeans.

Jesus tapdancing Christ.

Stiles shoved his own pants down, shimmying out of them and kicking them somewhere across the room and far, far away. Derek was focused on him—completely focused on him, Stiles, and no one else. Not his job, not his past, and most definitely not Kate. There was no way Stiles was going to fuck this up, because if he did he might as well go and grab the paper guillotine at work on Saturday and chop his own dick off. That, of course, is when Derek froze halfway to reaching out for Stiles. He wrenched his hand back, curling his finger into a fist and closing his eyes. Stiles' heart froze in his chest, watching Derek as he focused on his own breathing, chest rattling with a nearly inhuman growl.

Good job, Stiles. You already fucked up.

“Hey,” Stiles said quietly, sucking in a sharp breath when his voice cracked against his will. He tried again, leaning forward to put his hand over Derek’s. “It’s okay, come on.” Stiles tried to pull Derek back on the bed, to at least fucking cuddle, god dammit, but then Derek’s eyes were snapping open, irises bright blue—jesus, they were reflective in the moonlight—and then he was pushing Stiles down onto the bed and kissing him again.

Oh, thank God.

Stiles had no idea what just happened, but Derek was stretching out on top of him, kisses alternating between rough, biting presses, to gentle nips that were wet and open. Derek twined their fingers together, gripping tight while he set about trying to mark every inch of Stiles’ skin; lips, jaw, throat, collarbone, the dip in his chest, anything he could reach, without having to let go of Stiles’ hands.

Kind of awesome, but really not what Stiles wanted right now. What Stiles wanted right now was something pushing inside of him and opening him up and completely dominating him.

That is to say, Stiles really just wanted some actual fucking to commence.

Mind set, Stiles pulled Derek’s hands up and up until he had a mouth on his own again. Boyfriend properly distracted, Stiles lifted his legs, wrapped them around Derek’s hips, and shifted his weight to roll them over. Derek’s breath left him in a whoosh, eyes wide while looking at Stiles, in all his boxer-wearing glory as he perched himself on Derek’s hips androcked back. Stiles, himself, was actually startled when he felt the hot press of Derek’s erection through his boxers, sliding between the cheeks of his ass with the head nudging up behind his balls.

There weren’t enough expletives for Stiles to properly convey how his legs shook from that single touch. He could feel the muscles of Derek’s stomach twitching under his fingers, could feel every expansion of Derek’s chest when he breathed in, and he could feel Derek’s fucking dick against his ass like it belonged.

Belatedly, Stiles was extremely thankful they’d exchanged medical records a week and a half ago, because there was no way he was going to waste time fumbling to find a condom once things started to get good. Derek’s hands grabbed at his hips, pushing Stiles back at the same time he rocked upwards and holy FUCK, that was a mega wedgie he’d just gotten.
“Oh my god, dude,” Stiles breathed out, leaning forward to stick his ass up in the air. “You just gave me the ultimate wedgie.” If anything, Stiles was completely honest, and it did take some skill to basically grind into someone’s ass so hard their underwear got stuck there, right? Derek laughed, his eyes bright and warm with nothing but fond desire.

“Take them off, then,” he suggested, voice a low rasp that sent a shudder straight through Stiles like an electric shock.

“Oh, okay,” Stiles’ hands shook (partially with anxiety because, hello, impending orgasms) as he sat up on his knees and stuck his thumbs into the elastic of his boxers. He didn’t even have a chance to take them off before Derek was taking advantage the moment to grab Stiles and, essentially, lift him up and toss him right onto his back again. Stiles was totally ready to voice his protests when Derek, well, when Derek pretty much ripped his boxers off and tossed them across the room. Of course, given their luck, the boxers landed on Derek’s lamp and knocked it over with a loud clatter.

Derek glanced over his shoulder, shrugged, and then turned back to stare down at Stiles, naked and completely exposed like a virgin on her wedding day.

That’s when Derek’s eyes drifted down and locked on Stiles’ dick, where it was kind of jutting up like the flag on Iwo Jima. Stiles suddenly felt really, horrifically self conscious. He was pretty aware that he didn’t have a small dick—he was 23, of course he’d measured it; 7.25 inches, thank you very much—but it wasn’t on the particularly thick side. What if Derek liked them fat? Or what if Derek actually didn’t like dick at all? That would just be depressing, actually. It would be understandable, they’d never really established Derek’s sexuality, though the both of them knew Stiles considered himself an equal opportunist. What if Derek was going to—

To…

Ohgod. That was his hand. That was Derek’s hand. That was Derek’s very strong hand with a very firm grip that was now wrapped around Stiles’ very intimate bits. That was also most definitely Derek’s hand that was fisting him and dragging up the entire length of Stiles’ cock, thumb making a cursory swipe over the head to smear precum everywhere.

Stiles could feel his thighs quivering, could feel the tremor in his muscles shoot up his legs, hips and spine until he was slowly arching his back in reaction to Derek’s touch. Lips pressed softly to his sternum, Derek’s hand jerking him slowly, holding Stiles down with a palm to his hip. Sweet Rachel Ray, was this really happening?

“One, two, three!” Stiles gasped out, hands flying up and digging into Derek’s hair, trying to drag the guy up for a proper kiss. “You’re killing me,” he muttered against Derek’s mouth. Derek, the smug bastard, grinned and nipped Stiles’ bottom lip at the same time he squeezed the head of Stiles’ cock, which was like pulling some kind of string inside of Stiles, because he physically jerked at the sensation.

This bastard was going to be the actual death of him.

One second, Derek was hovering over him and jacking him off, and the next he was pulling back to shove his underwear down, fumbling a bit in an attempt to shimmy out of them without actually getting off of the bed. It was completely graceless, but Stiles was a little more focused on the fact that he couldn’t actually force himself to look away from the trail of dark hair that led down from Derek’s navel and circled the thick base of his cock.
Good god, Derek was only half-hard and Stiles was already wondering if that was going to fit in him.

Totally not cool.

Well, no. Stiles was pretty sure he was longer, but Derek had a good finger or two in width on him. Also, the head was fat and flared out just the tiniest bit. Stiles’ was a little more on the rounded side, which made for easier penetration, in his opinion.

Wait.

Why the fuck was Stiles busy focusing on the difference between their dicks when Derek was pretty much kneeling over him with a look on his face like he was ready to spread Stiles open and have his dirty way with him?

It was a look that made Stiles unsure if he wanted to be Snow White or Jessica Rabbit. Serious conflict here, man.

Derek braced himself over Stiles, ducking down for his favorite pastime of throat-fondling via his mouth. Stiles, of course, had no objections, because he was currently groping his way down Derek’s liquor store of a body (get it, because his stomach was a six pack but the rest of him was just as ripped? Hah. Stiles was hilarious) before his fingers bumped the base of Derek’s cock.

Houston, we’ve made contact.

Stiles instantly curled around it and squeezed, the flesh warm and heavy in his palm. Derek’s hips twitched, teeth scraping at Stiles’ throat, which was obviously a sign of encouragement. “Should I talk dirty to you?” Stiles asked, because hey, some people didn’t like dirty talk! It was a very good question to ask for future reference. It wasn’t like they’d ever really had much chance to talk during their multiple make-out sessions.

“Shut up.”

Aw.

“Aw.”

Derek totally didn’t mean it, Stiles knew. How did he know? Because he could feel the bastard twitching not to grin while he was kissing Stiles’ shoulder. Clever girl.

“So,” Stiles began conversationally, figuring well hey, the truth never hurt anyone. “I used to think about us fucking in the office.”

If Derek had gone any more still, Stiles would have thought his entire body had been injected with cement. Undeterred, Stiles plowed on like Tosh.0 with a culturally offensive joke.

“You know, pushing everything off the desk, bending me over it—or throwing me on it, actually, either one works. The end result is going to town in the middle of broad daylight at work.” All of this was true. Stiles wasn’t really sure he was fond of public sex, but he was fond of daytime sex. He was very fond of it, actually. It was probably one of the only things he’d enjoyed from hanging out with almost-strangers he’d met at some college party. None of those had ever lasted more than a few weeks, but that wasn’t the point.

Right now, the point was that Stiles was pretty sure he’d felt Derek’s dick twitch in his hand, and that Derek’s breathing had gotten substantially growlier. A lot growlier. The dirty talk was totally on
Stiles’ list of ‘things to do to make Derek act like an animal.’

Really, you’d think the guy was some kind of werewolf or something with the way he was always sniffing things and growling. Totally weird, right?

“Public sex not your thing? Totally understandable. We can always work in christening the rest of your apartment. Have you tried checking the durability of your table? You hardly use it, you should totally throw me up on it sometime. Better yet, I’d be up for throwing you on it some time.”

Derek was rocking his hips, fucking into the circle of Stiles’ fist and sucking probably the most vicious hickey of Stiles’ life into his neck. Stiles’ words caught in his throat because really, how was he supposed to be coherent right now? He never thought his dick would be aching just from the sensation of someone thrusting into his hand. The things Derek did to him were kind of really terrifying, to be honest.

“It’s going to happen. Me fucking you? Yeah. You act all big and bad, but I want to be the one who makes you shake and beg for it.” Stiles rasped, and oh, that really was kind of sexy. Stiles was a bit proud of that one. No, wait, he was extremely proud of it because Derek was snarling and biting down into his throat for one punishing second before he drew back and stared down at Stiles with eyes so dilated there was barely a ring of blue iris on the edges.

“Tonight, you can fuck me, though.” Stiles added, because he had some sort of death sentence. Derek sucked in a sharp breath, palm pressing into the middle of Stiles’ chest and shoving him down into the bed at the same time he leaned up to fumble around in the drawer to his bedside table. Stiles arched up, biting at Derek’s shoulder and barely getting a good nip in before Derek was pressing him back again like a disobedient child.

Sitting back with a small container of lubricant in hand, Derek first grabbed Stiles left leg, shifting it to rest on his hip, and then Stiles right knee was being hooked over Derek’s shoulder.

Applying it, Stiles could have gone on无穷 adding, “Appetizing, if Stiles wanted to get shit done, he needed to keep talking like a writer of literotica. Something he was totally okay with doing.

“Holy God,” Stiles gasped out, because he’s pretty sure he just unintentionally clenched and unclenched his ass from sheer anticipation. Derek’s nostrils flared and he fumbled with the lube for a second.

“Fuck,” Derek hissed, and suddenly there was lube spilling over his fingers and onto Stiles’ stomach. Stiles hissed, squirming because that shit was cold. Derek kept his apartment at like 60 degrees all the time. It was only from the fact that Derek himself was a human furnace that Stiles never got terribly cold. The lube, however, was like liquid nitrogen spilling across his belly.

“Dude, what?” Stiles watched Derek struggle to somehow keep the stuff from covering Stiles’ torso entirely—because the tube wasn’t exactly small. Derek cursed again, rolling his eyes and then squeezing the tube so that Stiles almost shrieked when there was suddenly a massive puddle all over his stomach. This was not a 90s porn, ergo, this was not acceptable. It was also making all of the hair around his belly button clump together unpleasantly. “Dude. What the FUCK?”

“There’s a hole in it.” Derek said nonchalantly, dipping three fingers into the miniature lube lake on Stiles’ stomach and tossing the bottle off to the side. The guy was acting like he hadn’t just turned Stiles’ stomach into a veritable slip n slide. The stuff was starting to ooze down Stiles’ hips and sides, dripping onto the bed while Derek hiked Stiles’ leg up like it was no big deal, fingers pressing up along his crack and then down to put pressure against his hole. Stiles twitched, because, okay,
covered in lube was not really pleasant, but it wasn’t completely distracting from the fact that Derek was sticking a finger slowly inside of him.

Still. How the fuck did the lube have a hole in it?

Stiles, being the kind of person who couldn’t just drop things, twisted until he could snag the tube, dragged it towards himself (getting his hands covered and utterly slippery) and stared at the gash in the side of the bottle. “Did you CLAW it?” Stiles breathed out, words cracking because hey there was suddenly two fingers inside of him.

The fingers scissoring him open went still, as did the rest of Derek. Stiles looked up, eyebrows high. Seriously, it was like he’d taken a knife and shanked the lube or something.

“No.” Derek said stiffly, and then thrust his fingers and curled them against Stiles’ prostate. Stiles sucked in a sharp breath, hips jerking and dropping the lube because holy fuck—that felt amazing. Derek seemed to know this, because he did it again with enough force that Stiles’ leg twitched and his toes curled.

“Do-,” Stiles was supposed to be asking him something. He was totally going to ask about why Derek had decided to Edward Scissorhands his own lube, but there was a more pressing matter to attend to. Like the fact that Derek was adding a third finger and twisting them, pushing and stretching until Stiles was on the verge of just gibbering out groans and inane babble if it meant he kept doing THAT. Oh yeah, Stiles remembered what he was going to ask. “Do you keep it in the same—ugh, fuck, dude—the same drawer as your pens?”

“What.” Derek’s middle finger teased against his prostate and Stiles made this awkward halfchopped whine that was more of a squirrel mating call than an actual groan.

“The lube.”

“Shut up.” Derek snapped (sounding more like a ruffled bird than actually angry), spreading his fingers out so much that Stiles thought something was going to break inside of him. He forced himself to breathe easy, relaxing and feeling the way his body just stretched compliantly against the intrusion. Derek hissed, since there was no way he hadn’t felt the way Stiles’ body just gave way to him, and bent down to press their mouths together in an agonizingly slow kiss.

Stiles could kiss Derek all day, could press their lips together over and over again until his mouth was raw and swollen. He could also—he could also try not to sound too startled when Derek’s fingers were no longer inside of him and Derek was scooping at the lube smeared all over Stiles’ stomach.

That was attractive.

Derek must have known Stiles wanted to make some sort of comment, because he was biting down on Stiles’ top lip and sucking it between his teeth in a way that really should be illegal in at least 47 states. Stiles scrambled to grab at Derek’s shoulders, unable to keep his hands against the bed any longer, and then dug his fingers into the hard, muscled flesh of Derek’s biceps. He could feel Derek’s arm flex as it was lowered down to slick himself up, could feel each twitch and shift while Derek went for a second scoop just to smear it all over Stiles’ ass, cheeks, and inner thighs.

“Never enough lube,” Stiles muttered with a smile into Derek’s mouth, getting his tongue nipped at for his efforts. So worth it.

“Come on, you can’t tell me you’ve never heard that.” Stiles pulled away, just enough to grin up at
Derek. “It’s on like, every gay porn site I’ve ever been to. Unless you don’t watch porn, which makes sense. I bet you don’t even know how to google gay porn, do yo—oh my GOD—”

Derek hadn’t even given Stiles a warning, pushing in right during the middle of Stiles’ rambling and filling him up to a point where it was just shy of painful. Stiles went rigid, exhaling sharply and sucking in a breath right afterwards. He scrabbled at Derek’s shoulders, every muscle utterly tense while Derek stilled halfway inside of him.

A hand pressed against his hip, steadying him while Derek stared down at Stiles, watching every tic and twitch that came across his face.

“You’re a jerk.” Stiles gritted out, clenching down for good measure. Derek’s hips rocked, pushing in a good inch further and making Stiles decide that he totally needed to be holding onto Derek right now. He just really wanted his arms around Derek right now. He just really wanted his arms around Derek because Derek was inside of him, okay. It wasn’t as if Derek was steamrolling his dick into Stiles, but it just felt so intimate that hey, Stiles felt really justified in bringing his arms around Derek’s shoulders and pulling him down until Derek’s face was pressed against his throat.

He could feel Derek draw in a deep breath, nuzzling at Stiles’ throat as he finally sunk entirely inside of him. Jesus, Derek was in him. Moreso, they were finally doing this. They were finally beyond awkward flashbacks and random people cockblocking them. They were in the middle of sex and Stiles just now was realizing that hey, they were having sex.

Derek’s dick was IN him. It was pushing him open, filling him up, completing the feel of Derek’s body pressing him down into the bed, skin hot and body taut under his fingers.

Would it be rude to ask Derek to pull out so Stiles could get his phone? He needed to take a picture or something. Actually a picture of Derek’s dick in him sounded like a wonderful idea. Perfect for early morning jack-off sessions before class. He didn’t entertain the thought for very long, because Derek’s arms were sliding up his back, fingers curling over Stiles’ shoulders and pressing into the dip of his collarbone. It kept Stiles firmly in place, holding him down so Derek could pull out and thrust in with a quick snap of his hips that punched the air right out of Stiles’ gut.

Good mother of Gandhi. Was there such thing as death by dicking? If there was, that was totally going to happen. Stiles dug his fingers into the short hair at the base of Derek’s skull, holding on tight while Derek shifted and thrust in deeper. It was like breaking the very last dam of restraint when Stiles couldn’t bite back the wheeze of a moan that left him, because Derek was rocking into him like he was a fucking Olympic champion at it.

Stiles hooked his ankles behind Derek’s back, rolling up with each downward thrust, encouraging Derek in any way possible because the man had the dick of Gods. “I seriously think your dick is going to kill me,” Stiles gasped out, “It’s huge, it’s, jesus, dude. Were you a porn star in a past life? Oh my godddd,” that was when Derek bore down on him, pressing their stomachs together so that, combined with the lube Derek had spilled there earlier, the slip-slide of their bodies pressing into his cock was driving him wild.

Derek sped up, snapping into Stiles with increased fervor. He moved his arm, where Stiles’ leg had fallen to the crook of his elbow, and pushed Stiles’ leg up until his knee was bumping his ear and—how the fuck even. Stiles was pretty sure he normally could not bend that well, but it didn’t really matter right now because Derek was most definitely pistoning right against his prostate. Stiles’ choked, his other leg falling down to the bed and his heel digging madly against the mattress for some kind of purchase as he gasped against Derek’s jaw. He could feel teeth bite a path up his throat, stubble scratching under his chin.
“Dude. Dude. Oh god. Oh my god, fuck, fuckfuckfuck,” Stiles groaned, clamping his eyes shut because he felt like his entire body was catching fire. Every single nerve was trembling, muscles vibrating like he was going to burst out of his skin. There was a heat deep in his belly, pulsing out through his heart and legs. He knew he was close, because he kept forgetting to breathe every few seconds. Derek was panting into his throat, kissing sloppily and fucking into him with reckless abandon. The hand that was holding Stiles’ leg up pushed harder, spread him wider so Derek could nudge in just that bit deeper. It was like being submerged in a sea of ecstasy, Stiles’ head swimming and his cock so hard he could feel beads of precum smearing all over his stomach and mixing with the lube already there.

“Come on,” Stiles begged breathlessly, “Come on, come on, fuck. Fuck, Derek.”

For a second, Stiles wondered if he should have kept quiet. The last person he’d begged had complained that Stiles wasn’t even doing any of the work and should just enjoy it. In reality, the guy had been way too drunk and he hadn’t even given Stiles the courtesy of a reach around. Stiles could have spent that hour watching reruns of Young Justice and felt more satisfied. Instead of getting complaints, though, Stiles got a wet tongue sliding up his throat and lips sucking hungrily on his adam’s apple.

“Mmn,” Derek grunted, fingers digging into Stiles’ hip for a second and then moving to grab Stiles’ other leg and push it to the side. It made Stiles feel so exposed he thought he would break under the strain. It hurt, it made the joints of his thighs ache in a way he’d never experienced before, but it also made him impossibly turned on. Derek rolled his hips, grinding inside of Stiles before he returned back to the maddening thrusting. Stiles had exactly three seconds to process his balls tightening and every muscle in his body going utterly weak before his orgasm slammed into him like a wrecking ball to the gut.

“OhhFFFuhh-” Stiles’ voice left him, a squeaking sound replacing it when everything tensed up and his cock pulsed thick, hot strips across their chests and stomachs. Derek snarled, hips working faster while Stiles clenched down around him, body tightening with each burst of come that was practically forced out of him.

Derek pulled out suddenly and quickly, fistng himself and his hand flying over his cock until he was crashing their lips together in a fierce kiss at the same time he came, spilling all over Stiles’ torso and thighs. Which, really, was going to take forever to get out, and Stiles would have to shower for at least ten minutes to make sure he didn’t utterly reek of sex when he—

And now Derek’s hands were pressing against Stiles’ torso and smearing lube, Stiles’ jizz, and his own spunk all over Stiles. Like he was a fucking three year old with finger paint. And no, kissing Stiles like a man starved was not going to distract him from this fact.

However, Stiles really didn’t have the energy to do much of anything. His legs were kind of flopped on either side of Derek’s legs like dead weights, and his muscles felt pretty non-existent. There was also the fact that Derek had just kind of face planted into Stiles’ chest, cheek sliding until his nose was half squished into Stiles’ armpit.

“I feel like a limp noodle.” Stiles said seriously.

Derek mumbled incoherently and shifted so that he was pressed up against Stiles’ side. The movement itself was easy, because he had two dicks’ worth of jizz and half a tube of misused lubricant to help him slide into sort-of spooning Stiles sideways.

“I didn’t know I could bend that way.” Stiles also said, just as seriously, only not. Derek huffed, grinning against Stiles’ arm and then setting his chin on Stiles’ shoulder, watching him. “I mean,
seriously,” Stiles turned his head, eyes going wide, “best orgasm ever. I expect all future ones to be of equal or greater value. Also, I’m topping next time. I feel I need to express how deeply invested I am in topping next time.”

Grunting, Derek pulled Stiles onto his side so their foreheads were pressed together. This would have been adorable but Stiles pretty much felt like was covered in tentacle monster goo or something. Though right now, he had more important concerns.

“No. Seriously. I so am.”

“Okay.”

Wait, what. Just that easy? Most dudes who topped the first time usually thought they were just going to top every time. There was nothing harder than getting a gay man with a phobia of penetration to take one for the team.

“Seriously?”

Derek’s eyes slitted open, arm draped along Stiles’ hip because both their hands were covered in various substances. Stiles was definitely going to make Derek carry him to the bathroom later. Might as well utilize having Thor for a boyfriend by making him do things like be your human transport system.

“… do you not want to, now?” Oh no, Derek totally was not pulling that reverse psychology stuff on Stiles. He’d gone through that during his pre-requisites back during freshman year.

“No, dude, I totally do.” Stiles assured, pressing their foreheads so tightly together that his nose squished into Derek’s.

“Then. Okay.” Derek repeated slowly, like Stiles had suffered a brick to the head and his comprehensive processors had been damaged. Which didn’t matter because Stiles was going to top. Stiles loved topping, Stiles loved the idea of topping Derek. He just wanted to push Derek down and open him up and do dirty, dirty things to him.

“Can we do it now?” He blurted, because if he tried really, really hard, his dick might actually start to respond. “Now can be next time. Can you get it up yet? I think I can if I keep trying.” “Stiles.”

“I bet if I rim you that will give us some recovery time, right? I’m down for that.” “Stiles.”

“Rimming not your thing? That’s okay. I’ll change your mi-”

Derek, at some point, had grabbed the nearest pillow he could reach, smashing it into Stiles’ face just to shut him up.

“Later.” Derek assured, and then pulled the pillow away, kissed Stiles, and got up to head for the bathroom. Stiles grinned, watching his boyfriend’s ass sway for only two seconds before realizing that sexy shower times were totally on the table. That in mind, Stiles scrambled off the bed and ran after him.

----

“Come on, man, haven’t you seen the piece of crap jeep that I drive?” Stiles cajoled, sliding the horrifically crumpled $5 across the desk. Boyd, forever unimpressed, shoved his hands into his uniform pockets without batting an eye.
“Can you count all the fucks that I give?”

Which, though a clever comeback, was totally not necessary. Stiles was the dispatcher, Boyd should be more than happy to do favors for him so that he could get put on long hauls. He should not be charging Stiles for the keys to his boyfriend’s truck.

“Breakin’ my balls, Boyd,” Stiles sighed, retrieving the other $5 and shoving it over. Boyd’s lips pulled back into a pleased grin, taking both bills and dropping Derek’s truck keys into Stiles’ outstretched hand.

“Pleasure doing business with you.” Boyd nodded to Stiles, turning on his heel and leaving the office.

Stiles ignored the temptation to respond with one of his ever-witty comebacks, instead reaching for the candy jar next to his laptop bag and lifting it up to inspect it. The jar was clear, mostly, except for the cheery orange pumpkins dotting the entire container. Inside was a note requesting Derek’s presence at his house for Halloween dinner on Monday night with a small blurb informing Derek that Stiles’ father would be in attendance and that Derek had to be on his best behavior because Stiles’ dad was the sheriff and he had guns. Lots of guns. Beneath the note was Stiles’ favorite part. The candy.

Normally, Stiles would have made Isaac do it, but Isaac was in court for the next week to deal with his father’s trial. Currently, they were trying to avoid getting Derek or any of the other drivers involved, but Stiles had a feeling one of them was going to be called in as a witness in the next few days.

Stiles shook the jar, admiring the orange and black foil-wrapped candies of black cats, howling wolves, and pumpkins. Part of the gift’s purpose was to prove that Stiles wasn’t a complete tool, and would happily continue to shower Derek in stupid gifts even after they’d gotten together.

Closing up the office and switching the phones to night service, Stiles swung by the garage to settle the candies neatly into the driver’s seat of Derek’s truck. Boyd had told him to leave the keys under the floor mat so that later, he’d put them back in the lock box with the rest of the keys for each unused truck.

Done with that, Stiles locked up the office, shut the garage and the impound gate, and headed home. Tomorrow, his dad was finally going to meet Derek, and Stiles honestly wasn’t sure if he was more excited or dreading it. Either way, Lydia was hosting a Halloween Party afterwards, so Stiles could always just get really drunk and have sloppy drunk sex with Derek in the back of the car or something. That was always a bonus.

Hopefully, this time Stiles wouldn’t be covered in disgusting amounts of lube because Derek apparently does not react well to unexpected situations.

Stiles knew when Derek got the chocolates on Monday morning, because he sent Stiles a picture of himself shoving one into his mouth. Stiles instantly set it as his contact ID for Derek, because it was a much better picture than the current one he had of Derek standing in his kitchen and staring pissily at the camera with beer spilled all over the front of his shirt.

With the picture, Derek put in a text asking if he needed to bring anything to dinner, and also that he refused to wear a costume to Lydia’s party.

Stiles responded with no, and you totally will.
He had plans, dammit.

Derek showed up the next night at exactly 6:00. Stiles was hell-bent on handing out candy, since the party didn’t start until ten, which meant they were going to eat before the rush of trick-or-treaters came in. Stiles opened the door, grinning despite himself, because Derek looked so uncomfortable he couldn’t help but lean in and give him a comforting kiss and squeeze on the shoulder.

Really, it was hard not to kiss him when Derek was dressed in a pair of nice jeans with absolutely no rips, tears, or stains, and a plain button-down that was dark gray and sinfully slimming. He really had tried to hard, because Stiles was just going to put him in costume later. Speaking of which—

“Did you bring the jacket?”

Derek stared, pursing his lips and looking just the tiniest bit put-out that Stiles hadn’t even said anything about his effort to look presentable. “Yeah. It’s in my car.” He muttered begrudgingly. Stiles grinned, curling a hand into the collar of Derek’s shirt and dragging him in for another reward kiss. This seemed to placate Derek (really, he was like a giant puppy sometimes, always looking for little rewards for his efforts) and his shoulders relaxed a little.

Stiles pulled away, giving Derek’s collar a tug to coax him further into the house, where Stiles’ dad was muttering to himself and trying to mix the bowl of candy so the snickers were mixed in properly with the Sixlets and Kit Kats. Derek stiffened just the tiniest bit when Stiles’ dad looked up, his eyes going wide when he was given a once over.

“Stiles,” his dad began slowly, “you didn’t blackmail him into wearing that, did you?” Rude.

“No!” Stiles gaped, gesturing vaguely around the room, because Derek looked like he’d just swallowed a dead pigeon. “He just wanted to impress you! Can’t a guy try to look nice for his boyfriend’s dad?”

“With the friends you have?” Dad looked skeptically at Derek, and then back to Stiles. “I’m surprised he hasn’t already gone into the kitchen and tried to eat everything in sight.”

Derek made a strangled noise in the back of his throat like he kind of wanted to laugh at the joke, but he was afraid Stiles would get offended and condemn him to the metaphorical couch for the remainder of the night. Stiles gaped at the both of them, scoffing loudly and then giving Derek a shove towards Dad.

“Screw you both. I’m going to finish dinner.”

In retrospect, forcing Derek to talk to Dad had actually been an awful idea. Stiles could barely hear the doorbell ring for the early trick-or-treaters over the sounds of baseball on the TV and both of them arguing over techniques and yelling at the screen. It was terrifying, because Derek was actually getting into the game. Stiles had never seen Derek get so excited over something except for when he’d first introduced the guy to Zoo Tycoon.

Deciding it was a good idea to intervene before Derek decided to date his father instead, Stiles set dinner out on the table and called both of them into the kitchen. Derek was there first, crowding up behind Stiles with a grin on his face—and jesus, he looked so happy that Stiles was pretty sure his knees just went weak for that smile.

“Your dad likes baseball.” Derek said quietly, “My dad did too.” Oh.
Well, just stab Stiles in the heart with a knife crafted from the pure emotions of orphan children, why don’t you?

“I like baseball, too,” Stiles added, feeling just the tiniest bit put out, “I just had to make dinner because Dad adds too much salt and butter to everything, otherwise.” Stiles tried to frown, but Derek was already leaning in to kiss away any sign of a scowl that could have possibly appeared. Actually, he didn’t just kiss away his frown, he pressed their lips together two, three, four times before Stiles’ dad finally came in after handing out some candy to another batch of trick-or-treaters.

Stiles felt unnaturally giddy, his chest ready to burst with an overflow of relief and happiness. He didn’t like it, it made him want to punch hobos in the face just to try and reign in all the excess energy he was feeling. Stiles grabbed a plate, filling it with chicken, stuffing, and green beans, and sat down while Derek and Dad did the same. It wasn’t anything fancy, a basic recipe, but it was healthy and just the tiniest bit holiday oriented. The pumpkin pie Stiles was hiding in the fridge was a surprise, anyway.

Things were going quite nicely, save for the interruptions by trick-or-treaters, until Dad decided to finally address the elephant in the room.

“So, Derek.”

Derek paused, chewing his mouthful of chicken slowly and looking up at Dad. This was the time for moral support, and Stiles reached under the table to set his hand on Derek’s thigh. It was a nice thigh, thick and muscular, and twitching in mild surprise under Stiles’ fingers. Really, really nice thigh.

“Yessir?”

Would Derek mind if Stiles slid his hand up just the tiniest bit? Mid-thigh, that was still in the safe zone, right? It wasn’t like Dad could see under the table, and he’d already had a fair amount of beer in the past hour.

“So, you know I have a gun, right?”

Stiles choked on his soda and Derek’s hand flew out to grab the one Stiles was rubbing along his thigh. Coughing, Stiles used the back of his wrist to wipe the soda that was dripping out of his nose very unattractively. Really, his dad had absolutely no concept of subtlety—Probably why Stiles didn’t have much of one, either, actually.

“Yessir.” Derek nodded, taking a swig of his beer as nonchalantly as he could. Holy God, if Stiles didn’t know him better, he’d think Derek was completely unfazed. Though it was kind of nice to know that the nervous tap of Derek’s thumb against his knuckle meant that Derek actually was, in some way, concerned about making a good impression on Stiles’ father.

“…and you know I have 24-hour access to your criminal records, right?”

“Dad,” Stiles whined, “Dad no.” Derek gave his hand a reassuring squeeze, interrupting Stiles’ second “no, dad, stop” with another “yessir.”

Was there a way to mentally tell Derek to avoid eye contact? Did Derek know how to deal with a vicious creature like Dad? Stiles knew; he knew quite well. Never stutter your words, avoid eye contact entirely, and don’t make any awkward pauses. A single misstep and your throat could get sliced open and your body left to bleed out grossly across the nice living room carpet.

Metaphorically.
“Mmm,” Dad said thoughtfully, chewing on a mouthful of stuffing and pointing his fork at Derek. Stiles suddenly felt threatened by that fork, like his dad was going to go old school Russian assassin on Derek and shank him through the chest. “… and you know that I know where you live.”


“Yessir.”

Derek, no. Stop placating him.

Why must every ounce of control slip through Stiles’ fingers like chocolate milk through a colander?

Derek’s fingers squeezed his again, trying to keep Stiles from flipping the table and smashing the bowl of green beans into his father’s face, apparently. Dad finished chewing, nodding solemnly. “Good. Glad we cleared that up. Did you want some more green beans?”

This was a nice development. Stiles could get on board with this: the two most important men in his life getting along and sharing food. He was starting to regret feeling left out during the baseball game, because he much preferred them being friends over his father threatening to shoot Derek. It was exactly the reason that Stiles’ second boyfriend hadn’t lasted more than two weeks. Then again, that guy also apparently sold drugs as a side job, and had seemed more interested in sex than holding a conversation. Not much of a loss, there.

“No thank you, sir.” Derek shook his head, gesturing to where he still hadn’t finished the green beans he currently had. Okay, so maybe Stiles knew Derek had a bit of an adversity to green things, but the guy was going to get some kind of obscure disease if he kept eating nothing but fast food and red meat. Stiles knew this for a fact, because the same ailment had befallen this guy in his Intro to Calculus class last semester. It hadn’t been pretty.

Dad reached out, grabbing the bowl of green beans and shoveling two giant spoonfuls onto Derek’s plate.

What.

Derek’s face took on a pinched look, the muscle in his jaw ticking like he was trying not to say what he really really wanted to say. Stiles, however, kind of wanted to take the pumpkin pie out of the fridge, inform his dad that it was going to be a reward, and then smash it into his face. Knowing that probably wasn’t a good idea, Stiles made a strangled sound in the back of his throat before he growled, “Dad. He said no.” with just the tiniest bit of really fucking irritated in his voice.

“I was just demonstrating how unpleasant it is when you tell someone no and they don’t listen, Stiles.”

Stiles didn’t know if he wanted to laugh or cry hysterically, but the mortification got the best of him because Derek was still somehow putting up with this and holding Stiles’ hand tight against his leg. Stiles dropped his fork onto his plate, a horrified groan escaping him because he seriously would rather get his face clawed off by a horde of enraged sugar gliders right now. “Oh my god, dad, I hate you.”

Which, he really didn’t hate his dad, and Dad totally knew that, because he was setting the bowl down like it was no big deal, grabbing his beer, taking a sip, and then looking straight at Stiles.

“The same applies to you.”
As if Stiles would pressure Derek into sex.

He totally has not—

Derek coughed into his fist and Stiles mentally adjusted that train of thought. He’d never pressured Derek in a way where Derek couldn’t turn him down, at least.

For the past minute, Stiles had really just been gaping open-mouthed at his dad, like maybe Dad had really just had more than a few beers and his behavior could be blamed on the alcohol.

The doorbell rang and Stiles took that as a cue to shove himself away from the table. “I am so offended right now that I’m going to give all of the Sixlets to these trick-or-treaters because you don’t deserve the leftover candy,” he hissed vehemently to his father.

Dad looked completely unfazed, and Stiles knew why as his father informed him when Stiles was stepping away that, “I bought a second bag, and I’m not telling you where it is.”

Oh no, Stiles would find it, if it was the last thing he did. Hell hath no fury like a son scorned.

An hour before the party, Scott and Allison showed up with a veritable Mary Poppins bag full of costume materials. The look on Derek’s face when Stiles pulled out a set of fangs and some faceputty would be the same one Stiles had made the time Dad had tried to get in touch with their 5% German heritage and had ended up burning an entire jar of sauerkraut.

“What is that.” Derek said, because there was no question in his voice when Stiles pulled out the fake hair and spirit gum. Derek reached into the box, pulling out a package that contained glue-on claws and looking at all of it like he was holding some sort of alien artifact. Silly Derek.

“You’re a werewolf.”

Stiles was pretty sure most people couldn’t just completely crunch through a package of plastic like Derek just did. Then again, he probably took the joke wrong, given how embarrassed he seemed to be about his giant collection of wolf things. “Come on, dude. You like wolf stuff. I’m gonna be Little Red, only trendy. This is like every cliché gay porno ever, anyway.” Stiles brought out a headband with little pointy ears on them, shoving it on Derek’s head and grinning at the wide-eyed stare he was still being given.

“What?”

Derek looked down at the annihilated package in his hands and then back up at Stiles. “I’m going. As. A werewolf.”

“Yes dude. Look, I even got you some fangs. Sexy, yeah?” Stiles held up the package, grinning widely. They were the kind that made little molds of your teeth, much more realistic looking than the typical plastic fangs you could get in the cheap costume bin.

The laugh that Derek gave him was so forced that Stiles was seriously second guessing his decision. “So… you want me to be a werewolf.” The way he phrased it made it sound like he was so freaked out that Stiles was going to turn into Kate 2.0 that Stiles reached down to pluck the crumbled container from Derek’s hands.

“God, no. Come on, Derek. Give me a little credit. You-know-who might have been crazy enough to try and convince herself you are one, but I assure you. I know that you are 100% human. This is just for fun.” Really, Derek looked completely the opposite of reassured. He looked more like Stiles
was trying to teabag him in the middle of a grocery store or something. Stiles sighed, reaching forward and cupping his hand along the back of Derek’s head, pulling him in for a kiss.

“Hey, come on, why the long face, sour wolf?” Stiles teased, earning an even MORE distressed look from Derek. No matter, Stiles was going to get his themed couple, god dammit. He’d been waiting 23 years for the chance to drag someone to a Halloween party with a corresponding costume. No way he was going go miss that chance just because Derek was having issues.

“Stiles,” Derek said quietly, his voice soft and his face looking really pained. Okay, so maybe certain things really didn’t merit mentioning the she-devil from hell. That wasn’t actually a good thing to bring up. The whole thing was that they were trying to help Derek get over Kate, not remind him of her.

“Look, dude, sorry. I didn’t mean to mention Kate,” Stiles breathed, pressing their foreheads together and praising a few deities out there that they were almost the same height, making it easy to achieve eye contact. “I just meant that I’m pretty sure if you were a werewolf, you’d have told me by now. Right?” He laughed.

Finally, Derek cracked a weak grin, though it really looked like he was suffering from chronic constipation or something. “Right.”

Relief hit Stiles like a two ton truck, his shoulders sagging and a sigh escaping him. Thank Bethesda, because Stiles was ready to start doling out sexual favors as an apology if things kept up like that. “Yeah, so… ready for your makeup?”

With Allison’s help, they gave Derek a set of fangs, some face-fur, a wider nose (Stiles had insisted on putting black face paint on the underside, but Derek had refused) as well as a leather jacket and wife beater combo. The best part had been Derek’s face when Stiles pulled out the clipon tail to go with the ears. Stiles still wasn’t sure if Derek had been more horrified or excited to see it.

When they’d gotten to the party (in Derek’s fancy black Camaro), Stiles had totally noticed how Derek was swaying his hips just a little more to make the tail move back and forth. He had no right to tease Derek, though, because Stiles had pretty much done the same thing with a fox tail he’d found a few years ago in a costume bin. That shit was fun, okay. Who didn’t love to pretend they had a tail?

Of course, Stiles in skinny jeans and a red hoodie was bad enough without adding alcohol to the mix. The outfit already made him feel pretty hot already (not literally hot, because it was the last day of October and thus already getting chilly out; hot like sexy ass fine). The fact that Derek was like his shadow, following him around and keeping one hand on Stiles’ lower back the entire time was really making the entire situation worse. After an hour of Derek grumpily using his tongue to prod and mess with the fangs, he slipped away for the bathroom and returned to where Stiles was chatting Allison up on the patio, looking far less disgruntled. It took a quick kiss for Stiles to realize Derek’s fangs weren’t protruding awkwardly like they had been before.

“Woah,” Stiles breathed, words slurring because hey, apparently five shots of rum and two Jagerbombs could really put you up in the clouds. He reached out, pawing at Derek’s face and forcing his lips open. “Did you reset the glue? Your fangs look totally badass.”

Derek nipped at Stiles’ thumb and Stiles gasped, more because he just went from horny to really turned on in the span of a half second. “Yes.” Derek confirmed, one hand resting on Stiles’ hip to keep him steady.
“I really want in your pants right now.” Stiles confessed, clutching Derek’s jacket and trying to climb inside of it. Derek smelled fantastic, and Stiles’ cheeks were half hot, half cold from a mixture of alcohol and the fall breeze. He pulled open Derek’s jacket, shoving his face in it and sighing at the warmth and intoxicating smell of Derek’s cologne. He could feel Derek’s rumbling laugh against his cheek, which kind of made him just want to wrap his entire body around Derek’s. It was probably the alcohol talking, but Stiles just loved Derek’s entire being. He loved the way Derek’s body felt against his, the way he would smell just after a shower, or even when he was starting to get sweaty. He loved Derek’s hands, and his laugh, and even the low growl that he sometimes made when he was upset or really turned on.

It wasn’t a surprise that Derek picked up on Stiles leaking his affections everywhere, because Stiles found himself being coaxed into a stand, Derek’s arm around his shoulders. “Come on.”

That was not a "come on, lets go home," though. That was totally a "come on, lets go somewhere out of sight."

Oh, hell to the yes.

Stiles didn’t even let Derek do much beyond unlocking the camaro before he was pinning him up against the side of it to steal that mouth in a kiss. At some point, Derek must have taken his fangs out, because Stiles’ tongue ran over nothing but flat teeth, a low hum of contentment leaving him in a heartbeat. Derek fumbled with the handle to the back door, opening it and pushing Stiles in to lie across the back seats. Stiles had two seconds to get comfortable before Derek was climbing in on top of him and shutting the door.

It felt so good already that Stiles was pretty sure he was going to vibrate out of his skin. He was shaking, half out of drunken arousal, half out of sheer ohmygodthisisawesome that was hitting him in waves. Derek pressed his legs open, rocking their hips together while keeping Stiles underneath of him the entire time. Stiles, trembling, pressed his arms up against Derek’s chest and gasped for air between kisses, feeling teeth dig into his lip before Derek was bearing down against his neck and growling low.

Stiles rolled his hips up, groaning at the spark of pleasure and doing it again in synch with the dry thrust from Derek. Things got pretty frantic from there, Derek making a complete mess of his neck, biting and licking and sucking a hickey from hell into Stiles’ throat while he basically dryfucked against Stiles like it was the end of the world. Not that Stiles was complaining, because he was surrounded by Derek on all sides and he’d been hard for the past half hour already. The only reason he didn’t make a mess of himself in the first few minutes was because he had enough alcohol to just increase the buildup.

“I’m gonna—” Stiles gasped, hips snapping up at the same time he tried to push Derek off of him, because he really didn’t want to cream his pants. Derek ignored him, bearing down and thrusting so hard Stiles slid up the seat and would have hit his head on the door if Derek hadn’t dragged him right back down with a hand on his hip. Oh fuck, this was way too hot for what it was. Stiles was pretty sure he was going to die. He was going to—he was going to—

Stiles choked, thighs clamping down on Derek’s sides and arching up so suddenly that his spine twinged with pain, coming hard in his pants while Derek continued to growl and rock into him, making Stiles’ boxers and jeans rub raw against his pulsing cock. It took less than a minute before Derek was biting down on Stiles’ neck and going utterly still. There was a half breath, and then Derek’s chest was expelling a low moan, followed by a twitch of hips and the feeling of warmth spreading along Derek’s jeans.
Well, at least they were both going to be uncomfortable for the rest of the night.

“You smell so fucking good,” Derek gasped out, collapsing against Stiles and crushing the air out of him. It was like someone had dropped a dead moose on him, and Stiles grunted out a wheeze, weakly squirming.

“Dude get off,” Stiles gasped, elbowing Derek in the chest. Derek huffed, made an animalistic grunt of acknowledgement, and shifted so that they were awkwardly crushed together on their sides. The car wasn’t very wide, so Stiles’ feet were up against the ceiling and Derek’s legs were curled up on either side of Stiles’ body. It was like some awkward interpretive dance position.

Story of Stiles’ life.

Once he came down from his post-coital high, Stiles felt half sleepy and twice as sober as he had been before their impromptu car-sex session. Derek was rubbing his nose across Stiles’ jaw line, muttering incoherently to himself and occasionally pausing to lick up behind Stiles’ ear or down his throat. Stiles sighed, because he hadn’t signed up for an oversized dog when he’d started dating Derek, but that’s totally what he got. Not that he particularly minded, Derek’s tongue just tickled a whole lot when he got really into the whole licking thing.

“What’re you doin’ for your birthday?” Stiles mumbled, moving his head so Derek could keep nosing at the base of his skull. “S’like, next week or something, isn’t it?”

Derek paused, nose buried in the short hairs behind Stiles’ ear and his arms wrapped Stiles like a human octopus. “Week and a half.” Okay, so Stiles couldn’t actually do math when he was halfdrunk and coming down from an orgasm high. No judgment needed.

“Cool. Is your sister gonna send you a present?” Stiles asked, turning and pressing his temple against Derek’s forehead. Derek reached up, thumb pressing into Stiles’ eyebrow and tracing it from the bridge of his nose all the way to the edge of his eye.

“She’s coming down for a few days.”

Stiles wanted to sit up and flail in excitement, but he kind of was trapped. Instead, he turned so that his nose crushed awkwardly against Derek’s. “Can I meet her?”

Derek gave Stiles a look like he’d just grown a second penis, cupping the curve of Stiles’ jaw and huffing out a laugh. “Of course.”

“Cool.” Stiles grinned, because he was totally going to make the best impression ever.

Stiles was totally making the worst first impression he had ever made in his entire life.

Stiles couldn’t even help it, because Laura’s children were adorable. Well, Lucy was adorable, but she was five and refused to come away from hiding behind her father’s leg. Justin, however, was the cheekiest almost-two-year-old that Stiles had ever met. He was all smiles and grabby hands and vying for Derek and Stiles’ attention. It was at point where Stiles may have blown off one of Laura’s questions about his school to scoop the toddler up and swing him around just to hear those happy squeals of laughter.

Derek maybe tried to get Stiles to at least talk to Laura, but Stiles much preferred talking to Laura’s son, who mostly gave Stiles gap-toothed shrieks of incomprehensible babble and the occasional howl for no reason.

Currently, Derek’s apartment was a disaster of toys, and it made something deep inside of Stiles ache
to see the dolls and toy cars and blocks littered everywhere. It made him think of Derek wandering around in a few years, picking up after a child of his own, and Stiles hoping desperately that it was a child he and Derek had adopted together.

Either Stiles was getting extremely sentimental around Derek, or he was suffering a quarter-life crisis.

Justin whined, releasing a piteous, “Auuuhhh,” that had Laura’s husband coming over with Lucy on his hip and the diaper bag in hand. Laura was there in a heartbeat, grinning at Stiles.

“That means he’s hungry,” she explained, taking the bag from her husband. “You did good with him, though. He’s normally not this friendly with strangers. I guess it’s because you smell like Derek.” Though her voice was teasing, Stiles was totally confused by what she was saying.

“I smell like him?” Stiles echoed, making a face. Unless Laura pumped her kid full of steroids, he highly doubted the kid could smell Derek on him at all. Laura opened her mouth to say something else, but then snapped it shut to look over her shoulder at Derek.

Derek was looking particularly mortified.

At least it made Stiles feel better to know that all members of the Hale family were capable of confusing the hell out of Stiles.

Turning back to Stiles, Laura gave him a thin smile. “It’s a metaphor my parents used to use,” she said lightly, “it just means you’re familiar with him, so you must be family.”

Ah. Well, that made sense. Babies could totally tell when people were uncomfortable. They had that heightened sense like cats or whatever.

“I am pretty awesome,” Stiles acknowledged, nodding seriously while Laura set about getting a juice box for each child, as well as some snack crackers. Stiles stood up, because there really wasn’t a way he could help a kid eat outside of staring creepily at them and baby talking them. Honestly, Stiles was all for the ‘googoo gaga here comes the choo choo train’ kind of speech, but not with someone else’s kids. He was saving that level of sap for when he had a monkey of his own.

Heading towards the kitchen to grab something to drink, Stiles was stopped when Derek reached out to grab his wrist and drag him back. An undignified squawking noise (not unlike the call of a sand hill crane) escaped Stiles as he tripped back, only one half of his butt hitting Derek’s lap. Improperly balanced, Stiles tipped back. This was the end, death via falling with the grace of a drunken raccoon. Stiles was going to have to pray his dad knew what to do with his comic books when—

Derek snagged Stiles’ wrist right before the killing blow and the top of Stiles’ head tapped the ground, legs kicking up in a mad flail. Derek gave his arm a tug that had Stiles’ upper body flinging up to be settled proper into Derek’s lap. Stiles could hear the kids laughing, but he was far too disoriented to really react because, seriously, what the hell just happened. “Well,” Stiles breathed, turning to stare at Derek’s wide-eyed gaze, “That was mortifying.”

“Are you okay?” Derek reached up, pressing his palm against the top of Stiles’ head. Stiles batted his hand away, because now was not the time for coddling. Especially not in front of Derek’s sister. Stiles needed to assert his dominance.

“No. I need to re-establish my masculinity,” Stiles said, “before I spontaneously grow a—”
Derek silenced him with palm over his mouth because, oh yeah, there were children in the room. Stiles was going to need to work on watching his language before someone stuck soap in his mouth. When Derek dropped his hand, Stiles reached out to pat Derek’s chest consolingly. “No, seriously,” he said quietly, so Laura and her husband couldn’t hear, “I think I’m going to die of sheer humiliation. Let me go hide in the kitchen.”

Snorting under his breath, Derek kissed Stiles’ cheek—because he obviously didn’t understand the concept of feeling emasculated—and then let Stiles stand up. Stiles shook himself, straightening his shoulders and grunting, “Beer. Bald eagles. Guns and stuff. America!” In a chant to try and encourage himself not to let his face flush any harder than he could already feel it becoming. He stomped his way across the living room and into the kitchen, completely content with hiding there until he felt a little less embarrassed.

Laura turned to stare at Derek, looking at her brother like he was utterly out of his mind. Derek, unable to really come up with any sort of explanation, shrugged halfheartedly.

Laura mocked his shrug, giving Justin another handful of cheerios. “Are you seriously telling me that is your only explanation,” she said quietly, flatly, so that Stiles couldn’t hear her from the kitchen.

Derek shifted from his spot on the couch, avoiding eye contact and replying under his breath with, “he’s honest.”

“Honest.” Laura echoed monotonously.

“… and… endearing.”

“Endearing.”

“Laura,” Derek growled, his voice just loud enough that it risked being heard by Stiles, who, by the sound of it, had decided to sit on the counter and give himself a pep talk.

“What?” Laura asked indignantly, ruffling Justin’s hair and earning a baby-fied version of a growl in return. “You can’t tell me you saw anything like that coming.”

“No,” Derek confessed, looking towards the kitchen fondly. “He’s not necessarily something you can predict.”

Laura snorted softly, because that was something that became obvious the second she’d answered the phone to the kid rambling about Derek only a handful of weeks prior. She left the rest of the child-feeding to her husband, turning to Derek and dropping her voice down into a half-growl.

“You have to tell him. I don’t want a repeat of last time, but he isn’t anything like her.”

Derek clenched his jaw, but kept himself expressionless, otherwise. “I don’t know how.”

There was a shifting from the kitchen, followed by the sound of the faucet being turned on as Stiles finally got himself that glass of water. “Figure it out,” Laura said, giving her little brother a falsely sweet smile and reaching out to pat his leg. “Try not to set anyone’s house burned down this time.”

Stiles came back into the room, freshly calmed and with a glass of water, to see Derek staring at his sister with a stricken expression. The second Stiles was in his range of sight, however, Derek calmed just enough to allow Stiles to sit down next to him and press their legs close, hip to knee, in comfort. Normally, Stiles would be prying Derek for information, trying to figure out what the hell had happened while he’d been gone, but he was pretty sure that pulling Derek aside during some much-needed family time on his birthday was ill-advised.
They went out for lunch, eating at a family restaurant that had Derek settled on one side, with Justin in a high chair on the end, and Lucy seated in a booster between her parents. Most of the time was spent with Laura interrogation Stiles and Derek trying to stop her, but getting silenced with dirty looks from his sister every now and then. Stiles held Derek’s hand under the table, trying to silently convey to the guy that hey, I’m sorry your sister isn’t paying attention to you on your birthday, but I sure am.

Stiles already had plans for some birthday blowjobs, anyway. He’d invested in edible lube just for tonight. Also whipped cream. He just really wanted to lick whipped cream off of every part of Derek’s body possible.

Until then, though, they had to entertain Derek’s family. After lunch, they went back to Derek’s apartment for the wind-down. Laura had already explained that the kids would be needing their naps in a few hours, so they might as well kill some time together until then.

That being said, Stiles was totally game for playing with Justin some more. The kid was the most adorable baby ever. He also still had that new-baby smell that Stiles knew, for a fact, nobody could resist.

Derek, his sister, and Jesse, Laura’s husband, were talking quietly on the couch while Stiles played with Justin and Lucy, who had finally started to come out of her shell and was now building a castle with only the blue construction blocks. Justin was squirming, and by the third time that he tried to destroy Lucy’s castle, Stiles decided punishment-via-tickling was in order.

Justin squealed when Stiles prodded him in the sides, laughing and squirming with little breathy shouts of “no! no!” that didn’t sound distressed enough for Stiles to actually stop. Oh ho, Stiles had babysat for enough neighbor’s kids to know exactly how to torture a kid. He brought the hem of Justin’s shirt up, going in for the most epic belly-raspberry of all times when Justin jerked forward and cracked their heads together with the intensity of an enraged billygoat. Stars burst into Stiles’ vision, making him curse as Justin released an unearthly wail, causing Derek and Laura to rush over. Stiles’ hand shot up to hold his head just as Derek reached his side, fist cracking into Derek’s jaw accidentally. He was like a rampaging giraffe, all awkward limbs and an inability to keep from knocking into things and causing unintentional pain.

Laura scooped Justin into her arms, pressing kisses to his head and whisking him away to the kitchen for a calm-down while Derek tried to keep Stiles from having a panic attack.

Stiles was pretty sure he was the current record-holder for ‘most successes in making an ass of oneself in the span of six hours’ because there was no way Laura was going to like him after he’d made her kid cry. The fact that he had made Justin cry made Stiles want to cry, because now his head hurt, Derek’s family didn’t like him, and Derek was probably embarrassed at having ever allowed Stiles to meet his sister.

Derek grabbed Stiles’ wrists, pulling them down from his head and then pulling Stiles towards the bedroom. Stiles tried to keep himself from breathing erratically, or at least looking like he was ten seconds from bursting into frustrated tears, when Derek stopped them just inside the bedroom doorway and cupped Stiles’ face. “Hey, hey, it’s okay.” Derek soothed, leaning in to kiss the red welt on Stiles’ head. “It’s okay, Stiles.”

Normally, Stiles would be really annoyed at Derek trying to calm him down like he was a hormonal 12 year old girl, but he had tried so hard to make Laura like him, and all he really wanted to hear right now was that he hadn’t ruined his chances completely.

“You’re not just saying that to make me feel better, are you?” Stiles asked dryly, sniffing once as the
urge to cry went away.

“Shut up.” Derek grunted with a scowl. “You're just being you. That's all I could ask for. This isn’t the first time Justin’s head butted someone.”

Stiles grinned, rolling his eyes just the tiniest bit. Derek totally knew that saying anything cheesy was what made Stiles’ heart melt. It was like the guy took advantage of the secret romantic hidden deep inside of Stiles to try and fix any situation ever. “You’re a sap.” He pointed out.

Derek nodded seriously, kissing Stiles once and then confessing, “I could have Canadian heritage.”

It took Stiles a second to even get the joke, his mind jumping from sap, to trees, to maple, and then the light bulb went off in his head. “Derek, that was a terrible pun. No, let go of me, I can’t even look at you.” Stiles squirmed, because the second he’d tried to walk away from the worst joke ever, Derek had gone gorilla on him, hugging him tight and rubbing his face all over Stiles’ throat.

“No, dude, totally not getting out of that one. Free me, you beast.”

Derek laughed, kissing Stiles’ neck and letting go as requested. Of course, because he was so polite as to obey Stiles’ demands, Stiles gave him a skeptical stare. Derek held his hands up innocently, and then offered it for Stiles’ to take. “Come on, let’s see how Justin’s doing.”

Stiles let Derek drag him back out into the living room, bumping into Derek’s back when he stopped abruptly. Stiles side-stepped him, and then stared at the crying ball of fluff in Laura’s arms. Derek floundered, grabbing Stiles’ wrist while Laura looked at Stiles like a deer in the headlights.

“Uh,” Stiles began, because Justin was furry, really furry, and he had tiny fangs that Stiles could see very clearly as the kid continued to cry and whine loudly. “You know, uh… did you…” okay so there really was no fathomable reason why Laura would want to cover Justin in a bunch of fake fur, but Stiles really didn’t know her that well. “Fake teeth aren’t really a good idea for a kid that young. He could choke on them.” Stiles settled on, because he was seriously at a loss as to how to react to what he was seeing.

Derek’s fingers circled Stiles’ elbow, forcing Stiles to face him. “Stiles, those aren’t fake, and I think you know that.”

What.

----

Right now, the only thing Stiles could really bring to mind was a reaction image he once saw of a cat backing up frantically from a vacuum while the caption flashed, ‘nope nope nope nope,’ because this was way beyond any level of weird that Stiles was really comfortable dealing with. Justin squirmed, gnawing on Laura’s finger like he didn’t have a set of fangs that made him look like a furry antichrist, and Stiles felt momentarily terrified that maybe Justin was the antichrist.

“… don’t tell me that’s a vampire baby,” Stiles heard himself say, because now he was starting to think about every single thing he’d ever gone through with Derek that may have seemed abnormal. Is this how Kate went crazy? Was he actually hallucinating? It had to be something like that, because Derek wouldn’t lie to him, right? I mean, sure the guy was angrier than the Hulk on Valentine’s Day, but Derek and his family being anything but human sounded way too unlikely.

“Not a vampire…” Derek lingered on the word vampire, like Justin was actually something else, and Stiles couldn’t help but release a strangled noise from the back of his throat. He was probably suffering a psychotic breakdown, that must have been it. What if, when he and Justin had bumped
heads, a miniscule pressure point had been struck which caused Stiles to experience visual and auditory delusions.

Like fuzzy demon children.

“Hah, funny,” Stiles choked out, because he couldn’t not say something. He closed his eyes, at least attempting to think up why the hell Derek’s sister would cover her kid in makeup and give him fake teeth. Was this some kind of joke? It was November, not really that close to spring to blame it on April Fools. Were they trying to scare him off, or something?

“Stiles. Look at me.” Derek pleaded, grabbing both of Stiles’ arms and forcing him to turn. Stiles clenched his eyes tightly shut, chest tight.

“No.” Stiles shook his head, because really, what the hell. Monsters weren’t real, even the ghost under his bed had never been real. There was no way Stiles could have lived almost a quarter of his life just for there to suddenly be Big Bads running around in the form of toddlers with fangs. This was all some sort of elaborate hoax and Derek apparently took his cues from Fox News on how to get someone to break up with you.

“Stiles, please.”

Derek needed to stop begging, because it was starting to sound like he wanted Stiles to believe that his nephew was some kind of creature. Like he wanted Stiles to understand why his eyes always got really bright at random moments, or how he’d gouged nail marks in the desk.

Or that he never worked on full moons.

Fucking ridiculous, and impossible. There was no way. Nope. No. Not even.

“I don’t want to.” Stiles said stubbornly. Derek’s hands moved from his arms to cup his face, forcing Stiles’ head to turn. That wasn’t going to work, because Stiles was smart enough to at least keep his eyes shut. Avoiding eye contact was pretty much his only defense right now. Maybe if he kept his eyes shut, all of this insanity would go away and he and Derek could resume some good old fashioned couch cuddling and arguing over the remote control.

“Stiles.”

Honestly, this entire joke was in pretty bad taste, given that Derek’s current ex had burned most of his family to death thinking he was a werewolf. Stiles already knew that Derek was way out of his league, but it must be pretty bad if Derek felt so awkward about breaking up with him that he’d do this. Seriously, Derek was an asshole.

Only, he really wasn’t.

He had a temper, for sure, but he’d never intentionally try to hurt Stiles, or anyone else, for that matter. So why…?

Stiles opened his eyes, but he couldn’t really muster up the energy needed to look any higher than Derek’s mouth, which was twisted into a pained grimace. “She’s not crazy, is she?” He asked.

“She is.” Derek urged, but Stiles had a feeling they weren’t exactly talking about the same thing.

“But she’s not wrong.”

No matter how badly Stiles wanted to believe that there was such thing as monsters and spooks and everything he’d always wished for as a kid, he wasn’t an idiot. Every single iota of his life had been Stiles continually telling himself these things didn’t exist. If it weren’t for that repetitive reminder, he’d still be sleeping with his bedside lamp on at night, just to keep the shadows to a minimum.

He didn’t want to ask for proof, and Stiles had a feeling it was mostly because he was terrified Derek would have none, and that maybe this guy and his family were just as crazy as Kate.

“No. Just-- no.” Stiles croaked, bringing his hands up and trying to pull Derek’s away from his face. “This is bullshit, man. I mean, I get that you had some issues with her, but if you want me to believe that you’re a bunch of-- of what? Werewolves?”

Derek’s fingers twitched on Stiles’ cheeks, and Stiles tried again to pull them away. “That’s—that’s low, man.” Why would Derek do this? Stiles had thought… he’d thought they were….

He’d thought that he and Derek could be something. Now it was all crumbling down around him. “Okay,” he said, sucking in a breath. “I know I’m loud and I can be really pushy, dude, but did you have to do it like this?”

Stiles couldn’t breathe, because the more he thought about it, the more he realized that maybe this had just been some entire joke that Derek had gotten his sister in on. What if none of this had actually meant anything? Maybe it was some kind of stupid revenge for ever going behind Derek’s back to see Kate? Stiles didn’t know why he would do that, but he really didn’t know anything anymore.

“You couldn’t just turn me down? You--you had to act like you cared? I know I’m… I know I’m kind of lame and I shouldn’t have pried but I really, really thought that--” his voice cracked, and Stiles couldn’t even find the energy to speak. Each time he tried to keep going, it was like a struggle just to breathe enough to make any sound at all.

“Stiles, would you just look at me?” Derek barked, shaking Stiles’ head, like that would do anything other than make his head spin. Stiles’ brows pinched together, chest wheezing to take in enough air. “Do you really think I’d make this up? Stiles-- open your eyes, please.”

Only, Stiles couldn’t open his eyes. There was a tiny voice in Stiles’ head chanting, ’danger, danger Will Robinson!’ that really wasn’t helping the situation. He’d had an easier time looking at his mother’s dead body, lying peacefully in her casket, than he did looking at Derek. Death was real, it happened to everyone, and it was completely factual. Monsters? Werewolves? That stuff wasn’t real.

He felt like an idiot, ashamed and angry at himself for thinking that Derek actually put up with him for this long.

“Stiles, I can prove it to you. Open your fucking eyes, godammit.” Stiles could feel pricks of pain in his cheeks, like claws digging into his skin, and it made his heart rate spike. If he ignored all of this, if he kept his eyes closed and acted like nothing was happening, maybe it would all go away and they could act like they had before. Stiles didn’t want anything to change, he didn’t want to lose Derek and he didn’t want to really find out what was about to happen.

Change was almost never good, it meant things like taking care of his dad, being alone at night, wondering if he was going to wake up an orphan. It meant watching boyfriends and girlfriends walk
away because Stiles had been too much for them to handle. Change meant so many things that Stiles was never ready to deal with, and it was exactly why Stiles intended to ignore the problem until it went away entirely. It had worked enough times in high school when Mr. Harris had an unhealthy obsession with keeping him after class, it could work now.

“Stiles, don’t fucking do this to me. Don’t you dare shut down.” Derek growled, so low that he barely sounded human. He sounded petrified, like Stiles was the one confessing he was some sort of supernatural creature best known for killing and maiming in the dead of night. He sounded almost as if he was afraid that Stiles would hurt him somehow. Hurt him like Kate did.

Stiles cracked his eyes open, and he forgot to breathe. Derek’s eyes weren’t just glowing, they were so blue they almost seemed white. It wasn’t anything he’d ever seen before, completely sapping the fight out of Stiles. Whatever he’d built himself up for, whatever fear of rejection or change, it was nothing in the face of Derek’s expression staring back at him. His eyes were wide, bright, but frightened, darting to and fro like he wanted to look straight into Stiles’ soul but he couldn’t tell which eye to focus on.

“What the fuck.” Stiles said weakly, because Derek’s eyes were so bright it was like he had a set of satanic glowsticks for irises.

“T’m not lying to you.” Derek said, half on the edge of desperate, like Stiles couldn’t see that he currently had laser eyes going on.

“Your eyes are glowing.” Stiles replied, voice faint.

Seriously, what the hell was going on right now?

Derek cracked a weak grin, and Stiles could see the pointed curve of his upper and lower canines. Stiles reached out unthinking, grabbing Derek’s mouth and prying it open. Derek let him, though he looked mildly uncomfortable as Stiles pushed and tugged at each of his canines, just to make sure they were real. None of them budged, and Derek’s face took on a pained look when Stiles pressed too hard against them, like he was afraid Stiles was going to pull his real teeth out.

“What the fuck.”

“Ih tuhld yhu.” Derek said around Stiles’ fingers, but he looked far less terrified than he had a few seconds ago.

Derek had fangs. FANGS.

“You--” Stiles pulled his hands back, because now he didn’t know what to feel. Should he be angry that Derek didn’t tell him? Not really, not if it was the truth. Kate must have been the last person he’d told, it made sense not to say anything to Stiles. Should he be scared? How was he supposed to react to this? “So you--”

“Yeah.” Derek interrupted, because he obviously knew Stiles was having an internal crisis on accepting the fact that his boyfriend was, what? A werewolf? Good God Almighty.

“So you don’t want to--” Stiles trailed off, feeling as if just bringing up the idea that Derek had done this to break up with him sounded really mean. Now he felt like a dick.

“I don’t.”

A really big, flaming dick.
“So you’re a--”

“Yes.” Derek nodded, bringing Stiles’ palm up to his mouth and nuzzling against it before kissing the heel.

“This is totally a scent thing, isn’t it?” Stiles blurted, watching with fascination as Derek dragged Stiles’ palm all over his face, like he was trying to memorize the moment one last time. Derek cracked an eye open, upper lip pressed against Stiles’ fingertips.

“A little.”

Stiles felt a little disembodied, like maybe he was just having a really intense dream. Only, Derek still looked unsure, even as he held onto Stiles’ hand like he was afraid Stiles was ready to run out the door.

“He’s not going to burn the apartment down, is he?” Laura piped up. Stiles whipped his head around, half startled out of his skin because how the hell had he forgotten they had an audience?

Justin was whining quietly, curled up against his mother while she ran her fingers down his back. His face was no longer furry, but his cheeks were blotchy and there was a big red bump on his head. Stiles almost felt guilty, but then he realized what she had said. Which, wow, Laura could have totally gotten a part in Mean Girls with an attitude like that.

“I’m a little offended by that,” Stiles said irritably, pulling his hand from Derek’s. “Seriously, I thought I had shown a little bit more class. Actually, I’m doing a pretty good job of not freaking out here.” He totally was, okay, because he knew for a fact that if it were Scott, the guy would be screaming and running the other way.

“I’m actually doing a great job. I haven’t screamed once. Did you miss the part with the fangs, by chance?” Stiles turned, grabbing Derek’s chin and shaking his head. “The sharp, pointy fangs?”

Derek, much to Stiles’ crippling surprise, snorted softly. Stiles and Laura both stared at him because, well, the guy wasn’t exactly a bucket of sunshine on a good day. Derek instantly tried to hide his grin, pursing his lips and pinching his brows together in a poker-faced scowl. “Stiles isn’t like that, Laura.”

“Oh my god, dude.” Not only was Derek doing his usually manly grunt of amusement, but now he was defending Stiles against his own flesh and blood? Stiles was starting to lose count of all the times he’d come to the conclusion of ‘I’m tripping balls’ because he was going to start having flashbacks soon. However, flashbacks or no, Derek had defended him. Stiles. The one who had gone behind Derek’s back more than once to get his answers, who had pressured and pushed Derek to respond, who had tried to seduce the guy with food and talking his ears off. Derek looked at him and Stiles just really really wanted to kiss him.

So he did.

Derek tensed for a second, apparently unprepared for the kamikaze kissing attack, but quickly pressed right back one he realized what was happening. Stiles cupped Derek’s jaw, palm rasping against his stubble and, honestly? There was no way he was going to give this up, not even if it meant he might have to clean werewolf hair out of the shower drain every now and then.

“You’re taking this surprisingly well,” Derek muttered. Stiles was, actually. It might have been because he was in shut-down mode when Derek had finally gotten him to open his eyes and take notice. Then again, it was entirely likely he was in shock.
Probably in shock.

“I think I’m in shock.” Stiles informed Derek matter-of-factly. Derek’s face took on an expression of ‘I don’t really know how I’m supposed to react to that’ and so Stiles reached out to tug on Derek’s ear, where the curve of it was still a little more pointed than it’s usual adorably elfy quality. “So is it… uh… curable? Like Beauty and the Beast? Or permanent like Phantom of the Opera?”

Derek turned his head, teeth scraping the inside of Stiles’ wrist in a warning bite (his fangs were probably more to impress than anything, because Stiles knew Derek was secretly a showoff) when Stiles tugged too hard on his ear. “It’s hereditary, like the Stilinski habit of making awkward situations worse.” Harsh.

“Yeah well,” Stiles scrambled for a good comeback, but his mind was apparently in the ‘haha fuck you!’ stage of the whole-life coverage policy Stiles had taken out on it after birth. So, instead, Stiles dropped his hands, arms akimbo as he tried to process the situation. Derek was, apparently, a werewolf. One who didn’t kidnap fair maidens and eat people’s internal organs, it seemed.

Did this mean that—no. Stiles frowned. “I still get to top, right? You’re not gonna go all alpha wolf and want to dominate me or something, are you?” Really, Stiles would be extremely disappointed if he didn’t get to be on the giving end at least every now and then.

Come on, anyone with an ass like Derek’s needed to get a little appreciation. Stiles was pretty sure he could bounce a quarter off of that thing.

There was a snort from behind them and Stiles glanced over his shoulder to see Laura burying her face into Justin’s hair, but he could totally see her trying to hide a grin. Justin released a loud howling, ‘awwwwuuh!’ of excitement, one that had Laura heading for the diaper bag sitting by the couch. Must have been feeding time. Heh.

“I’m not an alpha. Laura is.”

Stiles looked back at Derek because that was slightly unexpected. Derek was literally 200 pounds of nothing but sheer muscle, and Laura was maybe 140 on a good day.

“Oh.”

“You can still top, even if I was the alpha.” Derek supplied, his lips twitching like he wanted to grin at the way Stiles was gaping. Come on, though, it was like hitting the boyfriend jackpot.

“Oh.” Stiles said intelligently. Derek bent forward, pressing their mouths together and then shifting to kiss the arch of Stiles’ cheekbone.

“Are you still in shock?”

“Yep.”

“Babies help with shock.” Laura piped up, holding Justin up in the air like he was Simba from The Lion King. Justin squirmed, kicking his legs and then reaching out for Stiles, which was just a low blow. How was Stiles supposed to resist those big green eyes and wiggly fingers? Laura wiggled Justin like some sort of peace offering and Stiles realized that’s probably what he was. Stiles pulled away from Derek, stealing Justin the precious werebaby from his mother and tossing him up in the air and catching him just to hear that shriek of delight that he’d started to grow fond of.

“I love babies.” Stiles informed Derek and Laura, just to make sure they knew. Derek looked like he’d swallowed a pine cone (not the pokemon), but Stiles chose very heavily to ignore that. Instead,
he settled Justin down next to the stack of toy blocks. It was time to teach the kid a thing or two about being a proper Godzilla.

Stiles may have been focused on getting Justin to kick over towers of wooden blocks, but he still could hear parts of the quiet conversation Laura was having with her brother. Lucy had joined by then, still quiet and somewhat irritated looking in her corner where she tried to construct the Eiffel tower with toy cars. Laura’s husband was monitoring, looking like he wanted to say something to Stiles, but not knowing how because he was kind of the awkward fourth wheel that Stiles felt a little bad for.

“He’d make a good father,” Laura softly told Derek. Damn right he would. Stiles had been babying his dad for the past twelve years. If he could do it with his dad, and he didn’t get the undying love that came with a young, influential child that he had helped spawn. Justin grabbed a particularly bite-sized looking block and Stiles intercepted it’s journey into the endless maw that was known as a baby’s mouth.

“You would too.” Laura added. There was nothing but silence, and Stiles’ heart seized in his chest. He chanced a look up, but Derek looked completely stricken. Stiles didn’t know if that was a good expression or not--did children terrify Derek? Or did Derek just become terrified at the prospect of being a father?

Deciding that he didn’t feel like interpreting Derek’s reaction, Stiles came to the conclusion that it was ‘present time’. He gestured for Jesse to take over the monitoring of baby!Godzilla, pushing himself to his feet and gesturing vaguely. “So nap-time is coming up. We should totally open presents.” Stiles forgot that the word ‘presents’ was like injecting a shot of sugar and adrenaline into the veins of a child. Justin squealed, tearing himself away from his father and wobbling over to Stiles to throw himself into Stiles’ legs and start babbling incoherently.

Derek looked pained, but Stiles didn’t care because presents, okay.

He picked Justin up, balancing the werebaby on his waist and then crossing the room to go through his backpack for the box he’d barely crammed in there. Stiles, being the creative genius that he was, had used old Sunday Funnies as wrapping paper. It brought a twisted sense of joy to his heart when Derek looked almost guilty about having to rip the comics before he could read them. It reminded Stiles of all the times he’d come into the office and had tried to subtly read the Sunday comics by hiding them with pages from the sports columns.

Stiles had, briefly, entertained the idea of buying Derek wolf things for his birthday… but he liked to be practical. So it was gratifying to see the look of pleasant surprise dart over Derek’s face when he opened the box to see a spiral notebook with a wolf on it, a package of pens, and a pair of Raybans. The sunglasses had been on the pricy side, but Stiles knew for a fact that they were sturdy and likely more comfortable than any set Derek had previously owned.

“I’m not implying that you should, you know, work more or whatever,” Stiles began awkwardly when Derek didn’t say anything, “I just figured since you already work so much, you should get some stuff that you’d have to buy anyway, right?”

Derek looked up from where he’d been reading the package of pens, one eyebrow quirking high. “Do you really pay attention to what pens I buy?” Oops. Busted.

“Little bit,” Stiles confessed with a wince. Derek grinned, though, just a tiny bit, and then ducked his head. Stiles was at last 60% sure he could see the tips of Derek’s ears start to flush pink and Holy
God that was adorable. Now he just felt awesome, because apparently being perceptive to random things was exactly the right way to get Derek all nice and flustered.

Only now Stiles was thinking about all the other ways he could get Derek nice and flustered. With a room full of werewolves who could probably smell it-Son of a bitch.

“You totally knew I wanted in your pants this entire time!” Stiles cried. Everyone snapped their heads up and Derek stared blankly at Stiles until Stiles realized exactly what he’d just said. “Oh my God.” Stiles’ brain-to-mouth filter was completely malfunctioning, it seemed, and Stiles buried his face into his hands.

“Well,” Laura said awkwardly, “At least he catches on quick…”

Oh, of course Laura would say that. She was a Hale, and all of the Hales seemed to have an inherent level of sass to them that made Stiles question his choices in life at every step of the way.

“He does sometimes.” Derek responded lightly.

“I hate you both.”

The rest of the afternoon went reasonably better after that. Laura had gotten Derek some kind of ‘phases of the moon’ mug (one that Stiles had probably spent a good fifteen minutes trying to figure out the schematics of) and a set of plushie wolf toys that Lucy and Justin had picked out diligently. Stiles now understood why Derek had so many toys--Laura totally fed his habit. Stiles also was aware that Derek never really got rid of anything he was given, which would explain why Stiles had almost been crushed by a wave of toys and figurines the last time he’d opened the utility the closet in search of a vacuum.

After a while, Laura and her husband left to take the kids back to the hotel for their nap, and Stiles finally felt like he could breathe without being judged. He flopped onto the couch next to Derek, watching him fiddle with one of the dolls from the kids, pushing the hair from around the eyes and inspecting the mobility of it’s plush limbs.

“So,” Stiles began awkwardly, because how exactly were you supposed you ask your suddenly werewolf!boyfriend about his ex who you had previously thought was rampaging murdering psychopath, but now came to found out that she still was a rampaging murdering psychopath except less crazy than previously anticipated? “Werewolf, huh?”

“Kate comes from a family of hunters,” Derek answered, like Stiles had actually said any of his internal dialogue out loud. Stiles straightened up, just to let Derek know he was listening. Derek kept his head focused on the toy, eyes intense as he struggled to continue. “I--I didn’t know. What she did….it was my fault.”

Oh hell no it was not. “Derek--”

“Shut up.” Okay then. Derek was not done talking, apparently. Stiles swallowed, throat clicking loudly, and Derek sucked in an unsteady breath.

“I told Laura and… she confronted Kate’s family. What she did was against their code. It was within our rights to seek retribution, but Laura was--she was a new alpha, she didn’t want blood on her hands…” Derek brushed his thumb along the toy’s cheek and ears, licking his lips. “She issued an ultimatum, that Kate could live if she was imprisoned. If not…”

Derek didn’t have to tell Stiles anything else for him to understand. This shit was heavy--like, heavier than a southern cooked meal complete with biscuits. It settled deep in his gut, made Stiles shift to
press himself against Derek’s side. Derek leaned back against him, exhaling through his nose in a way that almost sounded like a sigh.

“Laura left, after that. She left, and started a family….but she was so mad, I couldn’t intrude.

So…”

“So you stayed here.” Stiles supplied, mostly due to the fact that he felt the need to contribute to the conversation just to let Derek know that he was listening, that he cared. See? Stiles could totally do this relationship thing.

Derek glanced up at Stiles, and then shook his head. “I ran.”

Okay, well maybe he could try to do this relationship thing, but that didn’t mean he was always going to be right. “You ran?”

“Anywhere I could go.”

Derek fell silent again, and Stiles had a feeling he didn’t particularly want to discuss any more emotions for the afternoon. So, instead, Stiles decided to bring up a much lighter topic. “So can you smell arousal?”

Derek snapped his head up and Stiles wiggled his eyebrows. “You know, arrrrrousual,” he rolled the ‘r’ like he meant business, and Derek’s expression took on a particularly pained look. Stiles shoved at Derek’s shoulder. “Come on, you totally can, can’t you? You knew I wanted in your pants since day one.”

“Maybe.” Derek confessed after a second. His lip twitched, and Stiles’ mouth fell open in a gape.

This guy was slyer than Sly Cooper, meaner than Moffatt on a hiatus, he was sneakier than-- well. He wasn’t sneakier than Stiles, so that was good.

Seemingly wanting to placate Stiles, Derek reached out to press his palm against Stiles’ collarbone and drag it up to Stiles’ jaw. “That day you saw Kate, I knew something was wrong.”

Huh?

“Huh?”

Derek stroked Stiles’ cheek with his thumb. “Your friend, Kate’s niece, they smell a lot alike, and you--you smell so good that I had to smoke, even though I’m trying to quit.. It makes it harder to smell things, makes it easier to control myself. That’s the only reason I didn’t know until you started to tell me that you had seen her.” Oh, that.

“Are you--”

Derek shook his head brusquely. “I was afraid you’d find out,” he explained, “and I didn’t know about your thing.” Derek grinned, and Stiles knew exactly which ‘thing’ he was talking about. The thing where Stiles would go out of his mind if he didn’t get his answers. There’d been enough times where Stiles had constantly bugged Derek just to get a few answers out of him-even on mundane things like Derek’s favorite cereal.

“So…”

“I don’t like that you saw her,” Derek added, pulling Stiles close so he could press their foreheads
together, “but I can’t get mad at you when I was hiding things from you.”

“Like the whole werewolf thing?” Stiles offered dryly, because he really couldn’t think of anything else to say. Derek was talking. He was talking and telling Stiles things, which was a feat in itself due to the fact that Stiles had spent like, ten minutes last week trying to figure out Derek’s favorite color (which was blue, by the way).

“Yeah, like the werewolf thing.” And Derek--Derek grinned. It was small, and timid, but it was, without a doubt, a grin. It reminded Stiles that he wasn’t the only one awkwardly tripping his way through this relationship. Derek was still trying to figure things out just as much as he was, and neither of them really had any prior experience to go on. Just thinking about that made Stiles’ mind drift to something Derek had mentioned earlier.

“So you tried not to smell me in the office, huh?”

“Yes…” Derek’s smile fell into a suspicious stare, his head tilting just the tiniest bit like he was trying to figure out what Stiles’ angle was. Oh, Stiles had an angle--a very horizontal angle that actually involved a lot of back and forth movement.

“Go on.”

Derek ran his hand down from Stiles’ jaw and back to his throat, applying just enough pressure to make Stiles want to squirm. “I knew you wanted me, I could smell it, but no matter what unspeakable things I wanted to do to you, I couldn’t.” Oh.

Ohhhhh.

“What kind of unspeakable things?”

“The kind we don’t speak of.” Derek’s mouth was twitching again and Stiles honestly wondered if Derek’s face was just going to break one day with how hard he was always trying not to smile. Either way, Stiles wasn’t going to let him off the hook so easily. If Derek wanted to talk, Stiles was going to take advantage of the situation like a panhandler on a lost looking tourist.

“Does it involve penetration?” Stiles rocked forward, brushing their noses together as Derek made a thoughtful sound and looked up like he was contemplating it before giving Stiles this look that could be interpreted as nothing other than ‘sassy’.

“Of my teeth ripping your throat out, maybe.”

“Kinky.” Stiles grinned, and Derek kissed the laugh right off his lips. It made Stiles’ heart catch in his throat and he forgot how to breathe when he was pushed down into the couch. Derek lined their bodies up after a second of uncomfortable shifting, and then slid his arms under Stiles’ back, fingers hooking over his collarbone and mouth biting slow, languid kisses against Stiles’.

Digging his fingers into Derek’s hair (because really, it was pretty much a requirement for any form of hanky panky with Derek) Stiles rocked his hips up and absently wondered if this meant that biting and scratching were now on their list of ‘things to do in the bedroom.’

Stiles pulled away with a gasp, kissing sloppily at Derek’s jaw and then asking, “Does this mean you can bite me?”

Derek went still, which could either be a good or bad thing. “I mean, you kind of already do, and I’m
not asking that you draw blood or anything, but a really good chomp right when I’m about to bust a nut is really on my to-do list… besides you, I mean. You’re on the top of my to-do list, if you catch my--ohgod.” It turned out that Derek was on 100% board for the biting because he was currently engaged in leaving a giant bruise on Stiles’ neck in the shape of his teeth.

It hurt, a lot. It hurt in a way that made Stiles’ dick twitch and his mouth completely ignore Stiles’ desire to be a quiet and reserved recipient of Derek’s attention, because he was moaning--yeah, he was totally moaning. He sounded like Mrs. Forrestor that time Stiles had gone outside to watch the stars and she and Mr. Forrestor had been fucking in their pool at three in the morning.

Stiles liked to think he sounded a little more dignified--but then Derek dragged back, pulling on Stiles’ skin and wrenching a hideously undignified cry from him at the same exact time. His entire shoulder and neck hurt in the best way possible and yeah, he’d gone from a chubby to a full-on mighty oak tree in about two seconds flat.

“Dude. Bed.” Stiles said intelligently, and Derek’s only response was to bite him harder, over the same fucking spot. This time, the pain outwon the pleasure, and Stiles eeked out a tiny noise of discomfort before shoving at Derek’s chest. “Ow--ow, okay, too much biting. I need my nerve endings.”

Derek instantly unclamped his teeth, wrenching back with wide, glowing blue eyes that quickly faded into their normal greenish hue. Jesus, he really was a werewolf. A werewolf who looked like a guilty child, lips red and swollen and ready to spew forth apologies. Well, that just wouldn’t do. There would be no awkward apologies in this relationship that weren’t from Stiles. Mostly because Derek feeling bad made Stiles feel bad and then there would be more tears and angst than orgasms. Nope. They needed to be shameless.

So instead, Stiles did the first thing he could think of.

He flicked Derek on the nose.

Derek’s eyebrows shot up, looking more shocked than if he’d been slapped. Stiles decided it was the perfect opportunity to wriggle and roll out from under Derek and onto the floor. Suddenly, Stiles felt giddy, like he’d been injected with a rush of energy that was probably just an overflow of emotions more than anything. He wanted to laugh and tease and shove at Derek, but at the same time he wanted Derek to push right back. As it were, Derek was now scowling and--and growling at Stiles.

Oh shit.

Stiles pushed himself forward, shoving to his feet and bolting for the bedroom door. He wrenched it open at the same time heard Derek lunging off of the couch. Stiles barely made it through the bedroom door before Derek was slamming into him and shoving him down onto the bed with a snarl.

Derek’s body crushed all of the air out of Stiles, but that was a little less important in the face of other things. Things like--in the span of a heartbeat--Stiles was being manhandled onto his stomach with his arms pinned above his head and Derek’s hips grinding up against his ass. Holy balls. Stiles didn’t even know what to do because he was still trying to process the fact that, apparently, the whole ‘predator/prey’ thing had just been added to their growing list of ‘kinky engagements that Stiles and Derek should participate in on a regular basis.’

“Ohffuuuh--” Stiles choked, because Derek’s mouth was back on his throat and Holy Creator of Tofurkey, the guy was two layers of clothes away from fucking into Stiles from sheer will alone.
“You ran,” Derek snarled, biting down on the shell of Stiles’ earlobe and tugging it as if in punishment. Stiles may or may not have whined just the tiniest bit, wanting to at least reciprocate some of the sexy that was underway. Derek shot him down completely with another totally inhuman noise and a forceful snap of his hips.

“You chased,” Stiles wheezed, because Derek was practically squeezing the breath out of him with every thrust. Stiles was already rock hard in his jeans, cock straining from where it was crushed between his body and the mattress. He was pretty sure that all those times he’d undergone a sexual identity crisis from watching Tarzan was not in vain, because Derek was halfway feral in the way he was utterly dominating—Wait a second.

“You said I could top!” Stiles whined, squirming because this was completely unfair. They had a deal, okay. Stiles did not like being coerced out of the things he was promised, and what he was promised was a nice one-on-one session with Derek’s gloriously well-rounded derriere.

Derek went still, rocking against Stiles for a second before he let out an—was that an annoyed sigh??--and rolled off of Stiles and onto his back. Oh, oh no. Stiles was not going to let this fly, not one bit. Pushing himself onto his elbows, Stiles stared down at Derek’s pissy scowl and returned it with one of his own. “Are you seriously pouting at me.”

“Get on with it.” Derek shot back.

Rude.

Unacceptable, also. “Oh, I will.” Stiles affirmed, getting up onto his knees and climbing on top of Derek. He pressed a hand against Derek’s chest and tapped his collarbone, watching the way Derek’s nostrils flared for just a second and his tongue darted out to lick his lips. “I’m going to make you beg for it.”

Derek snorted, like he didn’t know what Stiles was capable of. This wouldn’t do at all. Stiles didn’t spend endless hours watching and reading porn and bookmarking any article on ‘how to give great orgasms’ for no reason. He was going to show Derek who the real alpha was.

Okay, might be a good idea not to mention that line to Derek because Stiles had nearly forgotten that Derek actually did have an alpha, and that alpha was his sister.

Still…

Stiles bent down, because he already knew Derek had a pretty obvious neck fetish, and pressed his mouth right over Derek’s adam’s apple. Derek froze, and Stiles could feel his breath hitch the second Stiles bit down gently, and then dragged a wet kiss to Derek’s collarbone. He only paused every now and then to give a good, sharp nip, until he reached the curve where Derek’s neck met his shoulder. That’s when Stiles pressed his hands down, forcing Derek against the bed and rocking their hips together with a quick, sharp bite. Derek gasped, and oh—oh yes, that’s exactly the reaction that Stiles was looking for.

Stiles did again, harder, and Derek gave an aborted jerk like he wanted to arch his back but then remembered he was supposed to act like he was unaffected. Well, that just meant Stiles had to try harder. This was not a difficult feat for him, because he was an Achievement Whore on the Xbox.

The only thing Derek’s reluctance showed Stiles was that he had to try harder.
In actuality, Stiles didn’t really need to put forth much effort either way. Derek’s body was a soft, firm warmth beneath him. He smelled like bar soap and sweat, and Stiles could feel the way their hearts thundered unevenly together. All of this made him want to do anything and everything in his power to completely take Derek apart, to worship him and memorize each and every inch of his body.

Stiles nosed up under Derek’s ear, biting the lobe and sucking it between his teeth, hearing and feeling the way Derek struggled not to groan softly. Each time it happened, it made Stiles want to do it more and more until Derek was a completely wrecked mess. Derek brought a hand up to Stiles’ hip, but Stiles caught onto his wrist before it could make contact, shoving Derek’s arm against the mattress and pinning it down. Derek inhaled sharply, and Stiles felt the muscles in his hand and arm shift and then relax. Good boy. Stiles grinned into Derek’s jaw, kissing the hinge and then taking his other hand and shoving it up under Derek’s shirt.

“How long do you think it would take for me to kiss your whole body? I wouldn’t mind getting my mouth all over your Adonis self at any time of day—”

“You’d complain about pubic hair in your mouth.” Derek blurted, so suddenly that Stiles jerked back with wide eyes. Did he just--

“It’s the truth.” Derek added, because, well. It was. It was kind of scary that Derek already knew him that well. Stiles couldn’t help but laugh, loud and long, and bent down to press his smile against the curve of Derek’s amused smirk.

“You should work on your manscaping, then,” Stiles muttered, and Derek snorted quietly. Stiles kissed him again, and then again and again until he couldn’t tell where one kiss ended and the other began.

At some point, he was able to wrestle the both of them out of their clothes until the only thing between their bodies was heat, sweat, and the tiniest bit of precum. Stiles rocked their hips together, groaning when the head of his dick got caught in the dip of Derek’s belly button. Derek didn’t seem too interested in doing anything about it, he was too busy trying to bite a hickey into Stiles’ bottom lip, hands clutching the back of Stiles’ head to keep him from pulling away.

Stiles fumbled for the night stand, and Derek pulled back enough to give him a few seconds to loot around in it. His hands wrapped around a brand new bottle that Derek must have bought to replace the one he’d decimated not so long ago (Stiles liked to think that it would mark their first time together as completely unique). He sat back, ass nestled comfortably on top of Derek’s thighs while he fought to get the cap off.

Derek shifted, sliding one leg out from under him so he could--well fuck. Derek spreading his legs under Stiles was probably going to go under Stiles’ list of ‘top ten sexiest things ever’, right under the Michael Fassbender GQ photoshoot spread that was currently sitting on his desk at home.

“Oh my God.” Stiles groaned, bringing one wet hand down and then detouring halfway to getting between Derek’s legs to grab his dick. Derek jumped, eyes wide as he watched Stiles squeeze and stroke him. Derek had an amazing cock, okay. It was thick and hard in all the right places, and Stiles really, really needed to suck on it. Only he would have to wait until another time when he hadn’t just covered it in lube. Mostly because lube was not tasty. At all.

“Stiles.” Derek snapped almost breathlessly. Stiles looked up, one eyebrow rising high because yeah, he did feel a little cocky knowing that he was the reason Derek sounded like that.

“Did you need something?” Stiles asked, failing miserably at keeping himself from sounding like a
smuggy McSmugerson. Derek’s nose twitched in unison with his lip curling just the tiniest bit, brows pinching in an adorable pissy-faced expression. Derek huffed through his nose, but kept quiet, which was not what Stiles wanted. He squeezed the base of Derek’s cock, dragging his fist up and down and then easing his hand to Derek’s balls, cupping and massaging them with a pressure just shy of firm. Stiles visibly saw Derek’s right leg twitch at the knee and fall to the side the tiniest bit, like he was instinctively wanting to open himself for Stiles.

That was just the way Stiles liked it, actually.

Setting down the lube, Stiles climbed off of Derek’s other thigh, just so he could grab the meat of it and push until Stiles had plenty of room to work with. He could see the skin of Derek’s hips and groin stretching from the spread of his legs, his cock red and swollen where it rested on crease of his pelvis. Stiles was really glad he’d already gotten down into his birthday suit, because his dick would probably have a zipper imprint all along the underside by now, just from how hard he was getting at the image before him.

Stiles nearly went straight in for the kill when an idea struck him and he pulled back the hand that was covered in lube. Derek exhaled sharply, watching Stiles like a hawk and then almost jumping out of his skin when Stiles grabbed him underneath of each knee and hoisted them up onto his shoulders. Derek may have been on the beefy side, but Stiles was strong enough that he didn’t have any problem dragging Derek’s upper body close enough that he could nose his way up under Derek’s balls. A bit of lube smeared across his nose, but it didn’t matter because when Stiles licked a big, wet, flat line right up the seam, Derek’s thighs clamped around his head like a vice.

Christ, Stiles could get drunk off the power, he really could. Derek’s scent was heady, the skin of his balls soft as they shifted under his tongue. He even made sure not to complain about any pubic hair, just because proving Derek right was always a mood ruiner. Instead he licked a second time, sucking on each one long enough that Derek’s thighs started to quake. Really, it wasn’t a surprise. If Derek’s nuts were anything like Stiles’, even the slightest touch could get him riled up. Derek’s hand grabbed onto his wrist, making the bone creak and Stiles’ grip on Derek’s knee weaken just the tiniest bit.

That was no good.

Stiles tugged the skin along the underside of Derek’s balls between his teeth, nipping and then releasing it to lick and kiss the abused skin.

“Fuck!”

The shout almost scared the hell out of Stiles, because Derek wasn’t a particularly vocal person. Sure, he was grunting and breathing heavily, but Stiles had never done anything that got him to cry out like that.

Oh God, was it encouragement, though.

Stiles nuzzled up until he could press loud, wet kisses against the skin behind Derek’s balls. He blindly reached around to Derek’s stomach, arm wrapping around his hips--Derek’s cock bumping against it and smearing precum all along his forearm, Jesus Christ Superstar--and pulled until Stiles had easy access to press his face in and run his tongue along the pucker of Derek’s hole.

It was like someone electrocuted Derek, because Stiles had to hold tight to his stomach just to keep from getting whiplash from the force of Derek’s full-body jerk. It was hot as hell, yes, but

Stiles had never before mourned the fact that he needed to breathe until his nose and mouth were completely suffocated from how tightly he was pressed between Derek’s legs. This wouldn’t do. Stiles had plans to completely take Derek apart, and his basic body functions were getting in the
Pulling back after one last flick of his tongue, Stiles didn’t give Derek time to even pull his normal bitchface. With a twist and shove, he flipped his lovely, manly, utterly fuckable werewolf of a boyfriend right onto his stomach.

“Stiles!” Derek barked, like he was actually upset or something. Any other day, Stiles might have thought Derek was out of his comfort zone, but there was no way he wasn’t enjoying it when he was letting Stiles’ manhandle him like a life-sized marionette.

“You like it.” Stiles shot back, and then, just to test his limits (because he was a completely suicidal psycho) he brought his hand up and slapped Derek right on his left as cheek. Derek jerked and Stiles could actually hear the sound of the bed sheets ripping from his claws. “Good, huh?” Derek looked over his shoulder and gave Stiles the most annoyed, filthiest glare of all time.

Stiles swatted his ass again, right on top of the already-fading red mark. Derek howled, and Stiles grabbed a handful of each cheek, spreading him wide before Derek’s homicidal side emerged and did anything in retaliation. He ducked down, flattening his tongue right on the center of Derek’s exposed hole and dragging it up to his crack.

The muscles of Derek’s back twinged, so Stiles’ set his hand at the base of Derek’s spine and started to massage in unison with each swipe of his tongue. He’d never really rimmed anyone before, but he’d been on the receiving end enough to know just what he liked, and hopefully Derek would like it too.

Stiles teased the pucker of Derek’s entrance, pushing against the resistant muscle with every pass. He could feel the way the skin would tighten and twitch, and loved it even more when Derek finally let out a low breath and Stiles physically felt Derek loosen up enough to let the tip of his tongue slide in. Of course, that made Derek tense up again right away, clenching around Stiles’ tongue like a clamp. Stiles brought both hands up to Derek’s as cheeks, pulling them apart so he could press his face in and wriggle his way inside of Derek.

“Hhhnnn--”

Holy fucking shit.

Did Derek just moan? Did Derek just moan wantonly? Christ, he was making it extremely difficult for Stiles to take his time when he was actually squirming just the tiniest bit. It was becoming glaringly evident that Derek was entirely invested in making Stiles work for it, which meant not acting like he was enjoying any of it. The fact that Stiles could chip away at his resolve was more liberating than the time he’d taken on an Ancient Dragon and a Blood Dragon in Skyrim at the same time and had survived.

Twisting his tongue, Stiles couldn’t help but echo with a quiet groan when Derek rocked into his mouth and forced himself to loosen up. Stiles brought one hand down to wrap around the base of Derek’s cock, tugging at it to pump him back to full hardness again. He must have lost a bit of his gusto when Stiles had first gotten started--not really surprising. Stiles had taken a good two minutes to get himself hard again after the first time he’d been on the receiving end of any penetration.

Derek huffed, hips twitching, and Stiles took it as his cue to lift his head up and look around for the lube. Luckily, it wasn’t very far and the cap was a clip, and not a screw. He used his thumb to flick the lid open, other hand still milking Derek with a steady rhythm as he squirted a good amount of lube right on Derek’s crack.
Hm…

Stiles was in control of the lube this time…

He lifted his arm, and squeezed the bottle into his fist. Lube gushed out in thick squirts, pouring all over Derek’s lower back and ass in a glorious spray. Derek jumped so hard Stiles lost his hold on his dick, which was totally worth it.

“What the--”

“Payback!” Stiles interrupted, and he couldn’t even control the wild-eyed grin he knew he was giving Derek. It was entirely one of the most unforgettable moments of his life. Derek on his knees, ass in the air and his skin wet and shiny with almost an entire bottle’s worth of lube gracelessly dumped all over him.

“I’m going to--”

Stiles slapped his ass and Derek went deathly still.

Oops. Too far?

Stiles swiped his hand across the lube, pressing down on Derek’s back to shove him into the bed. Derek looked like he wanted to struggle--and he could, he was so much stronger than Stiles it wasn’t even funny--but then he caught Stiles’ eye and he just… relaxed. Stiles watched in detached amazement as Derek clenched his jaw, forced himself to go limp, and then looked behind himself at Stiles.

“Are you going to hurry up, or am I going to have to finish myself off in the bathroom?” Well then.

Stiles shoved his hand into the lube puddled in the small of Derek’s back, taking a second to trace the puckered dip and then bringing his hand between Derek’s legs. He didn’t even give Derek any forewarning before he slipped his index finger in just a tiny bit.

Derek hissed, and then the muscles around Stiles’ finger fluttered and practically sucked him in deeper. Oh mother of Goku, Stiles could not wait to get his dick inside of that.

He didn’t know if Derek had ever been with another guy before--even just for a one nighter-- so he took his time in pushing in and opening him up. With each passing second, Derek looked more and more uncomfortable until Stiles twisted his fingers and grabbed Derek’s cock at the same time he pushed right down against Derek’s prostate. Derek jolted, arched, and his left leg shot out like he wanted to pull away from Stiles at the same time he rocked right back into his touch.

Stiles did it again, spreading his three fingers and pressing in just enough to get his pinky in--he’d rather Derek be too loose than too tight. He wanted Derek to enjoy this, and that meant limiting the amount of pain from… well… Stiles shoving his dick into him.

“Like that?” Stiles asked, because Derek’s face was expressionless and his hands were flexing from where he’d gotten them pulled up by his face. Derek darted his eyes down to Stiles and frowned.

“If I didn’t like it I wouldn’t let you stick your fingers in my ass, Stiles.”

“Ouh, touchy…” Stiles grinned, rubbing up against Derek’s prostate and watching in amazement as Derek’s cock twitched from where it hung between his legs, and a spurt of precum dribbled out onto the bed.
Fuck, that was hot.

Stiles pulled his fingers out, scooping up more lube from Derek’s back and slicking himself up. Derek was watching him with that same stupid blank face that meant he didn’t want Stiles to know what he was thinking. Well fine, Stiles would just have to fuck the apathy right out of him.

It isn’t like he hadn’t planned to do that already, anyway. Derek was more emotional than Sailor Moon any time Tuxedo Mask was involved.

Realizing that he’d been letting his thoughts wander, Stiles lined himself up, shifting forward on his knees until the head of his dick was teasing against Derek’s hole.

“Do you need help?” Derek asked, looking at Stiles like Stiles didn’t know how to stick his dick in something. Wow.

“Haha. Fuck you.”

“I thought that was the entire purpose of this.” Derek mused, pushing himself up onto his hands and knees and shoving himself back onto Stiles’ dick--like Jesus fucking Christ, did he seriously just--oh god Stiles was going to bust a nut. He had to control himself--good god Derek was still so tight and hot and Stiles’ hips were cradled right up against his ass. He was going to die. He was going to die a very happy man, but he was going to die nonetheless.

“OhhhhhGod.” Stiles stammered, his thighs shaking with the effort not to just start jackrabbit his hips and fuck into Derek with reckless abandon. He wasn’t a teenager, he was an adult dammit.

He had some control.

Instead, Stiles bent down until his forehead was resting against the knob at the base of Derek’s neck. He kissed the skin there, licking up sweat just to distract himself from how close he’d come to losing it right then and there. One hand fumbled down between Derek’s legs, fisting his softening dick and going about bringing back to full attention. Derek grunted, and Stiles gave him a squeeze as he started to rock his hips.

“Holy crap,” Stiles groaned, pumping Derek in time with the movement of their bodies. Derek rolled his head back until his temple was pressed against Stiles ear. Stiles turned, kissing the high curve of Derek’s cheekbone with a wet press of lips. “You’ve got, like, the Vulcan death grip on my dick.”

“Shut up.”

Stiles didn’t shut up, though, because he had no idea how to. Instead, he started to move his hand faster, feeling Derek’s cock fill up and harden under his touch. He ducked his head down, kissing Derek’s collarbone and then giving biting at it once. “Can’t, don’t want to. Dude, I mean. You’re like Thor, and I’m Loki, but only in size. There’s no incest or passive-aggressive rage issues going on here. I don’t even know what I’m saying but you feel so fucking good. I want to just fuck your brains out and make you scream.”

Well that kind of sounded like dirty talk, right? That was about the closest Stiles could really get, because any time he attempted to talk dirty, he just got horrifically embarrassed with himself and started to, well, ramble.

“Harder.” Derek grit out, though it was more like an angry growl of a demand than a request. Stiles had to double-take, because had Derek just asked him--no, don’t question it. Just do. Be like the Republican party, just mindlessly do what you’re told. He pulled out, set his hands on Derek’s waist, and snapped his hips forward and FUCK if that didn’t feel good.
Derek grunted, reaching behind himself to grab Stiles’ wrist and pull him forward until Stiles’ chest was pressed into his back once more. For the second time in a week, Stiles found his entire torso covered in lube, but he didn’t particularly mind because he was too busy thrusting inside the endless vice of heat that surrounded his cock.

Stiles curled his arm around Derek’s shoulders, so that he was three inches away from bringing his arm up and choking Derek. It made bracing himself easier, so Stiles could push his legs up and thrust harder and faster with less to get in his way. Derek was responding more and more enthusiastically, encouraging certain angles by digging his nails into the back of Stiles’ hand when he particularly enjoyed something. Stiles bit down on Derek’s earlobe at one point, panting heavily into the shell of it. Derek stifled a quiet groan, and Stiles felt the entire shudder that went down his spine as a result, until Derek was clenching around him.

“Fuck--fuck, Stiles,” Derek choked, dropping down onto his elbows and lifting his ass up in the process. It was like Stiles was suddenly sliding right home, slipping in and out of him with perfect ease, where Stiles knew his cock was hitting Derek’s prostate because Derek was hiding his face in his arm, muffling groans, and reaching down to jerk himself off with an increasingly frantic fervor.

Stiles couldn’t even think of any witty inner dialogue because right now he was distracted by the fact that his dick had literally never felt more amazing than it did at that exact second. Hearing and seeing Derek react was only icing on the cake, but Stiles was doing that, Stiles was making him feel good.

He reached around, squeezing the base of Derek’s cock while Derek kept fisting himself, but he really couldn’t be of much help because his climax was hitting him like a two ton truck. Stiles groaned, the air punched out of him and squeezing the groan off into a loud whine. He twitched and jerked his hips through his orgasm, spilling inside of Derek in forceful, wrenching pulses that felt like they came straight from his very core. He didn’t stop, though, he had at least another thirty seconds before he started to go soft. That was enough to keep weakly thrusting, trying to help Derek get off.

The weird part wasn’t when Derek tensed up, or when he hiccupped on a moan. It was when

Stiles felt Derek’s cock swell beneath his fingertips, the flesh almost bloating up in his grasp. Stiles didn’t even have a chance to really think about it because Derek was coming, hard, and clamping around Stiles’ sensitized dick as he pulsed onto the sheets with a howling moan.

“Dude I think your dick is broken,” Stiles panted once Derek had shuddered through the last few pulses.

Derek tensed, silent as Stiles pulled out and flopped down beside him. He slowly rolled onto his back, and then looked down at his cock--which was still hard and angrily red-- and then at Stiles’.

“Is… is it not--”

Derek went quiet again, self consciously bringing a hand to the base of his dick like he could hide the fact that it looked almost painfully swollen. Stiles frowned, because that shit just looked uncomfortable. “Did you--can you sprain your dick?”

“It’s supposed to do that.”

“What.”
Pulling his hand back, Derek fiddled with the head of his cock and dragged his fingers down to press against the thickened base. “It’s a knot?”

A knot. Right, like Derek actually had a dick from every kinky fanfic trope known to man.

Apparently, Stiles was making the face that showed exactly what he was thinking, because Derek grabbed his hand and brought it towards his dick. “It’s not like that, dumbass,” he snapped, forcing Stiles to touch the firm, spongey flesh. Okay, so it wasn’t like a golf ball or a grapefruit or any other sort of description Stiles had ever recalled hearing about. It was… really just swollen.

“Why?” Stiles hoped Derek understood, because he didn’t know if he had the ability to process cohesive thought anymore.

Derek shifted, shrugging one shoulder. “Werewolves--not quite human, not quite animal, right?”

“You have no idea, do you.”

“No,” Derek said, looking like a kicked puppy. “That’s why I didn’t come inside the other day, I didn’t want to scare you.”

At least he was courteous. Stiles ran his fingers along the outline of Derek’s knot for another second before he drew back and shrugged. “Well, I guess it’s something to add to the list of kinks I didn’t think I would have before my mid-life crisis.”

With that, Stiles proceeded to drag Derek in for a much needed post-coitus makeout session.

----

“I have a high alcohol tolerance.”

“Lie.”

“God dammit.” Stiles threw his pen on the desk, watching it skitter over his paperwork and flip off of the edge. Derek picked it up and set it back on the desk, but Stiles was not in the mood for his placating generosity. This was just unfair. Nothing Stiles did or thought could throw off Derek’s apparent built in lie detector. It was like having a hot, non-OCD version of his own personal Monk. Derek, smug asshole that he was, simply plucked the remote from the desk to turn the television to sports.

Stiles resisted the urge to make any comments in reference to spanking as a form of punishment, even though he wanted to. The only reason for that was because, after they’d finished their cuddle session the other day, Derek had pinned Stiles to the bed to inform him--very sexily and very irritably--that he would enact his revenge for the ass-slapping that had occurred. Sure, Stiles had kind of wanted to see what exactly that entailed, but he also was wary of how thoroughly Derek was going to seek vengeance.

The phone rang, which was a really great way of distracting Stiles’ wandering mind from coming up with various light bondage scenarios that involved spanking and gagging and ropes and--

“Beacon Hills Towing, this is Stiles.”

“I’m looking for an ‘87 red pickup truck. Do you guys have it?”
Stiles almost reached for the drawer that held the paperwork for impounds when the year stuck out to him. Red trucks weren’t uncommon, but a red truck that was older than 1990 was something Stiles usually remembered. The only one he remembered, however, was impounded for a very specific reason. “Can I put you on hold while I look that up? Thank you.” Stiles hit the ‘hold line’ button, setting the phone back in the cradle and looking at Derek—who was already waiting for Stiles to speak.

“1987 red pickup. Isn’t that the police impound you picked up the other day? With the stolen stuff?”

Derek’s brows pinched together, and Stiles hurried to find the paperwork in the drawer, handing it over to help refresh Derek’s mind. They guy had to deal with at least a hundred cars every few days, which, you know, Stiles had no problem with if it meant always seeing Derek in the ‘sexy mechanic’ ensemble. Come to think of it, Stiles wondered if Derek had ever considered sex roleplaying. Derek flipped through the folder, skimming through his own handwriting.

“Oh snap. Oh snap crackle and pop. Someone was trying to pull one over on ol’ Stiles Stilinski. Well not today, buddy. Not today.

Stiles took them off hold. “I’m sorry sir, I’m afraid I can’t take it out of impound until the State allows us.”

“How was it that the only time people ever demanded to speak to the manager was when they already were, or when they were the ones who were wrong? Sure, Stiles wasn’t technically a manager, but since he was the only one who worked in the main office on the weekend, a few twisted truths wasn’t going to hurt. ‘I’m the weekend manager, sir, and I’m telling you there’s nothing we can do about your truck until we’re given permission to release it.”

“What a load of shi—”

“Have a good afternoon, sir.” Stiles hung up, because, yeah, nobody really wanted to deal with assholes at any time of the day. He was completely within his rights to hang up. That was the plus side to working for a company with the bare skeleton of employees, because there were less coworkers to twist the details and make it sound like Stiles was a liar. He’d had his fair share of those from working in retail.

Stiles grabbed his notepad, scribbling down a basic synopsis of the conversation, with the date and time, for Finstock when he came in on Monday. It didn’t’ hurt to cover all of your bases—and it made
Derek think he was a responsible adult. That was always a bonus.

Speaking of Derek…

“Your sisters kids are cute.” Topic changes were good, right? Okay, so Stiles completely had a reason for bringing up Justin and Lucy. He just had to know. This was very important information he was trying to pry out of Derek. This could make or break their relationship.

Well. It couldn’t really break it, but if it made it, they’d be breaking the bed the next time their schedules didn’t conflict.

“Mhmm,” Derek agreed, eyes narrowing suspiciously.

Stiles fiddled with his pen, and then occupied himself with searching the desk for some tape so he could attach the note to the monitor for someone to see on Monday morning. Sure, he could stick it on the wire thingie (did they even have a name?) that was in the corner and held a few other important papers, but that would mean he would have to look at Derek.

“You ever thing about having kids?” Nonchalance--be calm, be cool, be the leaf.

Derek twisted his head in a fashion similar to an owl zooming in on the prey it wanted to gobble up hole. Stiles suddenly felt very much like a mouse, which might have been why his voice cracked the tiniest squeak when he added, “I mean, not right away. Maybe in a couple of years? Not that I’m saying you have to want kids, I was just wondering, on a general note. I’m neutral on it, really. I’m like Canada--or Switzerland--I am so New Zealand on this, really.”

Really, Stiles had no idea how to classify the look Derek was giving him. Probably because he was doing that emotionless look that almost reminded him Jeremy Renner’s resting face, only with less boredom and more processing errors. Stiles struggled to think of how he could un-make an ass out of himself before a loading bar magically appeared on Derek’s forehead.

“I was just wondering, really. I’m awful with kids, heh, you know. I’d be the one bribing them with pixie sticks or something, and you know. That’s just an awful kind of dad to b--”

“I miss…family.” Derek muttered. Like he was implying that he wanted a family again--a family with Stiles.

“I think we could make a great family,” Stiles blurted, physically jerking and wincing because, wow, Stilinski, good way to forget all those years with the therapist telling you to think before you speak. “In a couple of years,” Stiles added, because now Derek’s eyes were growing wide and his eyebrows were going up so high that Stiles was afraid they were going to start hiding in his hairline. “No pressure right now, though.” Dig a little deeper, darling.

Derek--Derek grinned. He didn’t just grin, he smiled, big and wide and kind of excited? Did Stiles do that? Was he really the one who put that look on Derek’s face?

Stiles could feel his heart ache out a longing thump, because he had never seen that look before on Derek’s face in all the time they’d known each other. How could he even stop himself from mimicking the smile right back. Holy Library of Alexandria, though, did Derek actually want kids with Stiles? Sure, the possibility was way down the road, but did he actually see them being together that long? Just the implication that Derek was just as invested in this as Stiles was made Stiles want to break into a Kevin Bacon style song and dance number.

Of course, before Stiles could even get his stanky leg on, the phone started to ring once more.
“Beacon Hills towing?”

“I’m looking for my husband’s car…” The woman on the other line was so quiet when she spoke that Stiles had to take a second to process what he’d even said.

The impound drawer came open again. “What kind of car?” he grabbed the folder for the last impound, shoving it in the drawer while she rattled off what little she knew—the color and the make. It was 2/4 things, but there were a lot of white Hondas out there. Either way, he didn’t see any on the list from the day prior. He gestured at Derek, motioning for him to put the television on mute before speaking again. “I don’t see it here. Did he happen to get the information from the insurance company on where they might have had it sent?”

Silence, and then a strangled mutter of, “He’s dead.” that had Stiles cringing like he’d been poked in the belly button with a probing needle.

“I am so sorry,” he breathed, knowing there really was nothing he could do or say to make it better. “I really am, but we don’t have his car. I can give you the numbers of all the other tow companies in the area, if you need it.”

Stiles listed everything off to her, hanging up afterwards with a sigh of, “that was depressing,” and then relaying the call to Derek when he gave Stiles one of his sexy eyebrow bobs.

“It’s worse when you’re there,” Derek said, “and you see them covering the body while you’re hooking their car up to the truck.”

“Wow. Subject change imminent.” Stiles blurted, since the thought of dead bodies really made him think of zombies, and then he started making Zombieland/The Walking Dead crossovers in his head with himself as the quirky sidekick to Derek’s rugged zombie slayer. That was just not a direction that he needed to be thinking in while at work. “So—fall festival.”

“What about it?” Derek rocked his chair, making it squeak to a point where he had to be doing it on purpose just to bother Stiles. The tiny smirk let Stiles know that yes, it was on purpose.

Stiles ignored it and plowed on. “Tomorrow’s the last day so I already told Finstock that you’re not working.”

“What.”

Beaming, Stiles winked at him. Derek couldn’t be angry at Stiles, because if he got angry, that meant that he had to do in-city tows next week. Besides, they both knew Stiles would reward any compliance on Derek’s side with lots of stupid gifts and kisses. Kisses were awesome.

Derek was awesome.

“Yeah so…you should pick me up. Not that I’m a bad driver, I love driving. But you should pick me up.” The more Stiles talked, the more bewildered Derek got, until he realized what he was saying. “In the sexy car. Of sex…iness.. Not the truck.”

“Oh. Okay.”

“Alright, cool. Put your cigarette out.” Someone was pulling into the shop—in a car Stiles didn’t recognize, with a heavyset man behind the driver’s seat. Derek frowned.

“Werewolves don’t get cancer, remember?”
“Someone’s coming, doofus.”

Okay, the insults never were the best idea because Derek was doing that face where he was torn between glaring and looking like Stiles had hurt his feelings. It made Stiles want to apologize and a Stilinski never apologized. Well. Except for when he usually apologized for something.

Anyway! Totally served him right.

The door opened and as soon as the words, “I’m looking for an ‘87 red pickup, some retard over the phone told me I couldn't have it back,” Stiles’ stomach sank. Persistent customers were never good.

“Well, I told you over the phone, sir. You can’t have it back.” Oh, and how hard it was not to make a jab at the guy’s Neanderthal technique for insulting. Well, hey, a little one wouldn’t hurt. “Frankly, I’m pretty sure anyone who is mentally disabled would be able to a much better job at handling the situation than you seem to be.” He was going to get himself killed one day.

“It’s my damn truck, you little bastard. I’ll pay the damn fees. How much?”

“I don’t know.”

“The fu-- what officer took it?”

“I don’t know.” Stiles almost sang. Playing dumb was his favorite part about this job.

“Do you even know when this fucking thing got picked up?!”

“I don’t know.” Okay, now even Stiles could see that Derek was struggling not to grin. His mouth was twitching like he’d been stabbed in the face with a taser and it was really not helping Stiles try to keep at least somewhat professional. Stiles couldn’t help that he got rather snappy when he felt backed into a corner. Right now, he was literally and metaphorically in a corner, his desk barring him from really leaving without the guy intercepting him. Derek was on the other side--he’d have to use some mad werewolf powers to even get close enough if the guy were to do anything.

It was also growingly obvious that the man in front of Stiles was starting to have a conniption fit, his voice getting louder and booming across the office. “Well you don’t know a whole fucking lot, do you?” Considering this dude didn’t seem to realize that there was a police case underway to try and convict him of theft, Stiles liked to think he was a little more informed of the situation.

Go in for the kill. Do it La Roux style, Stiles (heh).

“I know how to call 911.”

Stiles saw Derek go just as still as the customer. Maybe Stiles was better at controlling his panic than he thought. Derek looked surprised that Stiles had jumped so suddenly into getting the police involved. However, Derek was a lot stronger than Stiles (even without the werewolf powers) and he, most likely, never considered the many times Stiles had needed to pull the ‘call the authorities’ card on people who got pushy over their cars. It was a lot less hassle than having to deal with someone getting up in his face and making Stiles wonder if he was going to get his ass beaten.

“Is that a threat?” The man cried angrily.

“You need to leave, sir.” Stiles said tightly, giving him the fakest smile he could muster, “and come back during regular weekday hours.”

When a protest looked ready to be made, Stiles was quick to add, “I’m sorry, but your vehicle is out
of my control. I’m going to have to ask you to leave, sir.” For good measure, Stiles grabbed the phone, fingers hovering over the dial buttons. Usually he just rang his dad up, since that way his father could wait to call it in until he knew if Stiles was actually in trouble or just needed to bluff his way out of a fight. Who said having the Sheriff for a dad wasn’t useful?

“This is horse shit. I’m going to talk with the owner about this.”

Stiles waited until the guy was gone, his car fading down the road in the distance, and turned to Derek. “So I think we should get one of those rustic pictures. You know, the western booths where they dress you up and charge you a whole bunch to look like you’re straight out of a Clint Eastwood movie?”

Oh, Derek was staring. No, he wasn’t staring, he was Staring. With a capital ‘s’ … for sexy. Or Serious. Stoic, maybe?

“What?”

“Does that happen often?” Oh, yes. Stiles had forgotten that part where Derek had actually looked surprised that Stiles could egg someone else on besides him. It was a very honed skill that had been developed over many many years, one that Derek may not have been able to understand. The Art of the Antagonist… that had a nice ring to it--like an Xbox achievement that only the most prestigious pesterers could receive.

“Sometimes.” Stiles shrugged, “People usually get angry when tow trucks are involved.”

“Huh…” Derek made this expression like ‘I’m impressed’. Which, wow, okay. Apparently Derek forgot last week when Stiles had him bent over the arm of the couch and--not a good place to go while at work, Stiles.

“Oh fuck you.”

“You want to?”

Stiles snapped his head up so fast that if he’d been eating anything, surely all of the food would have gone tumbling out of his mouth. Derek grinned, standing up and--and--

Cocked his hip, put a hand in the desk, leaned in close and…

Totally brushed by Stiles to snatch up the USPS truck keys from the desk before pulling away and heading out the door. “I’ll drop these off at the post office since Brian’s been busy all day. I’m covering for Boyd tonight.”

“But you don’t work this weekend!” Stiles cried, all his hopes of a booty call draining away in a very ‘ducks go down the hole’-esque fashion. Especially when Derek shrugged in the doorway, having the gall to look vaguely apologetic.

“I do now.”

“No.” Stiles barked, slapping his hand on the desk. He would not stand for this.

“No?” Derek’s eyebrow--ugh, those fucking eyebrows, man--rose up again.

“You can’t be a cocktease anymore. I demand you compensate me for this cruelty you are subjecting me to.”
Derek laughed, just a soft snort and shake of his head, and crossed his arms. “I’ll come by early tomorrow and take you out to breakfast. IHop?”

“Heat.” Seriously, Stiles would have tried to argue harder, but IHop had the best pancakes ever, okay. How was he even supposed to resist that?

Derek rolled his eyes and slipped out of the office.

It was pouring down rain by the time Stiles closed up the office and ran out to his jeep. Derek was on call already, having stopped in to bring Stiles something to eat before going out on a run. It just meant Stiles would have time to tidy his room up in hopes that he could convince Derek for some nice morning sex when he came by for breakfast. Stiles had to take advantage of Dad’s stupid-in-the-morning shifts, after all.

He was driving through an intersection, contemplating the advantages of buying Derek edible lube as incentive for good-morning sex, when headlights flared in the right corner of his vision. Holy shit that was a CAR. Stiles slammed on the gas, trying to get out of the way as karma and wet roads made it impossible for him. It was deafening, the sound of his tires squealing, struggling for traction and failing miserably. Stiles had a half second to close his eyes and force his body to go limp--years of his dad stressing that a relaxed body would suffer less injuries--just as the other car slammed into his passenger side. His entire world jerked, and Stiles momentarily felt bad because he’d promised Derek a family not even a handful of hours prior, and then his head smashed into the window and everything went black.

When Stiles came to, rain was dripping in through his cracked windshield and the shattered passenger windows. He felt soaking wet and his face was covered in something warm and slick.

What was going on? Why was he even in the car? Shit. Stiles couldn’t even remember the last thing he’d done. When he tried to recall getting in his car, all he could bring to mind was a bunch of static and jumbled memories.

Stiles winced, because his head was killing him, and he had no idea where he was. There was someone yelling at him outside of the car, knocking on the window like there was some sort of emergency that needed Stiles’ attention. Stiles looked down at his lap, where blood was smeared down the driver’s window and across the door, as well as soaked into fabric of his jeans and jacket. His waning focus drifted to his hand, where rainwater had smeared the blood into reddish swirls that dripped off his fingers. Had he done that?

Stiles brought his hand up, blearily touching where his head hurt the most and jerking with a whimper when pain flared up tenfold. Someone was pulling at his door, opening it, and Stiles looked at them. Why was anyone opening his door? Did he get into an accident?

Oh shit, was he concussed? He was totally concussed. Dad was going to kill him. Derek was going to kill him, too. They would probably join up together like a competent version of Team Rocket and beat Stiles into a bloody pulp.

“Are you okay, son?”

Stiles peered at the person who had opened his door. It was an older man, most likely in his thirties to early forties, with dark skin and a goatee. He looked kind of familiar, but Stiles wasn’t hedging any bets when he was gushing blood from the head. “Am I bleeding?”

“The ambulance is on the way, just hold tight, okay?”
Stiles reached down to fumble with his seatbelt. He should call Derek and have Derek come get his Jeep. Only, his hands wouldn’t stop shaking and his eyes kept crossing on their own. Someone reached over—the good Samaritan, apparently—and plucked the phone from his hand. “Do you need me to call someone?”

“My dad. An’ Derek.” Stiles said, thinking for a moment. “Scott too.”

Well now the guy was looking at Stiles like he was missing an arm or two, as well. “Let’s just start with one, for now.”

“Beacon Hills Towing.” That sounded good. They could get one of the overnight ladies to send Derek over to pick the Jeep up. Two birds, one stone. Maybe Derek could get there before the ambulance took Stiles to the hospital, which would be better. Stiles was just really tired and he kind of would like Derek to be there and hugging him and warming him up. He was cold, too. He must have been cold, because Stiles couldn’t stop the full-body tremors that wracked his entire skeleton.

“Don’t you think you should call your family, first?”

“You already did, dad’s th’ sheriff.” Agitated, and having a hard enough time figuring out how to use English again, Stiles reached a hand up to try and find where he was bleeding from his head.

It was hard to see out of his left eye, blood dripping down from his eyebrow. His head was now roaring in pain, which was what made Stiles realize he didn’t want to feel how bad it was, because gore was totally unpleasant.

The ambulance pulled in just as Stiles was contemplating the merits of moving any more than he already had. EMTs were rushing over, and things quickly became a blur of flashing lights and thousands of questions that had Stiles’ head spinning in a completely different way. By the time the cops had arrived, they already had Stiles forced onto a gurney and wheeling towards the ambulance. He recognized some of his father’s deputies, which was awesome as hell. Why was it awesome? Because Martinez was notorious for squeezing gossip out of Dad, and was already phoning for Beacon Hills as the tow company before they’d even asked Stiles how he was doing.

Well, Stiles knew the first priority was usually freeing up the road. His jeep was completely blocking the intersection. Martinez gave Stiles a look from over the EMT’s shoulder and Stiles mouthed Derek’s name. Which, okay so it would have been better to send someone with a flatbed and not Derek, since Stiles had no idea what shape his tires were in, but he just really was hoping Derek would show up before the ambulance rolled out.

Right after Martinez gave him the thumbs up, Stiles realized it was probably an awful idea to have his boyfriend pick up his decimated car—especially because the police never told the truck drivers anything about the condition of the accident victims. Also because there was a likelihood that they might not see each other until Stiles was at the hospital. Stiles knew for a fact that Derek had the heart of a worrywart, nobody with eyebrows that intense could be anything but.

That’s when Stiles noticed the other ambulance, and the gurney rolling a sheet-covered body away from the decimated remains of the other car. Stiles didn’t feel anything. He felt kind of numb, actually, not knowing if the other driver had been drunk, or if he’d just been recklessly driving, or maybe had suffered an ill-timed car failure that had coupled badly with the rain.

Another cruiser pulled up, and Stiles couldn’t help but perk up at the sight of his dad. Only, he couldn’t really do much since there was a light being shined in his pupil and he was trying to follow it around.
“Hey dad.” Stiles called out, and then winced because woah, hey, sudden bout of nausea that made his head ache even more. Whatever Stiles’ dad was going to say was completely drowned out by the shrieking of truck tires when Derek plowed onto the scene. Honestly, if Stiles didn’t think Derek had a flair for the dramatic before.

But, God, did it make Stiles’ heart ache to know Derek was actually that concerned for him.

Even more aching-of-the-heart occurred when Derek jumped out of the truck and completely bypassed Stiles’ jeep to jog over to the ambulance. Sure, the deputies directing traffic (and waiting for Derek to clear the jeep out of the way) looked ready to blow a gasket, but that was okay because Derek was kind of shouldering past the EMT and grabbing Stiles’ face. Holy God, he looked distraught. Stiles wasn’t even sure if Derek was saying anything or if he was just spewing gibberish, but it didn’t matter because he was suddenly being hugged breathless from one second to the next.

“God dammit, Stiles.” Derek choked into Stiles’ hair, purposefully avoiding touching any of the gauze wrapped around his hair. It suddenly hit Stiles that Derek was there, that Dad was there. That he could have died. Stiles could have never been held by Derek again, could have been going to the morgue tonight instead of the ER.

“I’m not dead!” Stiles cried, his arms coming up and clutching at Derek’s shirt. The shakes were back tenfold as relief crashed into him. Derek squeezed him harder, but it wasn’t hard enough.

Stiles didn’t want Derek to ever let go, and he even reached out to flail in the direction of his dad until he felt another set of arms wrapping around him. Jesus fucking Christ.

He didn’t know what he would do if he didn’t have these two in his life. The only thing that would make this better was if Scott was here.

Stiles would just have to demand another group hug later at the hospital.

It wasn’t until both the EMT and Martinez had to team up on them that Derek and Dad finally let go. They both got dragged off to do their jobs--but not after a head rub from Dad and a quick, desperately forceful kiss from Derek--and Stiles was loaded up into the ambulance.

So it turns out that hours of head scans, examinations, tests and a good dose of morphine is plenty to make Stiles completely wiped out by the time he’s allowed visitors. At least his brain wasn’t hemorrhaged or something--just heavily concussed. Not that any of that mattered, because morphine was awesome. Derek was awesome too, and Stiles just wanted to reach out and touch his face, but there was a bunch of chords hooked up to him to make sure he stayed alive and well for the next 12 hours.

So instead, Stiles wiggled his fingers and tugged on Derek’s hand in hopes that his boyfriend would lean in closer from where he was rubbing his face against Stiles’ thigh. “You’re the. THE best. Boyfriend. Everrr.” Stiles sang, mostly because he wanted to serenade Derek with his love.

Sure, Scott’s mom was busy checking his eyes, but oohh hey. Scott’s mom hadn’t met Derek yet.

Stiles needed to tell her all about Derek. You know why? Because Derek was awesome.

“Isn’t Derek the best?” Stiles asked her, eyes crossing against the shine of the small light. “He’s the best thing ever. He’s a werewolf and he totally gets all growly and shit. It’s so adorable. I wish I had like--Derek Snacks. Totally Scooby Snacks for Derek the werewolf. I donno if he can turn into a wolf or not, though…but if he can I will totally brush his fur like, twice a day if I must. I’m a good boyfriend like that.”
Derek was pulling on Stiles’ hand, which was utterly rude. Stiles was trying to talk to Mama McCall, okay? He hadn’t talked to her in forever. Like three days. That is so long. Man, Derek apparently did not appreciate Scooby Doo jokes because he looked like Stiles had kicked his puppy. That would be rude. That would be like kicking someone’s baby.

“That’s nice sweetie.” Scott’s mom patted Stiles on his non-captive-via-werewolf-boyfriend hand, and then fiddled with Stiles’ morphine drip. Aw, so mean. Stiles needed that.

“No, my happy juice…why would you do that to me, ma. Ma, no. Stop. I can already feel the pain. Oh, the pain.” Stiles reached forlornly for the button strategically placed out of his reach while Scott’s Mom looked over at Derek. Derek, who seemed to be making three different facial expressions at once because he couldn’t decide which emotion he was feeling the most.

Mama McCall, bless her itty bitty, soulless, morphine-depriving heart, smiled at Derek. “So you’re the one whose been stealing my son’s best friend away from him.”

Well of course he was. “Scott is jealous because Derek has a huge dick and it’s all mine.” Stiles told her matter-of-factly.

Well, Stiles had no idea why Derek had to look so horrified at the idea that his dick was considered above-average. Most people would think it to be a compliment, okay.

“That’s not something I wanted to know, sweetheart.” Mama McCall patted Derek on the head, and then walked out of the room. She was obviously jealous of the fact that Derek was hiding a practical Cloverfield monster in his pants. No doubt about it.

Derek looked at Stiles and aw, he was so precious. So cute. Stiles was just so giddy, and very happy. His legs must have been made out of clouds. Maybe he was a cotton candy man, floating up above the clouds with the sun shining down on him.

“You’re going to get me burned at the stake.” Derek muttered. Way to be a Debbie Downer. Stiles frowned. Only, he was pretty sure he was frowning. His face felt kind of numb. Not numb like ‘trip to the dentist’ numb. More like ‘floating on a rainbow of nothingness’ numb. “Witches get burned. Wolves get shot with silver bullets.”

“Stiles.”

“I’ve been concussed, Derek. You have to be nice to me.” Derek should be nice, because Stiles had blackmail on him. He had proof that Derek actually experienced ~feelings~, and that was a very important thing to remember.

Derek rolled his eyes, since he totally couldn’t think of any comebacks, of course, and a thought struck Stiles.

“Hey can se hanky panky?”

“What?” Oh come on, Derek. Use the urban dictionary sometime. Stiles flailed for Derek’s arm, pulling him in until Derek fell halfway into Stiles’ lap. Perfect.

“I wanna check hospital sex off of my to-do list. I mean. I’ve already checked your name off…to-do list. I’m going ‘to-do’ you? Aha, I’m hilarious.” He was hilarious. Stiles was so damn clever he cracked himself up. His laughter sounded funny, even to his own ears, and it made him laugh harder until Derek was grabbing his chin and dragging him into a kiss.

Oh hello, glorious turn of events.
Oh, hello…cockblocking phone.

Derek answered his cell, talking to the evening dispatcher and scribbling everything down on the small notebook he’d brought in his breast pocket. Stiles kept trying to take his pen (which was totally the one Stiles had gotten Derek for this birthday. Yay sentiments!), but Derek just turned around and walked away from the bed. Rude.

Hanging up once finished, Derek came back to drop a kiss on Stiles’ cheek. Unacceptable. Stiles wanted proper kisses. He even mashed their mouths together. The only downside was he couldn’t actually feel much of the kiss. But it was the thought that counted!

“I have to get back to work.” Derek muttered into Stiles’ lips, kissing him a second time and then standing up. “I’ll stop by later to pick you up after your 12 hours are up.” 12 hours only being after waivers and forms had been signed that allowed Stiles to leave before the 24 mark. Why, you ask? They were going to that fucking fall festival, come hell or high water. Or, well, concussed Stilinskis.

“I’m only allowing this because you bring home the bacon.” Stiles said. Derek stared at him.

“You don’t even live with me.”

Oh Derek, such a pessimist. They were seriously going to need to work on his negativity before adopting children. There was no way Stiles was going to become the father to the proverbial Wednesday Adams just because Derek couldn’t see things in rainbows and asymmetrical bumblebees.

“Minor details,” Stiles waved his hand, laying back against the bed and fumbling for the remote, “now shoo. I have some Adult Swim to catch up on.”

Derek snorted, giving Stiles one last parting wave before he left.

Stiles counted to five, and then he grabbed his phone and fumbled out a text of, ‘pick up sunscreen before we go tomorrow. You’re so pale I bet you burn like a peach.’

"I can't believe you told my mom your boyfriend has a huge dick." Scott whined from the door, pushing it open and letting Allison in before closing it behind them both. Wow, when did they even show up. Also, wow, Mama McCall was supposed to have his back on these things. This had to be a break in the bro code. Neil Patrick Harris would not be pleased.

"I'm on morphine! I'm not in my right mind!" Stiles protested, since using narcotics as a scapegoat had always been a viable plan of action. In fact, he should really be milking this for all it was worth. That is, until Allison reached out and patted him on the knee.

"I hate to break it to you, Stiles," she said quietly, smiling, "it's rare that you're ever in your right mind."

Shot through the heart, Allison. Way to give love a bad name.

"I guess this means you'll understand when I say we're still going to the fall festival tomorrow, right?" Since Stiles a) wanted some goddamn pumpkin pie, and b) was determined to get a western
photoshoot with Derek, also c) win Allison and Lydia carnival prizes to repay all debt incurred over the ‘Wooing of the Wolf’ time frame. (man, with an operation name like that, how had Stiles not known Derek was a werewolf?)

Allison grinned, looking over at Scott—who really looked disgruntled at the idea of waking up before noon for any reason other than sex. She turned back to Stiles. “Wouldn’t miss it for the world. Why don’t you get some sleep?”

Uh--

“I don’t want to sleep! I’ve been concussed!” Not that he necessarily had to, but Stiles would rather suffer a sleepless night than drop off into a coma against his will. Yeah, they didn’t need him to stay up, they could keep waking him up, or whatever it was that all the newfangled technology did, but there was some sort of deep-seated fear in Stiles’ gut that made him far too paranoid to be willing to just sleep everything off. Probably might have had something to do with his mom claiming she was going to ‘just take a nap’ and then never waking up.

Allison’s face did this thing where Stiles felt like he should be apologizing or something, which, yeah she had probably gotten that from Scott. He may have had the same capacity to catch onto things as a potato did, but damn could he guilt trip with just a single look.

Speaking of his best friend, Scott was still hovering the doorway, like he wanted to have feelings but it physically pained him. How was it that the only man Stiles knew that didn’t have emotional constipation was his dad?

“I’m glad you’re okay, dude.” Scott said quietly, crossing the room and bending down to hug Stiles. Oh, there we go. Scott was no longer afraid of bro-hugs. This was good. Even better than that week Scott had suffered a temporary phobia of cotton balls. Stiles had invested in half the cosmetic section at Walgreens just to have Scott as a human guinea pig.

“Me too, man.” Stiles agreed, rubbing his head against Scott’s. Wow, Scott had really soft hair. It was like, softer than the butt of a baby bunny. Only there was less likelihood of poop being involved. “It would totally suck if I wasn’t okay. What if I woke up in a coma, right? And I missed, like, five years of my life.” That would suck. That would be beyond Lifetime movie suckage and right into the realm of depressing fan fiction.

“What if I woke up five years in the future and Derek was married to someone else and had kids? He’s not allowed to do that. He has to have my babies. Well, not actually have my babies, but be involved in the process of acquiring said babies and--”

“Can I ask my mom to just take him off the morphine completely?” Scott asked Allison. Stiles had a feeling the expression on his face probably started to form around the time Stiles had brought up the probability of Derek rearing his children.

Pregnant Derek was just a completely terrifying concept, okay. Stiles didn’t even want to think about it.

“You should get me some coffee, instead.” Stiles offered, “Since I want to stay awake all night.”

Scott stood up, clapping Stiles’ shoulder. “Anything for my best friend, man.” With that, Scott, not only pulled his own wallet out to thumb through for change, but took a left outside the door instead of a right. That meant he was heading for the cafeteria—Stiles was getting himself some café coffee, not vending machine coffee. Fancy hospital shit right there.
Stiles was going to totally milk this injury for as long as he could.

----

Stiles felt a little better knowing he wasn’t the only zombie around when Derek came to pick him up an hour or two before the ass-crack of dawn. Just seeing the tired expression on Derek’s face when he drove the both of them back to Stiles’ house was proof enough that the entire night at work had been busy. That was okay, because Stiles was pretty much on his fourth wind of the night and ready to climb into bed for a few hours until they headed out for the fair.

His bed was already calling to him, giving him promises of warmth, softness, and the best sleep imaginable. There was also the likelihood that Stiles would be able to drag Derek between the sheets and force-cuddle him to death. Even though Stiles had already gotten his fair share of morning kisses back at the hospital, he expected plenty more. Kisses healed boo-boos, right? That meant Stiles had to stock up on a few to help deal with the way his entire body still ached after the wreck.

Stiles hadn’t anticipated how nerve wracking the ride home would be, though. Every single movement from another car on the road had him jumping in his seat. Derek must have heard Stiles’ heart rate ratcheting up violently when someone cut them off or moved too fast, because he grabbed Stiles’ hand less than ten minutes into the drive. “Cover your eyes. Pretend you’re on a kiddie roller coaster,” he advised quietly. Stiles wondered belatedly if Derek had ever gotten into car accidents before. It was just another thing about Derek that Stiles hoped to find out over time.

Stiles was too tired to even argue, so he curled up against the window as best he could without letting go of Derek’s hand. Even his brain was fried. He barely could keep up any internal commentary—and that was his favorite thing to do. Stiles squeezed Derek’s hand, holding tight. It was a good way to know if something was happening, because Derek drove for a living and only ever needed his other hand if he was shifting gears or having to react quickly. If Derek let go of his hand, it was signal enough for Stiles to open his eyes.

Somewhere between one turn and the next, Stiles drifted off. He felt so much safer in Derek’s truck compared to the hospital that it was kind of ridiculous. He shouldn’t be lulled by the rumbling seats or the roar of a giant engine, but he was.

Derek—apparently feeling a bit devious—woke him up after parking in Stiles’ driveway by dragging his fingers up Stiles’ arm and back down, calluses tickling the skin. Stiles groggily came to, watching Derek use his free hand to unbuckle Stiles’ seatbelt while still tickling at Stiles’ arm and wrist to coax him awake. It tingled enough for Stiles to whine, slap Derek’s hand away, and practically roll out of his seatbelt and out of the door of the truck.

Stiles was a little disheartened to see the driveway empty, which meant his dad had already gone to work. They must have just missed each other, which happened far too often already. Still, it did mean that he and Derek had the house to themselves. Of course, despite the fact that Stiles would have been completely on board for multiple levels of sexual activity, he wanted a shower more than anything.

Lucky for Stiles, Derek also happened to want a shower.

How on earth they went from washing their bodies, to Derek holding Stiles up against the wall and knocking his legs open with a knee, Stiles had absolutely no idea. Nope. None at all. “Lube,” Stiles groaned, riding on Derek’s thigh using the slip-slide of water to gain momentum. Derek kissed him again and again, mouth desperate to keep contact with Stiles’, like he was reassuring himself Stiles was there, in his arms. “Dude, c’mon–” Stiles gasped when Derek sucked on his lower lip, reaching
“Soap is ineffective as lube, I have totally tried. You should go and get the lube from under the sink. Right now.”

Derek scrambled to comply, but only after he lowered Stiles down to the floor of the shower.

Considering all Stiles had under the sink was some toilet paper and a few cleaning products, Derek was flinging back the curtain again in no time. Stiles reached out, dragging Derek in for a kiss because—he’d nearly died, all right? He was totally justified in being kind of needy right now.

Derek crowded him up against the wall, mostly blocking the lukewarm spray as he fumbled to open the lube with one hand while the other slid up and down Stiles’ side. Stiles pressed their lips together, fingers scraping through Derek’s hair as he bit and licked his way into that warm, open mouth. Derek grunted out a breathy sigh, snagging Stiles by the side of the neck to keep him steady, to press the warm line of their bodies together and rut into him.

“Jesus,” Stiles gasped out when Derek moved to nip kisses into his chin and jaw. Derek nuzzled his cheek and Stiles was suddenly overwhelmed with how much he really loved Derek. How devastating it would have been if he’d died, if he’d lost Derek this early on. Stiles clutched his arms around Derek’s shoulders, pressing their temples together when Derek’s palm rested against his chest.

“Your heart’s beating so fast,” Derek said quietly into Stiles’ ear, nipping the lobe, “I can hear it over the shower.”

“Your point?” Stiles muttered into Derek’s hair, rocking his hips so their cocks lined up, heads catching and sliding against one another. Derek groaned, kissing Stiles on the cheek and pulling back enough to dump some lube into his hand. Stiles kept up the motion of his hips, even though there was too much space for anything other than the occasional brush that had Derek twitching.

Stiles barely had time to catch the devious look in Derek’s face before Derek lifted his arm up.

“No!” Stiles shrieked, because Derek was an evil bastard who apparently took cues from children’s shows. Stiles was helpless against his boyfriend’s inhuman strength when Derek squeezed lube all over his head. It was wet and heavy, sliding into the short strands of his hair and down his ears and forehead. Stiles could feel Derek carefully wiping all of it away from the waterproof bandaging that was covering Stiles’ stitches, laughing loudly the entire time.

“You’re the devil!” Stiles cried, shoving at Derek and trying to punch him in the chest. Derek chuckled, and Stiles went to head butt him to wipe the lube onto him. The second the top of his head hit Derek’s chest, pain flared in his skull and he cried out, knees buckling. Jesus, it was like he’d almost forgotten being in pain just from a combination of the medication and being around Derek.

“Stiles? Fuck--I’m sorry, are you okay?” Derek cursed, hauling Stiles up and then helping him out of the shower. Stiles groaned, his head spinning while Derek went about shutting the water off and then grabbing a towel to wipe Stiles down. He used gentle swipes around Stiles’ head, though it still made everything hurt.

“M’fine,” Stiles said, because he felt like a dick. There had totally been sexy times, and then suddenly there hadn’t. This was not fun at all. Having Derek wipe him down like a little kid? This was just painful and downright embarrassing.

“I forgot you don’t heal,” Derek said sheepishly, “Not like I do.”
“Not all of us can be superhuman werewolves,” Stiles pointed out, wounded pride feeling the tiniest bit better. Derek huffed on a laugh, leaning in and pressing his lips to Stiles’ forehead. The pain dulled instantly, going from a loud blare of agony to a background ache. Derek swayed when he stood, but then rubbed his hand over Stiles’ head and grabbed a towel to wrap around his waist.

“I hear sleep helps,” Derek offered, “That’s something even superhuman werewolves need.”

There was no way that Stiles had just magically lost the near-debilitating headache he’d been suffering from seconds before. This was a poorly scripted medical show, this was real life, dammit… even though two months ago, Stiles was pretty sure werewolves didn’t exist in real life.

“Did you just… kiss it better?”

Derek stared blankly Stiles, shoving a towel at him in a manner that totally said ‘yes, I did, but I will not admit it to the likes of you.’ which was kind of precious, but at the same time, confusing because werewolves were not fairy godmothers. Stiles took the towel, standing up and hooking it around his waist. “If I ask for three wishes, can you grant them?”

“I took your pain,” Derek muttered, ushering him down the hall to Stiles’ bedroom. Stiles thought over those words for a few minutes, letting Derek sit him on the bed and practically shove some painkillers down his throat.

“Do you have a headache now, instead?” Stiles watched Derek rummage around in Stiles’ dresser for a pair of boxers for the both of them before pointing out, “clothes are optional.”

Derek looked up at him, rolling his eyes and dropping the underwear back into the drawer. He shucked his towel as he approached and, holy fuck, that belonged to Stiles, okay. Every inch of that ridiculous body was his and his only. Stiles reached out with a whine, making grabby hands that had Derek snorting and climbing up onto the bed. Stiles clung to him like a leech, hands roaming everywhere. He loved the way Derek’s muscles shifted and flexed under him, the way his skin was always warm and the hair on his body was just soft enough to tickle. Everything about Derek was just ridiculously fucking perfect, okay?

He kissed Derek lazily, nuzzling their mouths together with a contented sound. Derek brought his hand up, stroking his fingers down Stiles’ jaw in a move so tender that it made Stiles’ heart ache painfully. He didn’t ever want this to end. He wanted to have this five, ten, twenty years down the road. Stiles wanted to wake up to sleepy kisses stolen before the children woke up, wanted Derek’s half-smiles and affectionate touches to be with him forever. He just wanted so much that it scared him and excited him to a point where he could only bottle it up and hope that things worked out the way he wanted.

The more they kissed, the more the painkillers kicked in until Stiles was floating in a haze of lips and skin and numbness. He must have fallen asleep between one kiss and the next, though, because when Stiles opened his eyes again, Derek’s head was pillowed on his shoulder, body curled around Stiles’ side.

Blinking up at the ceiling, Stiles turned his head to stare at the clock. They still had some time to nap before Scott and the others wanted to go to the festival. Stiles closed his eyes and fell back asleep.

He woke up a second time to the feeling of stubble rasping over his throat, of Derek snuffling under his ear and leaving wet, sleepy kisses anywhere that his mouth touched. Stiles grunted, and Derek’s arms around him went tight.
“I thought you’d died,” he murmured into Stiles’ ear with a low and tired rasp. Stiles didn’t really want to think about what Derek and his father had gone through. The guilt hit him more violently than the killdozer when he even went anywhere close to bringing it up in his mind. He brought his arm up, brushing his fingers over Derek’s temple and then getting his hand captured and his palm kissed.

“I think you’re giving me cavities,” Stiles said quietly, because this was too intimate. He wasn’t allowed to have this. This was the stuff of true love and romance movies. Derek snorted, glaring a sleepy eye at him and then setting his chin on Stiles’ collarbone.

“Good thing we have those painkillers to help you deal with it.”

Stiles laughed, taken by surprise with Derek’s comment. He allowed Derek to shift on top of him, groaning at the way he was pressed so fully into the mattress. Derek kissed him, arms boxed on either side of Stiles’ head, heart calm and strong where it beat against Stiles’ chest.

That’s when Stiles’ phone alarm went off. The one that told him it was almost noon and therefore Stiles should be getting ready for the fall festival. Stiles loved making out with Derek, but that was not enough for him to skip the last day of the festival. This was the one time that Stiles would allow himself to be cock blocked. Also, the crowing rooster sound was rapidly getting more and more annoying as it went on.

Derek, on the other hand, did not seem to want to stop, nor did he seem particularly bothered by the alarm.

“Time--to go--to--the--fair,” Stiles said between kisses, breathless and dizzied by it all. Derek hummed his acknowledgement, and then rolled his hips in a way that had lights flashing in Stiles’ vision. “Foul!” Stiles gasped, he would not be deterred. He was fierce. He needed to bring out his inner Beyonce!

“Derek,” he whined, and then took a cue out of Scott and Count Catula the 4th, and went limp.

Derek kissed his pliant lips for a second before realizing that Stiles wasn’t responding at all. Sure, Derek had given Stiles a boner the size of Tokyo, but Stiles refused to let Godzilla do any rampaging this morning.

Derek kissed at his throat and then rocked their naked bodies together. Stiles hissed (he was only human!) and remained immobile.

After another moment, Derek huffed and rolled off of him. Stiles watched as Derek grabbed the discarded underwear from earlier, a dismayed noise escaping him when that Amazonian ass was hidden behind Eric Cartman’s cartoon face.

Success was so bittersweet.

Derek tossed another pair at Stiles’ head, nailing him right in the face.

“I feel the love here,” Stiles said dryly, grinning despite himself as he wriggled into his underwear. Derek adjusted his crotch, visibly disgruntled at having to wear plain old boxers instead of his normally tight and sinful boxer-brief hybrid that liked to hug his dick and ass like some kind of superhero suit.

“‘You should.’” Derek pointed out, and yeah, Stiles did. No matter how much he joked around or acted like he didn’t, Stiles knew Derek loved him, at least a little bit. There was no way he didn’t, not when the guy had told Stiles all about his little monthly problem and had nearly caused another
wreck trying to get to Stiles after the accident.

Of course, Stiles was vastly disappointed about all of that. Derek had almost immaculate control. The only time Stiles got to see those eyes flash or a hint of sexy feral Derek was whenever Stiles took him by surprise or got him particularly riled up. That was okay, because Stiles had all the time in the world to figure out just what made Derek tick. Or shift, for that matter.

“I do,” Stiles confirmed, just as Derek was struggling to button a pair of Stiles’ jeans--Jesus, were they tight on him. Stiles was pretty sure he could see the muscles in Derek’s ass and legs flex every time he moved around. Derek paused, looking up at Stiles and furrowing his brows.

“Good.”

Derek went back to battling with the button. Stiles couldn’t help the laugh that escaped him, a swell of affection rising in his chest. He was having way too many medicated feelings, which meant it was time to put some clothes on.

By the time they’d gotten dressed--Derek having to help Stiles coordinate his sweater, because Stiles was still concussed and not exactly the most graceful--Scott had managed to shoot them a text message with the location of where they would meet up at the fair. Derek let Stiles hustle him back out to the truck when they were ready to leave, pausing in the driveway just long enough to tap in the address into his GPS before they headed out.

Stiles turned on the radio as soon as they were on the main road, bringing a hand up over his eyes because, Jesus, he couldn’t stand to even look at traffic in the other lanes. Every single movement out of the corner of his eye had him jumping, had his head throbbing in pain and his bones aching. He had no idea how long it would take to get over this fear, but it probably helped that Derek always pressed a hand to his chest any time they took a particularly sharp or sudden turn. Normally Stiles would protest being soccer mom’d, but he knew Derek was only doing it to reassure Stiles, and possibly reassure himself.

The festival was completely packed with people by the time they got there. Stiles had tried, for all of five minutes, to coerce Derek into just using the wheel lift to pull a car out of a parking space and taking it, only to be shot down with glares and scowls. In the end, they pulled off the curb and into the grass near the back of the lot, half under a tree and probably not allowed--but who was going to tow a tow truck for illegal parking?

Getting tickets was dizzying, even without the added effect of medication and a mild concussion. Stiles was completely thankful he’d decided to wear the sweater Derek had yanked out of the closet, because the first waves of winter had already begun to settle in with a chill. Derek had to keep a hand on Stiles’ elbow just so Stiles didn’t forget which way was up as he was jostled to and fro by the crowd. He was pretty sure half the people there were tourists.

Tourists always clogged the arteries to society.

They met Scott and Allison out by the horse show, and Stiles spent a good minute trying to slap Scott’s hands away from his face. Apparently having a nurse for a mother made Scott feel like he knew enough to check the status of someone’s head injury.

“No rollercoasters.” Scott finally said, and Stiles maybe kind of already knew that rollercoasters were going to be a no-go, but he didn’t want to hear it from someone else. He loved rollercoasters. They were the best thing about the festival. It was just depressing to be reminded that he couldn’t go on any.
He didn’t even get a chance to tell Scott this before Derek said, “no rollercoasters,” in agreement. Stiles didn’t sign up to be double-teamed harder than a pikachu on steroids, but apparently that’s what was happening. There should be some serious words exchanged about the matter, but then Stiles caught whiff of funnel cakes being cooked and lost his train of thought.

Allison looked depressed, and Stiles was pretty sure she wanted to go on some of the rides. Stiles had a feeling she didn’t want to ask Scott to leave them, and so he decided he would abide by the bro code and give her an opening.

“I want food.” Stiles said, nudging Derek. “Time to spend that bacon you brought home.”

Derek gave him a flat look, but sighed and allowed himself to be dragged towards one of the food stands. They loaded up on a little bit of every ridiculous fair food known to man, a funnel cake, churro, candied apple for each, the whole shebang.

They gorged until Stiles’ stomach hurt halfway through and he had to sit back and take a break.

Derek’s sweet tooth had him picking at Stiles’ share before Stiles could even consider offering.

While Derek ate, Stiles peered around at their surroundings. That’s when his eyes caught the main objective for coming to the fair. A photo stall.

Not just any photo stall, a western themed photo stall. Oh yes, Stiles was going to get his cowboy kink on before the end of the day, if it was the last thing he did.

“Want to be a sexy sheriff?” Stiles blurted, watching Derek choke on a lungful of powdered sugar. He reached out, thumb swiping a bit of powdered confectionary from the corner of Derek’s mouth and then sucking it off his finger. “I can be the outlaw that you have to punish for being a very bad boy.”

Derek stared, which was understandable. Stiles realized that he’d yet to elaborate as to where that train of thought had come from. Derek probably thought Stiles wanted to dive into sexual roleplay already.

That was going to be their one-year anniversary, thank you very much.

Stiles gestured to the photo booth and Derek peered curiously at it, and then back at Stiles. “Do you want to?”

See, that was why Stiles would give the moon and the stars to Derek. As long as humiliation wasn’t imminent, the guy really was willing to compromise with a lot of things. Sometimes it made Stiles want to rip his clothes off and publicly ride Derek’s cock like some kind of bad 80’s porno.

“Yes, in fact, I do.” Stiles nibbled at a slice of candied apple, because no amount of aching stomach could force him to resist it’s charm, and Derek nodded seriously. It looked like he was gearing himself up for battle, mouth thinning out and brows pinching in concentration.

“Okay.”

The booth, it turned out, was run by a woman just shy of cougar status. She also happened to be completely into Derek, if that first full-body eye sweep when they came in was anything to go by. She helped them pick out their costumes--it turned out the clothes were not changed into, they were pulled on over the clothes you were already wearing and clipped in the back. Stiles did have to take his sweater off, though, because the high collar peeked out over the outlaw getup he’d chosen. Luckily, the booth was warm enough that wearing only the plain tee wasn’t making him shiver.
It would have been all fun and games, but Stiles happened to be perceptive. It was hard not to see the way the woman’s fingers would run down Derek’s arm, would squeeze his hip while adjusting his outfit or cup his elbow to get him positioned right. All in all, she was bad touching to the nth degree and making Derek look more and more disgruntled with each passing minute.

This wouldn’t do. Stiles wasn’t the jealous type, okay, but there was a difference between being possessive, and not wanting some lady all up in your boyfriend’s grill when he was clearly not interested. Also clearly spoken for--apparently the affectionate rub of Derek’s back during the initial costume selection was not sign enough.

“Excuse me,” Stiles blurted, his head giving a throb, because stress could totally make injuries worse, and watching someone molest Derek was very very stressful. The woman looked up from where she was using her hands to move Derek’s hips and thighs into a pose for the camera.

“Yeah, hey, I’m not paying thirty bucks for you to grope my boyfriend.”

Derek’s eyes widened and the woman froze. Yeah, that’s right bitch. “Actually, I’m pretty positive that I’m paying thirty bucks for a picture with him. So can you finish manhandling him, if you don’t mind?”

Wow, Stiles wasn’t sure who looked more shock, the almost-cougar, or Derek.

“I’m sorry,” she stammered out, pulling away and all but running behind the camera. The second she was no longer between them, Derek was up in Stiles’ space, and holy God, Stiles just physically saw his pupils expand.

“Possessive much?” Derek said lowly as he pressed a kiss to Stiles’ temple. Stiles turned to face the camera. He didn’t even have to try hard to look annoyed at the lens when wannabe-cougar was the one behind it. That was okay, though, because crankiness came with head injuries anyway, right?

“No. Insecure people are possessive.” Stiles said in a clipped tone. Derek pressed the barrel of the fake gun into his side, and Stiles had to give him props for at least attempting to make a decent pose for the photo. “I just happen to be territorial. Vast difference, buddy.”

Derek’s breath hitched and, wow, Stiles suddenly didn’t want to have to wait around the fair for the photo to develop. Not when Derek was sliding a hand up his back and doing things that were entirely inappropriate for a mundane photoshoot. Stiles was pretty sure he could feel Derek’s dick grinding against his hip.

“Smile for the camera, sweetheart,” Stiles grit out, his ears and neck growing hot. Derek snorted softly, pulling away just enough so that he could grab a handful of Stiles’ collar and pull him up with the fake gun still sticking into his side, like Stiles had just been caught. Oh yeah, this was gonna be framed and put on the wall, for sure.

Once the pictures were taken and she gave them a slip of paper with the time it would take to develop, Stiles made sure to grab a handful of Derek’s ass on the way out. He squeezed, hard.

“Okay, so I might be a little possessive if it means I can do this whenever I want,” he said loudly to Derek, giving another tight squeeze that had Derek stumbling out the door and releasing a whine, like Stiles being territorial over him was a huge turn on. Oh God, yes. Stiles was so on board for this.

Well, he was on board after they spent at least a few more hours at the fair while their photo was being developed. Which was why Stiles was more than delighted to drag Derek towards the section with the carnival games. If he was going to have a werewolf boyfriend with super powers, he was going to get as many damn prizes as he could.
They ran into Scott and Allison at the ring toss, and Stiles dragged towards them Derek at the same time he wrenched a $5 out of his sweater pocket. Stiles barely got the bucket of rings from the carne before he turned to see Derek and Scott staring at each other with a horrifying intensity. Stiles was pretty sure if they lived in an anime world, there would be a star of rivalry and some sparks between them.

Derek snagged the bucket from Stiles, despite Stiles’ protest, and carried it over to Scott.

“So we haven’t really met before,” Scott said conversationally to Derek, “but I’m Stiles’ best friend. We’ve known each other for years. I don’t think I caught your name.” What.

“Derek.” Derek said curtly, grabbing a few rings and watching as Scott tossed his own towards the bottles in the center of the grid. “I don’t think Stiles has mentioned you before.” Which was a total lie, because half the time Stiles talked to Derek, it ended up involving some sort of story about Scott. That could only mean--

Oh God. Passive aggressive battle for Stiles’ attention. This could only end in tears.

“Didn’t you guys bond at the Halloween party?” Stiles asked helplessly. Derek shrugged, tossing the rings and nailing them all. Wow, not even a rigged game could stop a competitive werewolf.

“Guess not,” Scott said dismissively, trying to hit the same bottles as Derek and failing miserably. Derek was doing a terrible job of hiding a smug look. Stiles was sorely tempted to just take the damn bucket away from Derek so that Scott didn’t drown in his own misery afterwards. Allison came up next to Stiles, bumping shoulders with him.

“Scott thinks you didn’t go on any rollercoasters because Derek said something, even though Scott told you first,” she said quietly, clapping when Scott made one of the rings fit around the neck of an outer bottle.

“Uh, I wasn’t gonna go on one anyway,” Stiles pointed out. Allison gave him that look that clearly read ‘honey, please, like that even matters.’. Oh, so basically Scott needed his best friend ego stroked. Well. Stiles was good at that.

Derek landed his final ring, every single one of them snug around the necks of the center bottles.

He wasn’t even trying to be subtle anymore.

“What do you want?” Derek asked him, gesturing to the massive toys all around the booth. Stiles could either pick a ridiculously huge one, or two medium ones. The moment of truth.

“Uhhh,” Stiles pointed to a medium sized wolf plush, and then to a shoddy knockoff of Mr. Potato Head. Derek looked utterly confused at the second choice, until Stiles gave it to Scott.

“What?”

“That’s for putting up with me before Derek and I got together,” Stiles said. “Don’t know what I’d do without you, man.”

Scott’s eyes went wide, taking the plush as a smile spread across his face. He looked down at the toy, fiddling with it and shrugging almost humbly. “You were kind of a pain in the ass.”

Rude. Stiles was trying to make peace, here. “Hey, don’t milk it.”
Scott laughed, looking up at Stiles with a wry, affectionate grin. That was the Scott Stiles knew and loved. “It’s what friends do, man.”

Derek pressed his hip against Stiles’, holding the wolf plushie under his arm. “You’re a good friend,” he admitted begrudgingly.

Sweet tilapia on a stick, they were making progress. Stiles thought he was going to faint when Derek reached a hand out and firmly clasped Scott’s, shaking it once. That had gone surprisingly well. Scarily well. Derek must really want to get back to his apartment and have some sexy times. Either that, or maybe he’d only been reacting to Scott’s hostility. It was still hard to read him, sometimes. Stiles hoped that would be something that got fixed over time.

“Well,” Allison clasped her hands together, smiling tightly in a way Stiles knew meant that she felt incredibly awkward and desired a change of focus. “I don’t know about you guys, but I’m in the mood for the petting zoo.”

The way Derek’s face lit up made Stiles want to vomit rainbows and glitter. Stiles reached out to manhandle the wolf toy from Derek’s grasp, nodding to Allison. “Lead the way, my liege.”

Allison rolled her eyes, grabbing Scott’s hand and guiding them across the fair towards the animal pens. They probably looked a little out of place, four adults surrounded by children, but Stiles could give absolutely no fucks because there were fluffy things to be petted.

The second that Derek reached out to brush his fingers over the muzzle of one of the sheep, Stiles couldn’t help but laugh. Derek peered up at him in confusion, fingers moving over the animal’s head and back. “What?”

“Would it be bad if I made a wolf joke right now?”

Derek’s scowl deepened and he huffed, turning away. “You always make bad jokes.”

It was truly a test of will that Stiles was able to put up with such cruel and heartless words. Stiles made an indignant noise, and then brought his palm up to his chest. “You hurt me,” he cried softly, “you must only love me for my endless beauty.”

“More like endless chatter,” Derek muttered, running his hand behind the sheep’s ear and then over it’s nose again. “It reminds me that I’m not deaf.”

Well, Stiles couldn’t stand for that attitude. He gently smacked Derek right on the bum. Derek jerked, turning and giving Stiles a dark look that most likely meant clothes would be shed the second they were no longer in public. Actually, it was probably a bad idea to be constantly turned on by your boyfriend, even when in a petting zoo. Was that allowed? Stiles had no idea, so he patted Derek’s bottom apologetically.

Derek grabbed his wrist and tugged. Belatedly, Stiles wondered if kinky things were going to happen, but all Derek did was pull Stiles to start petting the sheep with him.

Stiles wasn’t really sure what he was expecting a sheep to feel like, maybe close to petting cotton candy or an afro, but the wool was soft, though a little tangled and somewhat dirty from being in a pen all day. Derek’s fingers intersected with his own, stroking it down the animal’s back. It was surprisingly relaxing, just being this close to Derek, doing something so simple. It warmed Stiles up in a way he wasn’t entirely used to. It made him want to lean back against Derek’s chest and just be pressed in close and surrounded by him.

“Erica’s having a birthday party next week,” Derek said quietly, “She’s mostly doing it so I can get
Wait, what? Completely random.

Also, “Boyd?”

“He used to check in on Isaac when he was staying with me.” Derek elaborated, dragging Stiles over to the hen house after a beat. “I wanted to know if you could ask Lydia to cover for you?” Derek put a hen in his arms, showing Stiles how to hold it properly while Stiles’ brain scrambled to process what he was saying.

“Aren’t you busy?” Stiles asked, because he was pretty sure that was around the same time Derek usually went to go and see Kate. Derek glanced up from where he was guiding Stiles’ fingers to stroke gently down the hen’s neck.

“Hm?”

“…aren’t you supposed to go see Kate next week?”

Derek’s eyebrows bobbed, and then he pursed his lips and shrugged. “No, I’m good.” He’s good.

“You’re… good.” Stiles echoed disbelievingly. How was he just good? What did ‘good’ even signify? Stiles needed clarification, because he was feeling a little out of the loop. This had been a huge, dark, elephant of a shadow over their entire relationship, and Derek was just good?

“Yeah.” Derek gave Stiles a tiny smile, like facial expressions could somehow convey what a thousand words couldn’t. Maybe ten years into their relationship it could, but not now.

“Good as in…?”

Derek plucked the hen out of Stiles’ arms, putting it back down into the crate and then turning to face him. “It doesn’t matter anymore.”

Either Derek was failing to quote a Linkin Park song, or-Oh. Oh.

“I need to suck your dick right now.” Stiles blurted, grabbing Derek’s hand and dragging him towards the hand washing station. Now he was very glad that Derek’s truck was in the back of the parking lot. Stiles was going to utilize that. Starting now.

“What?”

“Shh, just come.”

Derek laughed, letting himself be pulled along. It was an amazing thing, that Derek could laugh so much more now than he used to. He laughed and smiled, and he let Stiles take control because he trusted and he loved Stiles. It was the best feeling ever, and Stiles really hoped that it stayed that way for the rest of his life.

Derek had completely ruined him for anyone else.

Which, really, Stiles didn’t want anyone else. So it was okay.

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