**Discord and Love**

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**Discord and Love**

by *jynx*

**Summary**

Fili and Kili are brothers, separated by divorce, time, and distance. Neither realizes who the other is as they embark on a journey of love and discord.

**Notes**

This fic technically only belongs on tumblr but people have voted for me to try this. This fic is...unique, I think, in that it relies heavily on music. Some chapters are only music, some mix it, and some are text only.

I fail at 8tracks so let's not go there. I do have a YouTube playlist ([here](http://archiveofourown.org/works/5243291)) that I need to update but that's where you can find a lot of the music for this fic...and what I'll be using to post the music? I don't have any better ideas.
Fili walked past a group of men standing in the alley right outside the club. They were smoking and laughing, phones out and flashes bouncing around. He had his hands in his pockets as he came out of the club. The music was blaring behind him, some dubstep remix of Summertime Sadness—the song was starting to grate on him it was played so often—but he could still hear the raucous noise from the group.

“Hey, which filter should I use?” one of the guys asked, waving his phone around, cigarette between his fingers. “I want to look tan!”

There were boos and even louder laughs. Fili watched, seeing the way the man’s hair was long and he had it held back in a braid, his jaw strong and stubbled. The group started throwing other lines of the song at each other, the braided man doing something to his phone as he continued to smoke.

“Hey, mind if I bum one off you?” Fili asked. He hadn’t even realized he’d come so close to them but, well, there he was.

The man with the braid grinned at him from around the cigarette in his mouth. “Sure, you can do that,” he said. “But you gotta do something first.”

“What?” Fili asked.

“Lemme see your phone,” he said. Fili watched him warily and handed it over. The man did something, getting into Fili’s phone remarkably fast even through the passcode, and pulled up Instagram. “Take a selfie.”

Fili arched an eyebrow. “Seriously?”

The other man fished out a semi-squashed pack of cigarettes with a lighter shoved into the cellophane. “You want one or not?”

Fili shrugged. Why not. It was even his brand. He turned enough to get a decent slice of light and made a stupid face. The man snickered as Fili flicked past the filters and posted it with the comment “the things I do for a smoke.” He flashed it at the man. “There, happy?”
The phone was promptly yanked out of his hand. “Oh, boo! That’s not how the game is played!”

“Game?”

“C’mon, hashtags, smartass comments, over-the-top filters trying to look all artsy and shit,” he said. “The art of the selfie!”

“I’m too old for that,” Fili said.

The man looked at him. Fili noticed that his eyes were brow, almost gold, and there was a wicked smile on his face. He tossed his cigarette away to land in a puddle and started doing something else to Fili’s phone. “There,” he said, handing the phone back to Fili. He tapped out a cigarette and pulled out the lighter, handing both over to Fili. “And your reward.”

Fili lit up, handing back the lighter, and flicked through his phone’s open apps to see what the hell the man had done. Contacts was the last thing opened. Fili looked up at him. “I guess I took a good selfie,” he said.

The other man laughed—Kili from the contact still open—and leaned in. He grabbed Fili by the chin and kissed him loudly. “Booty call any time.”
Kili grit his teeth, listening to the annoying ring back tone Fili had on his phone. It was some annoying peppy JPop. The fact Fili was a minor anime fan and a major dork had been a selling point originally. Now it just pissed him off.

Kili rolled his eyes an hung up once it hit voicemail. He tossed his phone on his bed and ran his hands through his hair in aggravation. He winced as he pulled hard enough to mess up his braid and yank some strands hard. He was in A Mood, as Fili put it, but only because the jackass had put him in one.

Kili looked at his phone as it started ringing. That was the ringtone he had for Fili.

"Oh, now you want to talk?" Kili said, scooping his phone up. "Really? You don't pick up when I call but you'll call back and expect me to answer? Asshole!"

Kili let the phone ring and stomped out to the fire escape, cigarettes in hand
He lit up, lips clamped tight around the filter as he did so, shoving both pack and lighter in the pocket of his sweatshirt. His phone went silent and then rang again.

Jerk.

Asshole.

Son of a goddamned bitch.

Fili had a girlfriend. A girlfriend with a kid that Kili didn't know was Fili's or not.

Fuck.

They were all out and eating when Kili had run into Fili. And Fili had ignored him as his girlfriend beamed at the blond ass.

A couple of absolutely fantastic nights of sex and now it turns out Possibly Mr Right was definitely Mr Never-Gonna-Happen.
Goddammit.

The phone stopped ringing.
Fili watched as Kili hummed along to whatever song the supermarket was pulsing through their speakers. To him it was just bad muzak but Kili was obviously a lot more interested. He pushed the cart as Kili dumped a truly startling amount of yogurt in it.

"Really?" Fili asked with a smile.

"I love the stuff," Kili said. He tilted his head and started laughing. "Oh, this is a good one."

"What?" Fili asked, looking around curiously.

Kili pointed up, "The song."

Fili shook his head. "You are so weird."

"C'mon, dance with me," Kili said as he came closer. He reached out and took Fili's hands, moving his hips and feet. It was mostly just swaying with a better sense of beat. Fili laughed, feeling foolish, and let Kili move their arms back and forth.

They were in the middle of the dairy aisle and people were pushing past them to grab milk and creamer. There were looks and Fili felt himself flush.

"Nooooo," Kili said. He tugged Fili closer. "C'mon, no letting people ruin your fun. Sometimes you just gotta dance, shake your ass and wave your arms. It's natural and awesome. Feel the music and the good vibrations. Smile and enjoy!"

Fili nodded, Kili's smile infectious. His face was hurting almost from his smile. He didn't smile, as a general rule, but Kili... Kili made him want to be different. He wrapped an arm around Kili's waist and took his hand. He wasn't good at dancing but he could pretend to waltz.

"Yes!" Kili laughed as Fili twirled him and they continued to poorly dance in the aisle.
Kili stirred his coffee lazily, trying not to smile, looking at Fili discreetly from under his lashes. The other was talking about something work-related, some client he had at the non-profit he worked at for public relations. While Kili would normally be attentive he couldn’t help the way he mind wandered just the slightest bit. There was something magnetic about Fili and Kili couldn’t help but be drawn to him, almost against his will. There was something about the way he smiled and the tilt of his lips, his crooked nose, the way his hair was sticking up the littlest bit in the back even with the wavy almost-curls. It was so cute. And endearing. He’d stopped going to the clubs and sleeping with others just for the hell of it. There was just… There was Fili.

“What’re you smiling about?” Fili asked.

“Nothing,” Kili said. He laid the spoon on the scarred wooden table and picked his cup up, taking a sip. Yeah, maybe, just maybe, he had fallen for the blond. Maybe. Just, well. Just maybe.
Kili knocked on Fili’s door, sighing. “Fiiiiiiii,” he whined. “C’mon, I know you’re in there.”

Silence.

Well, it was two am. And Fili was probably asleep, except Kili could see light leaking out under the door.

“Fili, c’mon. I know it’s late and I was out and you couldn’t get me, I get it, I do. I’d be pissed too but I have reasons! My phone ran out of minutes and I know, you told me to get off prepay but I didn’t and I didn’t have a phone. And then I couldn’t get a taxi and I had to walk. And it’s raining. So I’m kind of soaked and cold and c’mon, open up, please?”

More silence.

“Please?” Kili asked again. He sighed. “Yes, I know you hate Dirk. I know. You think he’s skeezy and yes he gropes my ass like he owns it but it’s this, this thing, okay? I’ve known him for years and that’s just the way he is. He’s just a jarhead jackass. I promise.”

Something that was maybe sound.

“I really don’t want to sleep on the floor.”

Kili could swear he heard crickets.

“Jeez, Fi, the trains have all stopped and I really can’t hoof it to my apartment and I’m out of cash for a taxi. Just, c’mon, open up? I promise it won’t happen again. I’ll talk to Dirk, okay, try and get him to lay off grabbing my ass so hard he bruises it for you, okay?”

Silence—no. Movement. Sound!

The door opened.
Kili hung back as everyone floated around the hospital waiting room. They were still waiting to hear if Fili was going to be okay but. Kili didn’t know what to make of this, of all of it. It was too much. Too much so fast and soon.

“Kili?” the woman in front of him asked. She had long dark hair with the slightest curl, clear blue eyes, a strong nose and stubborn chin. Kili could see Fili in her. He could also see himself.

Kili swallowed dryly and nodded. “Guess you're mom, hunh?”

Dis tried to smile, lips quirking before flattening out. “I. Last I heard from your father you both were in the Sudan.”

“That was about two years ago,” he said. “I got tired of the sand.”

Dis nodded. “Of course. Did you…are.” Kili waited while she gathered her thoughts. “What are you doing here, now that you’re on your own?”

“ Mostly doing nothing,” Kili said. “I’m not military but I have plenty of skills and. Well. There’s plenty of places that make use of me. Most been taking jobs on and off in random places. I’ve got a job with a private security firm right now.”

Dis nodded again. “Fili…he’s going to be all right, you know.”

Kili wrapped his arms around him. Fili had said forever and had even said always. That was Before they found out about being brothers; before Fili had been in a train accident. He’d been on the Green Line on the MBTA when the train had derailed. Fili had been standing, using one of the straps and had be thrown loose to smack his head hard enough into the window to lose consciousness. It left Kili with his…family and without Fili.

He’d forgiven Fili for the girlfriend and the kid, could he forgive him for almost dying and the broken promise of forever? Could he forgive him for being his brother?
Fili, stunned, fell back into his chair. Kili looked just as stunned but also with a healthy dose of confusion. Fili just felt cold and numb. For a moment all he could do was see Dwalin's lips move but no sound reached his ears.

"No one told me I had a brother," Kili said. "Dad mentioned he'd been married but nothing about mom or a brother."

Dwalin looked uncomfortable. "He...thought it best to move on. You used to cry for Fili when you were younger. Kirin thought it would be better if you forgot about it, played it off like an imaginary friend."

Kili frowned. "That makes no sense. Even if dad did that the rest of you had no reason to lie." He crossed his arms over his chest. "What about Thorin?"

Fili rubbed at his chest, feeling as if he could actually feel his heart breaking. "Uncle Thorin knew?" he asked. At Kili's look he gave a tiny smile. "He's mom's brother."

Kili's eyes narrowed at Dwalin who merely held up his hands.

"I knew I had a brother," Fili said softly. "In the same way that I know how to convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, vaguely."

"It was hid from both of you."

"You had no right!" Kili exploded angrily.

Fili tuned him out as Kili shouted. Kili was gorgeous when he was angry, all lit up with fire and fury, looking for all the world like an angry god of death. He would have watched and enjoyed the show but... Kili was his brother. They'd been...intimate with each other. He'd introduced Kili to his daughter as his boyfriend. How could he tell her that Kili was her uncle?

The...they'd. He'd. He bolted for the bathroom, barely making it before he started throwing up. There were hands rubbing at his back and then a glass of water being given to him.
Kili.

Fili accepted the glass and stood shakily. All he could think was about the past two years, the many break ups and make ups he and Kili had had over those two years. He didn’t think he could…he had thought that Kili was it. His it. How damaged did that make him that he still wanted his brother to be his one, his for life? But he couldn’t, they couldn’t.

"Why don't you two get some sleep," Dwalin said. "We can talk more in the morning."

Kili nodded and helped Fili to the chair near the bed before showing Dwalin out.
Fili hesitated and opened his door to the man from the club. He’d never actually done this before—not sex, he’d done sex plenty of times, but booty calls? Uncharted territory.

“I’ve got a bottle of Arbor Mist,” Kili said, waving the bottle at Fili. The guy didn’t play around. He was dressed in a pair of low slung black jeans and a navy blue button-up that wasn’t really...all that buttoned. And still left a nice slice of skin showing between the last bits of his shirt and the jeans. Usually jeans that low showed the elastic of underwear but Kili’s didn’t show. So either he wasn’t wearing any—and Fili’s cock twitched at the thought—or it was strange underwear that was low and small. Kili’s hair was loose around his shoulders and he had his bangs hanging in his face, making it look like he’d just rolled out of someone’s bed.

Fili took the wine bottle and set it down before reaching up and pulling Kili into a kiss. Kili laughed against his lips and pushed him back against the door.

“You know, I want you to wear my kiss. So you know tonight happened,” Kili said. The maddening man slid down Fili’s body, hands smoothing over his clothes, as he went to his knees. “Mark you up and bruise you. Bite you, mark you.”

Fili licked his lips, watching as Kili pushed up his simple tshirt and pressed several soft, gentle kisses along the general vicinity of his navel. That was before Kili glanced up and bit at a bit of skin, his teeth sharp, his mouth vicious as he sucked and licked and by the time he pulled away there was a large red mark.

“Wear it,” Kili said, leaning back the littlest bit. “Temporary tattoo, yeah?”

Fili reached down and yanked Kili to his feet. “I’m going to fuck you.”

“Good,” Kili said. “Just to let you know? I like it rough.”
"So," Fili said from the other side of the bed. He was sitting up, his back to Kili, having moved to the bed from the chair. "Brothers."

"I don't have a brother," Kili said. He wasn't being emotional or anything, he just honestly couldn't comprehend the bomb Dwalin had dropped on them. Before they had been planning to enjoy the hotel and the bed and amenities but now their bed had turned into a lava pit that neither really wanted to touch.

"I do," Fili said softly.

Kili got up from the window he had perched in. "I don't. I have a boyfriend who knows how to make me laugh, how to fuck me, how to make me mad. I have a boyfriend who takes me flying on the back of his motorcycle. I have all those things, Fili, I don't have a brother."

"Yes you do," Fili said, voice quiet. "You have a brother and no boyfriend."

Kili rocked back on his heels, not expecting that. It was naive, he should have known. "I'm going to get another hotel room," he murmured as he gathered his bag and left. He leaned against the door for a moment, trying to get himself in order. He scrubbed at his face with the arm of his sweatshirt. Okay, enough pity. Enough sadness. Enough thinking forever and always.
Kili watched Fili from across the table. The other man was fiddling with a spoon, ignoring the clam chowder sitting at his elbow. Kili had a beer in front of him and a platter of onion rings.

He had agreed to this because Fili promised food. That was it. The only reason.

"I have a daughter." Fili said quietly. "I'm...we're not together. We were but, well. Things happened."

"Bi?" Kili asked.

"Yeah," Fili said.

"Yeah," Fili said.

Kili nodded and took a big sip of his beer. "Okay. So you have a kid. You, what. Panicked? Is that why you ignored me and then refused to talk to me?"

Fili hesitated and set the spoon down. "Kind of?"

"Kind of?"

"I don't know," Fili said. "You're ridiculously hot and you, you kind of blow my mind. And you're funny and sweet and and." He rubbed his eyes. "People hear kid and bi and they run. I didn't want you to run. Kina, she lives with her mom, not with me. But people still run."

Kili picked up the ketchup bottle and squirted some on his plate. He set it down and deliberately dragged an onion ring through it. Fili stared as he took a slow bite and munched through it. "Does it look like I'm running?"

Fili shook his head, looking mesmerized by him.

"Good. Now, let me say this right now--you've got one shot. You used it up. You don't get more than that one chance because I can't do that. You can only kill me once."

Fili reached for his water glass and drained it, the ice clinking against his teeth. "Understood."
"Tell me about your Kina," Kili said, dropping a ring on Fili's plate.
It was an instrumental song from the anime *Trigun*. However, YouTube decided to take all versions of it down. This vexes me. :|

The problem with dating someone was that they knew how to find you even when you didn't want to be found. Kili stared at the blond waiting for him at the gym. Kili was in the middle of wrapping his hands and stopped to stare. Fili tried to smile.

Kili turned and walked away.

As hyped up as he, as full of adrenaline and anger and sorrow and frustration he was...it was not a good idea for Fili to be near him. He didn't know if he would fight him, kill him, or fuck him.

"Kili, wait!"

Kili whirled as Fili grabbed his shoulder and punched him in the face. Fili's head snapped back and he grabbed his nose and mouth. There was a pained noise and he hunched over. Kili blew out an angry burst of air before pulling Fili straight up and swatting his hands away.

There was blood. Probably a broken nose, definitely cut his mouth on his teeth. Fili had his eyes squeezed shut, making tiny noises of pain.

"Jeez, such a baby..." Kili sighed. "You're going to have two black eyes, a mouth that aches for a little, and your nose'll heal."

"You broke it."

"You broke me, asshole," Kili snapped. "A broken nose is the least I could do to you! I told you before, you have one shot. One chance to kill me and you took it and smashed me to pieces."

Fili was quiet. "I didn't mean to."

"Didn't mean to which," Kili asked. "Be my brother? Get yourself hurt on a stupid subway? Or leave me alone with a mother I never knew I had?"

Fili rubbed gently at his nose. "All of it."

"That's an awful lot to be sorry for," Kili said as he crossed his arms.

"Can we talk?" Fili asked. "Like, actually talk and try to figure this mess out."

Kili hesitated. "I'm leaving."

"What?" Fili asked, looking far more stunned than he had when Kili had punched him. "Like, leaving the gym right now? Leaving the conversation? I...I don't think I understand."

"I'm leaving," Kili repeated. "A friend of mine needs some help with this job in Greece and I wanted to get out, get my head on straight. I'm leaving in a couple of days. Probably gonna be gone
for a couple months."

"O-oh," Fili said. He looked pathetic and devastated. Like Kili had kicked his puppy or taken his favorite toy. Fuck. It shouldn't be like this. Fili shouldn't have any more hold over, not after everything that had happened.

Kili sighed, shoulders slumping. "Okay, how about we do dinner tomorrow?"

"Yeah, okay," Fili said. He had brightened, just slightly, smiling awkwardly at Kili. "I can do dinner."
Track 12 - Poison and Wine

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter End Notes

Video only. The lyrics and music say a lot.
Fili grinned as he was pushed back and down onto the bed. Kili was licking his lips as he pulled his shirt over his head and dropped it onto the floor.

“Fuck you’re gorgeous,” Fili said. He had never expected his late night call to actually pan out, but here he was, on the bed with the hot guy from the club. Booty call successfully accomplished. Third booty call, actually, and each time the other man showed up with that damnable smirk and his hot body.

Kili stretched his arms up over his head, linking his fingers together and stretching, bringing his muscles into sharp relief. “Yeah?”

Fili reached down to adjust himself in his pants. “You gonna put on a show for me?”

Kili let his arms drop, hands going immediately to his belt. “Nah,” he said. His dark eyes were at half-mast, a predatory look on his face. “I’ve got what you need.”

“You do, hunh?” Fili asked.

“Oh yeah,” Kili said. He undid his belt and whipped it through his belt loops and dropped it to the ground. “I’m going to give you a distraction, something else to think about. I’ve got exactly what you need.”

Fili sat up on the bed, pulling his own shirt off, ignoring the buttons, and tossing it to the side. He started on his own pants, shucking them almost as fast as Kili was. He lunged to the side, pulling open the drawer on his night stand and searching for the condoms and lube he kept there.

Kili, though, made it difficult as he joined Fili on the bed. He nibbled on Fili’s shoulder as his hands started exploring his chest. Fili growled low in his throat, grabbing what he needed, and twisted. He grabbed Kili’s ass and ground up against him, his own mouth going to the brunet’s neck. He bit and sucked, listening to Kili groan above him.

Oh yeah, Kili had what he needed. And he had what Kili needed. He was going to enjoy pounding Kili’s ass and making him scream.
“Dad,” Kili whispered into the phone. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“What’re you talking about?” Kirin asked. “Tell you what?”

“About Fili,” Kili said. He pulled his knees against his chest, just barely able to keep himself in his kitchen chair. “About mom.”

Kirin was silent for a moment and then Kili heard a long sigh. “You met them.”

Kili gave a strangled laugh. He felt like crying. He felt like screaming. “Yeah, yeah I met them. You know that boyfriend I was going on about?” Silence. “Yeah, exactly.”

The silence went on long enough that Kili pulled the phone away from his ear and checked to see if the call was still connected.

“You never did do things by halves,” Kirin said finally.

“Why?” Kili asked again. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

Kirin was setting a world record for silences. Usually his dad was far more like him, saying whatever was on his mind; unless it was related to work and then their tongues tied. “Dwalin already called and said he told you why.”

“That’s his reason why,” Kili said. He manfully resisted the urge to call Kirin on his bullshit; he knew he'd met Fili and he knew he and... He knew. “I want your reason why.”

“What do you want me to say?” Kirin asked. “Dis and I were madly in love for years. We doted on Fili and it was wonderful. And then things just, just stopped being wonderful and became tedious. We were fighting all the time about everything.”

“And me?”

“You weren’t planned,” Kirin said, no pause. “It was a curse and a blessing. You’re my pride and joy, kid, you know that. I thank the stars every day I’ve got you.”

“Was I the last straw?”

“No,” Kirin said firmly. “We tried for a couple more years after you were born, see if we could make things work for you and Fili’s sakes. It just, it didn’t work out. So I got you and Dis got Fili. We had planned to keep you guys close, sharing custody when we could, but you know the job. It just wasn’t in the cards.”

“But to pretend they never existed?” Kili asked, feeling his throat catch. Fuck. Why was this so hard? Fili was just, he was just another guy in another city. Yeah, he was another guy in another city who happened to be absolutely wonderful and had gotten Kili to stay in one goddamned spot for two whole freaking years. That was more than just a minor miracle. “To even let me know that I have family out there? You know the way I bounce about. You couldn’t have even warned me that I might, possibly, have the slimiest chance of running into them?”
Kirin sighed. “Kili. Sparky. It honestly never occurred to me.”


“Wish I knew,” Kirin said. “I really wish I did.” There was another lengthy pause while Kili tried not to fall apart on the phone. “Two years...you fell in love with him, didn’t you?”

“Doesn’t much matter anymore, does it?” Kili asked. He rubbed at his nose and let himself unfold from his spot on the chair.

“No, I suppose it doesn’t,” Kirin said quietly.

Chapter End Notes

No music.
Fili watched as his mom and Kili stayed on opposite sides of his hospital room. The ER docs had said they wanted to keep him overnight to watch him but had largely just told him he had a mild case of whiplash and a concussion; nothing to write home about. His family, though, was worried. Dis kept making as if to go to his bedside but there seemed to be this...this unspoken mandate of required space between her and Kili. You shall be no more than fifty paces apart or something like that.

Sharon knocked on the door and Kina burst in with a screech of “DADDY!” and then he found himself with his arms full of his little girl. Sharon walked over to Dis, giving her a hug, and starting to talk to her. Kili, though, stayed with his back against the other wall. Fili watched him over Kina’s shoulder. His boyfr—his brother was looking cornered and half-panicked, upset, and very tired.

“I’m okay,” Fili said generally as Kina settled into his lap. She had his hand and was examining the IV stuck in his hand. “Really. I’m just being kept because I hit my head so hard. But, I mean, you all know how hard my head is. I’m good.”

A nurse stuck his head in the door. “Mr Durin, I’m sorry. You can’t have so many guests right now. Two is the limit, even for family.” He popped back out as quickly as he had come.

“How did you get in?” Sharon asked Kili. “Last I looked boyfriends weren’t—"

“Boyfriends?” Dis asked, paling. Fili sighed; he had forgotten to mention it to her after everything. He figured it would have been mean to do so at her wedding. He had come up with some cock-and-bull story about how Kili had just been a friend and he’d broken up with the boyfriend before the wedding and. Well. Looks like his lies were catching up to him.

“Last I checked ex-girlfriends weren’t either,” Kili said, voice flat and devoid of emotion. “Guess you lied and said wife.”

“I’m the mother of his—“

“Ask me how much I care,” Kili asked. He shoved his hands into the pockets of the hoodie he was wearing. “I’ll go. I just wanted to make sure Fili was okay.”

“I am,” Fili said softly. “I’d be better if you stayed. We, we have a lot to talk about.”

Kili shook his head, his pony tail moving with him. “Feel better.”

“BYE DADDY’S BOYFRIEND!” Kinda said, her volume control just as broken as every seven-year-old’s. Fili winced at the level while Kili flinched, looking like he’d been smacked, before he left. Kina pouted, her bottom lip sticking out. “He didn’t say bye.”

“Fili?” Dis asked.

“Not now, mom,” Fili said, clutching Kina to his chest. He buried his face in her hair, inhaling the smell of chemical strawberries. “Not now.”
Kili, for some reason, didn’t have handcuffs. Even working security meant he didn’t have handcuffs. He, instead, had ziptie cuffs. Fili had been curious about them and had, while they were catching their breaths and just enjoying feeling each other’s skin, strapped Kili’s hands behind his back with them. Kili rolled to his knees and grinned at Fili.

“I’m sorry, did you want something?” he asked.

Fili stretched out against the bed and reached down, lazily stroking himself. “Yeah, I do.”

Kili watched him. “Oh?”

Fili reached over to the bedside table and the pump of lube they had, getting enough to coat himself with. Kili had stayed where he was, eyes fixed on his hand. Fili let him look as he worked himself, paying attention to every inch of his cock. This wasn’t the first time they had masturbated for each other, but this was…a little more deliberately. And Kili seemed to know that.

When Fili was hard enough and slicked, Kili shuffled over on his knees and straddled Fili’s lap. Fili reached up, grabbing Kili’s hip with his dry hand, his other reaching back to finger his brother teasingly. Kili bit his lip, swallowing any noise he might have made from it. Fili reached out to get more lube and worked it inside Kili, teasing, seeing if he could get Kili to break his self-imposed silence.

Kili, however, made no noise, even when he was sinking down onto Fili’s cock. Fili growled softly, sitting up enough to kiss and bite at Kili’s chest, nuzzling at the muscles and hair there. Kili let out a soft oof of air as he stayed sat on Fili’s cock. It was quiet and intense and Fili couldn’t help it as he reached down and gripped Kili’s hips to set a brutal pace.

Kili kept his silence, his eyes locked on Fili’s, the two of them building their own little pocket of heat together. Fili’s hands moved from Kili’s hips to his thighs, digging his fingers in, stroking, urging. Kili was biting his lip, looking at Fili with such hunger and need and want that he thought it would devour him if he wasn’t careful.

Fili shifted himself slightly and gave a hard enough thrust that had Kili’s head snapping back and

Fili grinned, his hands moving to Kili’s ass, his dull fingernails digging in as he directed Kili as he wanted. Once his silence was broken Kili let himself be verbal, encouraging and cursing and damned near begging. Fili just licked his own lips and did his best to give Kili every inch of himself.

If this was illegal, if this was sinning, he would be more than happy to ride to hell between Kili’s thighs. There was nothing more he wanted as he gripped Kili’s ass, pulling his cheeks apart just enough for Fili to slide his fingers down to rub along the stretched skin where Fili was pushing inside Kili. The noise Kili made was worth more than eternal heaven because he had one right here.
Track 17 - I Know I Know I Know
Kili leaned against the wall, hands shoved into his pockets, trying not to smile as Fili ignored him. His brother—such a weird thing to think—was unlocking the door to his apartment and thoroughly ignoring Kili. Fili knew he was there, had seen Kili against the wall with his duffel bags at his feet, but hadn’t reacted.

He did leave the door to the apartment open.

Kili pushed off the wall with his shoulders and leaned down, grabbing both duffels by their straps, and walked into the apartment. He closed the door and dumped his bags just far enough inside it wouldn’t block the door in case of emergencies. He shoved his hands in the pockets of his hoodie and looked around. Nothing had changed in the past nine months. Not physically at least.

There was a beer waiting for him on the counter, not his preferred brand since Fili hated his imports, but still a decent brand. He picked it up and watched as Fili watched him. His brother was drinking steadily from his own bottle, looking at Kili very carefully, almost like he was examining him. Kili arched a brow, raised his bottle in a silent toast, and took a large sip

“So.”

Kili lowered the bottle from his lips and tilted his head to the side.

“Anything to say?”

“Plenty,” Kili said.

“Like?”

Kili set his bottle back down on the counter and deliberately stepped into Fili’s personal space. He took the beer bottle from Fili, setting it down, and pressed in close. “I’m sorry I called you a coward.”

“And?”

Kili leaned in and licked Fili’s lips. “I want to touch you.”
“And?”

Kili reached down, his fingers playing with the waistband of Fili’s jeans. “I love you.”

“And?”

Kili smiled. “And you love me.”

“And?”

Kili laughed. “And what? What do you want me to say? You’re my brother, my lover, you’re everything I need and want. For fuck’s sake, you’ve got me actually considering staying in Boston. Our love is a perfect crime, Fili. I want to touch you.” He rolled his hips against Fili’s. “I know you want to touch me too.”

“And?” Fili asked, keeping his hands off Kili.

Kili kissed Fili, hands coming up to cup his face. “I’m not leaving.”

Fili pushed off from the counter into Kili, hands going to grip Kili’s hips bruisingly hard, kissing him back. “That’s all I wanted to hear.”
Kili lay on his side in Malcolm’s bed, feeling the other man’s hands ghosting over his skin. He let himself be turned and…

Kili drifted away as Mal took and took and oh, Kili would be so pleasantly sore tomorrow. Mal was someone he had worked with closely in the past, one of the men who usually blew his mind in bed, and usually he’d be grabbling at the other man and…

But Kili wanted Fili.

Malcolm had gotten that Kili was going through a bad break up and had arranged for Kili to have a spot on the job he was currently hired for. Kili had been thrilled and there had been several nights of headboard slamming and screaming but lately. Well. Kili let Malcolm do what he wanted, do everything he wanted and oh, he loved the sex. Malcolm knew him and all of his buttons and how to play his body but. Well.

Kili’s mind was full of Fili.

Kili’s heart was full of Fili.

He squeezed his eyes closed and reached up to hold onto Malcolm tightly, panting and moaning into the other man’s ear. It would be so much easier if he could just forget about Fili. If Malcolm could make him forget.

Didn’t seem like that was going to happen anytime soon, though.
Somewhere around the first ten months of their...dating? Kili ended up moving in with him. Fili had insisted, actually, to the point of packing up the two duffels Kili had and deliberately depositing them in his closet. Kili had taken the hint and given up his month-to-month and moved in with the rest of his paltry belongings.

It had almost started feeling like a home.

Kina had been over more often and Fili even tried to get home at relatively normal hours. Kili was still here and there with certain security jobs but it was still a steady, almost normal, relationship. It was the first steady relationship Kili had ever had, that much for sure, though Fili hadn’t had many either; they made it work. They wanted it to work.

Then Dis’s wedding. And Dwalin. The Brother Bomb, as Fili was referring to it. Kili had left the hotel room, then the hotel, and then Fili’s life before he knew it. Kili’s stuff had been gone when Fili had come home, all two duffels of it, and it was only by sheer miracle he’d found Kili at the gym that day.

And now he was gone.

There was a part of Fili that was positive Kili would come back, come home. He’d left a key under the mat—on top of the door, actually—and he left the hallway light on. There was even that ridiculous plastic plug in candle that Kili had insisted on getting because it would “guide you home”.

Fili hoped it guided Kili home.

He wanted to be here for him, to talk to him, to just...to have him back. Brother or not, Kili was still the one he loved. Yes, he needed to figure everything out and knew that’s why Kili had left, but all the same. He wanted Kili to come home. Not an If but a When.

When he came back home. Not if he ever came back.
Kili watched as Kina bounced her way around the apartment in amusement. She was singing at the top of her lungs and flouncing about in a black tutu and a sparkling fake tiara.

“How does she know Japanese?” Kili asked as Fili handed him a beer.

“That would be my fault,” Fili said. He winced as Kina hint a particularly high note that only a child could. “When she can’t fall asleep I let her watch anime with me. That song she’s singing is from Kingdom Hearts. She loves the video game and I made the mistake of showing her some of the scenes in Japanese on YouTube.”

Kili grinned. “Dork.”

“Just a little bit,” Fili said.

Kina danced over and threw herself at Kili. “Daddy’s boyfriend! Do you watch Pokemon?”

Kili reached down, setting his beer on the floor, and hefted her up. “Nope, can’t say I do. I used to collect the cards, though.”

“Awwwwnn,” Kina said with a pout.

“I am, however, a huuuuuge fan of Yakitate Japan and Hikaru no Go.”

Fili stared at him, “Okay, you win.”

“You win!!” Kina shouted in Kili’s ear as she hugged him.
Kili groaned as Fili went to his knees in front of him. There were hands, insistent and demanding, pushing and pulling. Then, oh and then, a mouth. Hot and wet and so damned good. Fili knew him, knew how to twist him up and around. Kili grabbed at the edge of the couch, feeling his knees start to give. He let his head fall back and just let himself go. He didn’t hold back anything, unable to even if he wanted. Fili knew him so well.

It didn’t even matter how angry they’d been at each other, how they’d broken up, how everything had been so…explosive.

Kili nearly screamed as Fili pulled away, rocking back on his heels and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

“You bastard,” Kili snarled, panting.

“Yeah?” Fili asked as he got to his feet. “You think I’m the bastard here?”

“Fucking finish me!”

Fili smirked, a smirk that usually led to Kili being boneless and bruised and aching. He grabbed Kili by his opened fly and pulled him onto his feet. There was grinding that, with Kili being so sensitive, made Kili try to push away. Fili held him fast and there was kissing and hands and Kili being bent over the arm of the couch.

“You want me?” Fili asked, leaning over him and breathing against Kili’s ear.

“Fili,” Kili whined. “Please!”

“Kiss me like you want me,” Fili growled, fingers pushing and pulling.

Kili twisted, hands gripping the couch as Fili thrust, mouth finding Fili’s and kissing him. They fought, teeth clashing and blood leaking, both grabbing at each other as they came together forcefully and desperately.

There was absolutely nothing better than makeup sex.
Fili looked around Kili’s apartment with shock.

“What?” Kili asked, handing Fili a beer.

“I’ve seen hotel rooms with more personality,” Fili said. He took a sip of the beer and tried not to make a face. Whatever Kili had given him was a far cry from the Sam Adams Fili usually grabbed. The label was in German and wasn’t anything he was familiar with.

Kili grinned and flopped onto the couch. “Place came furnished with the basics. That’s really all I need.”

“And your stuff?” Fili asked.

“I don’t bother with much that doesn’t fit into my duffels.”

“You have two duffels,” Fili said, standing and staring at Kili.

“Yeah, it fits clothes, a couple of things I can’t do without, and that’s it. Everything else is just packaging. It’s all gotta fit in a car or on a plane after all.”


“Kindle, cloud storage, anything I can’t live without I send to my dad who makes sure it gets put somewhere safe,” Kili said. “I move around too much.”

Fili raised the beer to his mouth and took a long drink. “You leaving soon?”

Kili set his beer down and got to his feet. He tugged Fili in close by his belt loops and bent his head to kiss him. “Nah, I’m pretty good in Boston for the moment. It’s got something that the rest of the world doesn’t.”

“Yeah? What’s that?” Fili asked.

Kili smiled. “You.”
Dinner had ended quickly with a single glance. Fili had Kili against the wall and was kissing him before either had a chance to put down their wine glasses. Fili heard the thunk of them hitting the table, the sound of the wine spilling, and the crash that said one or both had broken. But Kili was in his arms and his hands were in Fili's hair and they were practically ripping each other's clothes off.

"We, we shouldn't," Fili said. They hadn't touched each other since... But Fili needed this, he needed Kili. Two years couldn't be undone so easily.

"Shut up and kiss me," Kili said with a hint of a growl.

Fili did as commanded, kissing him on his mouth, his nose and cheeks, his neck, wherever he could touch. Kili was yanking on Fili's shirt, managing to tear the simple cotton shirt to get to Fili's skin. Fili laughed, kissing Kili to muffle the sound. It was hardly the first shirt he had lost to Kili's impatience.

"Sorry," Kili murmured, hands roaming over Fili's chest. "Couldn't help it."

Fili pulled away long enough to pull off the ruined collar of his shirt and get the ruins off while Kili waited, leaning back against the wall. Fili made a flicking motion and Kili pulled off his shirt with a flourish, throwing it at Fili.

Kili pushed off from the wall and pulled Fili in for a kiss, cupping his face. "C'mon, bedroom."

"I don't want you to go," Fili said, following him.

"I have to go," Kili said. "But give me tonight, all right? We'll see what comes next."

Fili walked him back toward the bed, kissing him as they tumbled back onto the bed. Tonight. He could do that. He could keep tonight and save it.
Fili squared his shoulders and sent the text. It was simple, nothing more than “Call me.” Now he just had to wait for Kili to actually reach out to him. It didn’t actually take that long, actually, only about an hour. Fili had expected it to take longer.

“What’s up?” Kili asked. He sounded miserable, tired and down, and it made Fili want to reach through the phone to hug him.

“Are you okay?” Fili asked.

Kili snorted. “What do you want, Fili?”

“Okay,” Fili said. “Cut to the chase. Got it.” Fili cleared his throat. “I love you. You know that. I love you and it’s not going to change. I don’t care that, I don’t care what Dwalin said—”

“That we’re brothers?”

“That we’re brothers,” Fili said. “I don’t care. I still love you. I still want you. I want you to live with me, to wake up with me, to fight with me. I want everything we had and more. I refuse to leave you, to have you leave me, because of some bullshit our parents pulled.”

“Fili…”

“I don’t want to lose you,” Fili said. “Simple as that. I don’t care what anyone says, I can’t lose you.”

Silence.

Then, after Fili had thought Kili had hung up, there was a sigh. “I’ll be stateside in a week. We can talk then, okay?”

Fili nodded. “Yeah, okay. Tha-that would be great.”

Silence. Another sigh. “Stupid idiot.”
“A stupid idiot who loves you?”

A snort. “No, just a stupid idiot.”
Track 26 - Ache for You
Dis had somehow gotten hold of his email address, probably from Dwalin, and had started emailing him. Kili let them sit in his inbox, unread, unsure what to do about them. He had never had a mother before and this sudden influx of maternal guilt was unsettling. He’d been around mothers, sure, there were plenty on base who had watched him, but this was different. This was his mother.

Such an odd thing to think.

He clicked on the latest one hesitantly. Most of it seemed to be talking about Fili, Kina, and the goings on in Boston. Apparently she and Dwalin (who knew they’d gotten married to each other?) had gone to see a concert. Kili blinked and then laughed when he saw who they’d seen.

Dis really didn’t strike him as a Nine Inch Nails lady. Then again, what did he know?

The odd thing was she didn’t ask for him to reply; she just chattered at him. He went back through all of the emails and most of it was just news. There were no questions, nothing putting pressure on him to respond. She didn’t even address her missives or sign them off.

Kili had to admit some curiosity and hit reply before he realized it.

*I’m in Germany at the moment* he typed. *A friend of mine had a security job and needed my help. Figured might as well be of use. I’m not good at staying in one place for long. Boston was different. I was in Greece a couple weeks ago.* He stopped, trying to figure out what else to say. *I like NIN. I listen to pretty much anything. I think after Germany I’m going to go to Wales. There’s not a lot to do there but it’s pretty. I can sleep and relax. Think. I take a lot of pictures of where I am. I have them sent to a cloud service so I don’t lose them. I can make them public, if you want to see them.*

He drummed his fingers against his laptop and hit send.
Fili released the breath he was holding as the door closed. Kili had a job in California with one of his friends from a military base—Kili had a lot of military friends—and it was a relief, actually, to have the other man out of the apartment for once.

Love was all well and good but hooooooboy it was not everything. Both of them had habits that drove the other up the wall and they were. It was just. Fili could feel his temper fraying. He knew Kili’s was already gone, the two of them getting into tiny spats over the past few weeks.

It would be good to not have Kili around for a little while. He would stop caring about every little thing, be able to reset everything back to a semblance of calm. Otherwise there would be a lot more fights—more than they already had—and things would eventually come to a head. A very nasty head, probably.
Kili watched, trying not to unhinge his jaw, as Fili calmly told both assembled parents that they were involved. Romantically. Physically. And that it wasn’t going to change. And that if they had anything to say about it that it was their own damned faults in the first place. So they could kindly fuck off.

It had been a minor—major—point of contention after Kili had come back stateside. They didn’t agree on telling people, or if they should keep quiet, or if they should even get back together. If, if, if, if. So many ifs. So far he’d resisted anything more than the near desperate, clinging hug they’d exchanged when Kili had first come back. There had been attempts but, well. Kili had refused. He didn’t think he could stand it if they went from what they were to each other’s dirty little secrets.

That might be how Fili lived but that wasn’t Kili.

Except…

Well. Maybe Kili owed Fili an apology. He’d called him a coward before but honestly, after this? Fili was just as brave as anyone Kili had ever met.
Track 30 - Kiss With a Fist
Kili rolled over and snuggled up against Fili’s side. He slid his hand over his shoulder and back. Fili twitched slightly, the only sign he was awake. Kili leaned in close and brushed a gentle kiss over Fili’s shoulder, right above the tattoo he had. It was a white ink tattoo of the infinity symbol stretched across his shoulder blade. Kili let out a soft sigh and rested his head where he had kissed.

“This needs to stop,” Fili said. His voice was rough from sleep.

Kili closed his eyes and pressed another kiss into Fili’s skin. “This?”

“The fighting and the yelling and the breaking up and the making up,” Fili said. “It’s exhausting. Yes, make up sex is fantastic but all the same. I mean. I just, I can’t keep doing this.”

Kili stayed quiet. Fighting was… They did fight an awful lot. Then again he was in some serious uncharted territory; his last “relationship” had lasted all of eight weeks….four years ago. He was very bad at this but something in Fili, about him, made Kili want to stay.

“Kili?” Fili asked. He rolled over, holding Kili where he was so he ended up relaxed against Fili’s chest.

Kili nuzzled against Fili’s chest hair, freeing a hand from the blankets to scratch lightly between his pecs. He stroked Fili lazily, feeling him and his solidness, the way Kili wanted to do nothing but just…stay in bed with him and do inane things like crossword puzzles and coffee and…

“I think I love you,” Kili said, tilting his head to the side. He poked at the thought and, yeah, that… that sounded about right. Love. Contentment. Were the fights because he didn’t know how to settle down and part of him was rebelling against the tethering? Or were they because he wanted to see how far he could push Fili away.

“Think?” Fili asked. He had his hand in Kili’s hair, scratching lightly as his scalp, the long strands caught around his fingers.

Kili leaned into the touches and shrugged slightly. “Not sure, to be honest. Never been in love. I have no problem if you wanted to do the stereotypical crossword puzzle and coffee in bed thing. Cuz, I mean, I suck at crosswords but I can do a mean sudoku and you make awful coffee but.”

Fili laughed and maneuvered them into a better kissing position. “You’re horrible.”

Kili smiled against Fili’s lips. “I can’t say I’ll stop fighting with you, cuz I don’t know if I can, but I can try talking more?”

“I’m good with you trying to talk. Even if you just huff and wave your hands around and gesture, that’s better than what we’ve been doing.”

“So. Love.”

Kili eyed him. Fili was trying not to smirk and failing. Kili sighed and pushed him away. “Jerk.”

“The man who can’t even say relationship or dating without breaking into hives is tell me he loves me.”

“Think,” Kili said, stressing the word. He wiggled away from Fili and pushed back the covers. “I
can change my mind at any point.”

Fili lunged after him as Kili made to get out of bed. He caught Kili by the thigh and yanked him back. Kili yelped, arms windmilling as he fell back hard against the bed, only to have Fili kissing him. He tried to protest but it was swallowed by Fili. There were hands, apologetic, and Kili melted. Fili just had that…touch. Something. It was magic.

“I think I love you too,” Fili said, nuzzling Kili’s ear.

Kili couldn’t describe how he was feeling. His face felt red and there was that warm feeling and his throat felt all tight and…but there was also this pit in his stomach, a type of cold fear that gripped him. He ignored it, not wanting to dwell, and, in turn, nuzzled Fili back. Slowly, as if in no hurry which was odd for them, they touched and kissed and slowly Fili pulled Kili into his lap. Kili rode him, their hands gripping each other’s, eyes locked. They’d done this thousands of times before but somehow this held so much more meaning.

Somehow.

Kili kept Fili’s eyes even as he was in the grip of climax, gasping and shouting Fili’s name and more. This had to be love. It had to be. Kili didn’t want it to be anything but love. That had to make it so, right?
He sat at the bar while running his finger along the rim of his beer glass. Normally he didn’t have these issues. He never got close enough, or stayed long enough, to get in fights with whoever he was screwing.

Only Fili had turned into more than just someone he was screwing.

Fili turned out to be someone he was dating and cared about.

He just, he didn’t get Kili and everything that had gone into making him. He was so unused to this. He didn’t get the expectations others had when in relationships—the word was mostly foreign to him—but Fili assumed he did.

Fuck his heart hurt.

Emotionally, that was. Was this what people went through all the time? How could they deal with this? He didn’t want a heart if this was the case. Attachments sucked. Even when he was a kid he’d known not to get close to people because everything was so transient.

Well, no. That wasn’t true. Sophomore year he’d be absolutely smitten with twins Dale and Jessica. Jessica had been only too happy to reciprocate, as was Dale, but they flat out refused to be involved with the same guy and had, instead, declare him persona non grata. That had been a blow to his younger self. But that hadn’t hurt like this hurt.

He picked up the beer and took a deep pull of it, draining half of it in one go. He watched the carbonation fizzle, not setting the glass down, just looking at it. He was in the process of raising it back to his mouth when a hand came into his field of vision and took it away.

Kili looked up to see Fili, grimacing as he finished Kili’s beer.

“Blue Moon?” Fili asked. “How absolutely mundane for you.”

“They don’t have any good imports,” Kili said faintly. He hadn’t expected Fili to come after him…

Fili took a seat next to Kili at the bar, setting down the empty glass, and sighed. “So.”
“So.”

“I guess we need to talk,” Fili said.

“Guess so,” Kili said.
"Why aren't you in the military?" Fili asked. They were out at a bar Kili had suggested for a couple of beers, act like dorks, and shoot some pool. It was a very good way to unwind and, well, it counted as a date, right? They'd been screwing almost every night for the past two months and had only generally talked while recovering. Fili had found out that Kili was a military brat, his dad was in the army, and that he had been to more European counties than Fili could name.

"As my dad put it I am far too rock n roll to actually make it through training," Kili said. "I hate taking orders but I generally can stomach it. Mostly I do private security instead, or working at community centers to teach kids archery."

"Archery?" Fili asked, trying not to grin.

Kili rolled his eyes and lined up a shot, pool stick cracking against the balls. "I harassed one of the guys on the base when I was a teen to teach me how to shoot a gun. It kind of turned into me doing sniper training for the fuck of it with the same guy. I've got a fantastic eye, apparently, but then some of the commanders and my dad found out and I got banned from playing with guns."

"Can't imagine why," Fili said, watching as Kili continued to sink ball after ball. "You'll shoot your eye out."

Kili cracked up, missing his shot and scratching. "You ass. Did you seriously just quote A Christmas Story at me?"

"I totally did," Fili said. He lined up his own shot while Kili rechalked his cue. "So they banned you, hunh?"

"Yep," Kili said. "So I got into archery. Compound bows are insane amounts of fun."

"Is there actually money in that?" Fili asked.

"Largely in the South but yep, totally money there," Kili said. "Generally, as I said, I do security. It's more fun."
"I'm dating a gun for hire," Fili mused, wincing as he scratched. He really sucked at pool.


Fili snickered. "You got a hat?"

Kili gave him a sidelong glance. He took a long drink of his beer and sat it down. "Why, you wanna see how well I ride?"

"Well, you have to ride well if you're a cowboy."

"I'm sure I could find a hat and a pair of chaps," Kili said.

Fili licked his lips. "Yeah, you should do that."

Kili twirled his cue a couple of times before lining up a shot, smirking up at Fili as he sunk another ball.

Oh yeah, dating Kili was going to be awesome.
Kili checked the time on his phone and the time of his next flight. He had a five hour layover in Boston before he could get to Louisiana and he had planned to meet Fili during this time. Except he was suddenly having cold feet. They hadn’t seen each other since that dinner, which really just ended up with them in bed. Kili had slipped out once Fili was asleep, not just because he had things to do, but he really didn’t do goodbyes. He didn’t want to say goodbye to Fili.

Except here he was, at Logan, and completely terrified to go through security and meet Fili by baggage claim. Kili’s bags were already being held but the baggage claim area was the easiest place to meet.

Kili sat down at one of the benches and bit his lip. He couldn’t do this. He couldn’t see Fili and then, just… Fili said it didn’t matter, not to him, and Kili had said the same. The brothers thing didn’t really bother him too much but what did bother him was, well. They fought, constantly, the other sometimes just rubbing each other the wrong way. Two years and they had broken up at least fifteen times. Yes, they’d managed to figure something out and they’d been happy, but now?

Now there was the chance to be nothing but volatile. And what about Kina? Was it really fair to her?

Kili groaned and dug out his phone. “Tell me not to be a chicken,” he said as a greeting.

“Don’t be a chicken,” Nori said. “Go out there and get that brother of yours.”

“Nori,” Kili whined.

“You have five hours, right?”

“Yeah…”

“You’re wasting time. Go get a burger, a beer, and get fucked. Talk, if you want, then get on your plane and meet me for the job. Then, once you’re done, get your ass back to Boston and deal with everything else.”

Kili took a deep breath and blew it out slowly. “I have another job lined up after this one.”

Kili could practically hear Nori’s eyes rolling. “You fucking idiot.”

“I’ve been trying to stay busy!”

“Pathetic,” Nori said. “How long is that job for?”

“It’s with Gloin,” Kili said. “He’s moving a bunch of product and he wants to make sure it’s secure.”

“So that’s, what, two weeks?”

Kili shrugged. “Ish.”

“Look, why don’t I take your place with Gloin? I’ve got nothing to do and I can more than do your job.”

“Excuse me, whose ass am I protecting right now?”
“Eh, I could but I’ve got my own issues down here, you know that. I used to run security with you, you twerp. I taught you some of your tricks.”

“Blah blah blah is all I hear coming out of your mouth,” Kili said, smiling a little.

“I am giving you the perfect chance to be with your man,” Nori said. “You’ve been sickeningly happy since you met him, even when you guys were fighting and kept breaking up. Didn’t you tell me that you told him you don’t care?”

“It…it feels like if I go to him now then he’ll think it’s forever,” Kili said. “I have no problem with that, I really don’t. I mean, I’m still working security so I have my breathing room and it’s not like Kina stays with him all that often. But, I just.”

“Go put him out of his misery,” Nori said. “And put yourself out of your misery too.”

Kili hung up the phone without saying goodbye and stood. He could do this. He could totally go see Fili and figure things out. Totally. Easily. He bit his lip and squeezed his eyes closed as he walked toward the exit.
“You two have broken up and gotten back together how many times now?” Jack asked.

Fili snickered. There was nothing funny about the situation but it was laugh or scream so he laughed. “Something like five or six times so far. It happens, right?’’

“Not that often.”

“Well, it’s worth the make up sex, that’s for fucking sure,” Fili said.

Jack waved down the bartender. “Okay, we need another round. We’re not stopping until you are fall down drunk on tequila.”

“I’d say make it permanent,” Scott said. “No one’s worth the fights you two get into. If me and Lisa got into the fights you and your guy do? We’d be through.”

“Yeah but the good times outweigh the bad,” Fili said.

“High maintenance is the word you’re looking for,” Jack told Scott. “I’ve had a few girls like that and showed them the door.”

“Kina loves him,” Fili said.

“She’s seven,” Scott pointed out. “She loves everyone.”

“You can do better,” Jack added.

Fili tossed back the shot of tequila placed in front of him. Yeah, he could do better. Just because Kili was smoking hot and had an ass that Fili couldn’t stop thinking about and those long legs… No, yeah, he could so do better. And he would do better. This was the last time.

He slammed his upside-down and empty shot glass down on the bar. “Another!”
It was 10:30 when Kili got to the shore. Fili knew a little known secret about Boston that sometimes the best beaches were hidden. Castle Island and Pleasure Bay were fantastic. Even at night it was pretty with the moon and stars and the water swishing as it did. Fili was lying on the hood of his car and grinned as Kili hopped up and handed him the Big Gulp of Slurpee.

"Oh my god, what did you put in here?" Fili asked, sputtering after his first sip.

"Bathtub gin," Kili said. "Moonshine. Booze. Stuff. I don't know, just picked one at the counter and went with it."

"You put half a pint in here didn't you?" The wide grin Kili gave him was answer enough. "Okay, so. What is this, date number three?"

"Yeah that works," Kili said. "Is this the one where we spill our guts to each other?"

"No idea," Fili said. "I don't date much."

Kili snickered and took a long sip of his Slurpee, cheeks hollowing over the straw. "Okay, leeeeeeesssssee. You know I'm a military brat and I work security because I can."

"You know I've got a kid and an ex who is on quasi talking terms with me because of her. I work with CityYear in public relations."

"Uhmm, you have aspirations to work for the EPA," Kili said.

"And you have none," Fili said.

Kili made a unhappy noise and fiddled with his plastic cup. "I wouldn't say that."

"You want to work security for the rest of your life?" Fili asked.

Kili was quiet for a moment. "I move around a lot. I got used to never staying in one place for long, never really setting down roots. It doesn't make sense to me to be completely grounded in one place. I do a lot of good with what I do now but sometimes its not...it's what it is."
"Private security can mean being a mercenary."

Kili snorted. "You sound like my dad."

"So what do you want to do?"

Kili shrugged and scooted closer. "Haven't figured it out yet."

Fili shook his head, drinking more of his own Slurpee. He could feel the liquor spreading through his limbs and ooh, it felt good. "Ridiculous."

"Meh." Silence reigned for a moment until Kili slid off the hood and stood, stretching his hands over his head. "It's warm out."

"Yes?" Fili said, watching him. He set his Slurpee down.

Kili tossed a smug grin at him. "Ever been skinny dipping?" Fili stared at him. "No? Well, c'mon then." He stripped his shirt off and tossed it on the hood of his own car. Fili hesitated before pulling his own off. Well, why the fuck not.
Kili leaned against the balcony railing and took in the sight of Prague. It was gorgeous here, all hazy at the end of the day with the sun setting over the water. It was a bit of a change from the past few places he’d been recently but he liked it. He needed change.

“You look heartbroken,” AJ said from behind Kili. She wrapped her arms around his waist and scratched at his stomach. “Or heart sore.”

“Aren’t all of us?” Kili asked. “Private security is full of people who need the distraction and adrenaline to get them out of their heads.”

“I always thought you were in it for the thrill and the love of the game,” AJ said.

Kili turned, leaning back and smiling at the petite redhead. “Maybe. I think…someone might have changed my mind. But it’s different now. I don’t think I can go back to that.”


Kili swayed his head to a fro. “It’s complicated. We’re from such two different worlds and even though we love eac—“

“This is Fili, right?” AJ interrupted. “The PR cutie with the daughter. The one who has had you staying so close to Boston.”

“AJ—“ Kili said, flushing.

“Oh, sweetie,” AJ laughed. She leaned up and kissed him, hands in his hair. “Everyone knows about the two of you. Now here you are, looking miserable, sleeping with any and all of us? Yeah, this is about your Fili.”

Kili pulled away from her, rubbing at his eyes. Everyone knew? Had he been so much of a chatterbox about Fili and Kina? Or maybe it was what he didn’t say. People in security were never idiots; they could read between the lines.

“Kili?” AJ asked, gently touching his elbow. “What happened?”
Kili shook his head and let AJ lead him to the bed. He let her push away his shirt, helped take hers off, and let her distract him with her curves and softness. Maybe he could just forget, let himself lose himself in someone who wasn’t Fili. He didn’t want to think of things having completely changed.

He knew, now that he knew, that things were going to change and that he and Fili. Well. It wasn’t the end. He couldn’t stay. He was just going to be very heart sore for a while. And lose himself in anyone else who would have him.
Fili watched Kili thoughtfully, sipping his beer as the other man fiddled with the bluray player. Kili had been insistent about Fili watching some old movies, Hitchcock actually, and had finally given up on just telling Fili to do so and had somehow obtained a stack of them from the library. Fili had just let him—though he did protest watching the bird one because he really didn’t need a reason to jump out of his skin around pigeons—mostly to see him happy than any desire to watch the damned movies.

Kili had been twitchy lately, not actively leaving to do things but also not quite always there. Fili knew he was a military brat and they had gotten into enough fights over Kili just doing things without thinking or talking them through. Kili didn’t seem to know how actual relationships worked, but Fili was slowly learning how to work with that. He had given Kili a home, as much as he could make the other understand, and was teaching him about love.

Kili looked over at him and smiled, this blindingly happy smile that made Fili melt. It made him want to do nothing more than to love Kili, to patch up the broken bits inside of him, to give him all those missing pieces. Fili set his beer down and went over to tug Kili close by his belt. Kili laughed and kissed Fili sweetly.

Fili knew that this was it—he loved the idiot and he would do his damnedest to never let him go.
Track 39 - Keep Me Crazy
Fili looked up as Kili came into the baggage claim area and tried to smile. Kili looked like hell, tense and unhappy, shoulders squared like he was going into battle. He knew the moment Kili spotted him by the way a tiny smile flitted across his face before vanishing into a worried furrow of his brow.

He had a feeling that this was not going to turn out well but he had to try.

Kili hesitated and walked over. “Hey,” he said softly, hands shoved into the back pockets of his jeans.

“Hey yourself,” Fili said. He hesitated for a moment before reaching out and grabbing Kili, dragging him in close for a tight hug. Kili—brother, lover, friend, whatever—tensed even more before giving in and curling down around Fili, clinging to him tightly. “Fuck I’ve missed you.”

Kili buried his nose against Fili’s neck and didn’t move. Fili kept his arms around Kili, easing the pressure and just…just holding him. He rested his head against Kili’s and closed his eyes. This felt right. He lost track of the minutes as they ticked by as he rubbed Kili’s back, as he felt Kili clutching at back of his shirt, the way he could feel Kili’s warmth and the smell of sand and the plane. Finally Kili pulled away, rubbing at his eyes slightly.

“So, uhm, food?” Kili said, trying to smile.

“Yeah, food,” Fili said. “C’mon, I’ve, uhm. So it’s a really nice day out and there’s a great park not too far from there.”

Kili stared at him. “Did you—?”

“Yeeaaaaah,” Fili said, rubbing the back of his neck. “Picnic and all. I thought it’d be better to talk without actually being in a place where people could hear us.”

“O-okay.”

Fili tilted his head in the direction of the shuttles and hefted his backpack up onto his back. Kili shoved his hands back in his pockets, following Fili quietly.

“You know, I wasn’t sure you’d actually come out,” Fili said as they got onto the airport shuttle.

“I almost didn’t,” Kili admitted, leaving a seat between them. “Friend of mine told me to put us both out of our misery.”

“Good friend,” Fili said.

Kili was silent until they got off the shuttle and got to the park. Fili picked a table far enough away from playing children that he and Kili could actually talk. He took out the food and spread it out while Kili snickered at the food choices.

“Wow, did you learn to cook while I was away?” Kili asked.

Fili rolled his eyes, trying not to smile. “Nah, I went to Whole Foods and got a bunch of random stuff.”

“Lots of finger food.”
“Figured it’d be easier.”

“Figured right,” Kili said as he went after the stuffed grape leaves. Fili offered Kili a can soda, one of his favorites, and smiled as Kili shot him a look. “You’re bribing me. I can tell, this is what bribery is. You seduce me with food and lull me into a false sense of security and then you’re going to lay it on me.”

Fili picked at the salad he’d gotten, pushing the lettuce around with his fork. “I told you that I wasn’t going to lose you.” Kili shoved another grape leaf in his mouth; Fili rolled his eyes at him. “You told me you didn’t care, and I agree, I don’t care either. I’ve been a mess without and this is. We need to work everything out.”

“Yeah, I know,” Kili said. He heaved a sigh and popped the top on his soda, taking a deep drink. He played with the tab as he set it down and made a face. “Okay, let’s see. When I said I didn’t care? I didn’t. After some time away…”

Fili felt himself go cold. “Don’t do this to me.”

“Hear me out,” Kili said, waving his hand at Fili. “The biggest thing for me right now is Kina. I’m her uncle and I’m her…uncle.” Kili rubbed at his forehead. “This is so complicated.”

“If you’re just worried about Kina then we can work on that,” Fili said. He was trying so hard not to be desperate but Kili seemed like he was so far away from him like this even if he was right across the table. Kili picked at the food and stayed quiet, but it was a thoughtful quiet. Fili rolled his shoulders, trying to get rid of the anxiety, and started to eat some of the food for himself.

“If we keep this up—“

“If?”

Kili waved him quiet. “If we keep this up then I want to actually continue where we left off. You were going to tell Dis during her wedding. I was going to kidnap you and Kina and drag you to the base where my dad was stationed—he’s been transferred again—and. Fuck, I was going to see about talking you into getting an apartment big enough for us and Kina, having her come over more often.”

Fili stared at him, heart in his throat.

“You want to know why I flipped out? Because of that. Because I wanted to make a home with you. I know absolutely fuck all about having a home, a permanent one, but I wanted that. I still do. I wanted forever, like you promised, but I just. I don’t think I can do forever right now.”

“I know I messed up, I know I should have—“

“You’re fine,” Kili said. He smiled a little at Fili. “This is just how I am. This was what I wanted.”

“That’s all past tense.”

Kili ran his finger along the rim of the soda can. “I don’t know what I want anymore. Yes, I want you. Fuck, I want you. You have no idea how pissed off I am that all I want is you.”

“Kili…”

Kili leveled him with an annoyed look. “Three of my favorite exes and all I wanted was you. Amazing sex and all I wanted was you. I kind of hate you for that. You’ve ruined me.”
Fili flushed.

Kili shook his head and reach back, tightening his ponytail and then going after one of the chicken sandwiches Fili had gotten. “I’m willing to try. I am more than willing, I’m kind of desperate to do. But I want all of nothing. I can’t promise forever., I want it but I don’t know if it’ll work. We made two years work with a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. I don’t think we can make forever work but I’d like to see if we can prove my sensible side wrong.”

“But you want to make it clear to everyone that we’re related and we’re…we’re not kissing cousins, we’re even worse.”

“Neither of us can have kids with the other,” Kili said. “Rules out all the bad pieces of incest. The rest is society.”

“Kili…”

“If you want to do this we do it all,” Kili said. “Or we do nothing and I go back to doing what I was doing before I met you.”

“You’d leave Boston.”

“Avoid it like the goddamned plague,” Kili said.

Fili looked down at the food and felt his stomach churn. He didn’t think he was hungry anymore.
Track 41 - Stupid Little Things
They met at a Polish cafe in Dorchester, small and private so they could talk, and somewhere that was neutral ground. Kili desperately needed neutral ground. They were (mostly) determined to work through this, to keep going with what they had before. Things were different now, obviously, but maybe the dynamic wasn’t.

“So,” Fili said, drawing out the sound of the o. “I’m going to guess you’re not moving back in yet.”

“Nope,” Kili said, fiddling with his straw wrapper and not looking at Fili. “I’m staying with a friend.” Fili was silent long enough that Kili glanced up at him; the other looked conflicted, somewhere between anger, jealousy, and sadness. “You don’t know her. She’s a friend.”

“Right,” Fili said. He huffed out a breath of air and dragged his fingers roughly through his hair. “I’m going to be really bad about this.”

Kili rubbed the back of his neck. “This is a shitty situation. You can be petty over who I’m staying with because I already did my freak out for ten months.”

“Which is why I want you home,” Fili said, stressing that word. That one word, the word that haunted Kili for two years of dealing with Fili. Home. Why the goddamned… Kili took a deep breath to calm himself and listened to Fili. “How can we work things out if we’re not—“

“We are working things out,” Kili said. “Here, now, this. This is us doing that.”

“I want—“

“I know what you want,” Kili said. He balled up the wrapped and tossed it aside. “It’s not happening. You said you wanted to be open about this, to not deny but not flaunt.” Fili nodded. “I’m not doing anything until we’re gotten things straightened. That means getting families straight too.”

Fili slouched in his seat. “Families?”

“Dad, Dis, Dwalin,” Kili said. “Maybe Sharon, Kina when she’s older. Anyone seriously close who, you know, might throw an epic fit at the thought of incest.”

Fili flinched.


Fili reached out and took a sip of his soda. “I’m aware.”

“I don’t think you are,” Kili said. He shifted about, trying to get comfortable, and looked around to see if the waiter was coming back with their food. He didn’t want to keep up this conversation, this line of inquiry, because he knew where it was headed. He knew that this wouldn’t work and then where would he be?

“Okay, so you want us to make it clear to people that we’re a thing, despite the… the other thing.”

Kili sighed. Why was this so painful? He made a face and shook his head. He didn’t, couldn’t. Words. He didn’t have the words.
“Kili?”

“Just. You know, I can’t do this. I just. No,” Kili said. He got to his feet and took out enough to cover the meal and tip.

“Kili!”

Kili shook his head again and left. He knew he had a tendency to run, and maybe Fili had gotten rid of it before, but ten months by himself? He was reearning how to run and remembering that it honestly was the best option in his life.
Kili shoved his hands in his pockets and made a face. Dis was meeting him for burgers at The Boston Burger Company and Kili was. He wasn’t sure. He and Fili hadn’t really been able to figure out a balance between themselves yet. It was hard and vile and nothing Kili ever actually wanted to be involved in.

He didn’t do complicated.

“There you are,” Dis said. Kili jumped slightly, not having noticed her come up along side him. “Sorry, didn’t mean to startle you.”

Kili shook his head. “It’s, it’s fine. Just, not really used to people being able to do so?”

“You looked a little spaced out,” Dis said. One of her hands tightened on the strap of her purse. “Should we get a table?”

Kili paused, looking at the windows of the restaurant, and then out at the rest of the street. He didn’t… Burgers didn’t seem to be Dis’s thing, not from the way she dressed. She was rather well put together in a long black skirt and a scoop neck blue bell-sleeved shirt. It was all very cooling, considering the heat, and very smart.

“If we go down a little bit,” Kili said slowly, trying to picture the street in his mind, “there’s a better place to go eat.”

Dis arched a brow at him. “And where would we go?”

“There’s Legal Seafoods at the Prudential,” Kili offered.

“I’m not a fan of their fish,” Dis said. “Live out on the sea for too long and you get snobbish.”

Kili shrugged; he wasn’t too much of a fish person anyway. “There’s a couple of nicer places to eat.”

Dis shook her head, grabbed Kili by the wrist, and almost dragged him into the burger joint. Well, that solved that problem. When they had been seated, ordered, and beered, Dis propped her elbows up on the table and leaned over, resting her breasts on the table. Kili coughed, rubbing the bridge of his nose and trying not to smile or laugh. She was charming.

She was also his mother.

Ah, there went the amusement and on came the awkward.

“We know each other through emails,” Dis said, “not so much in person.”

“The delete key is my favorite,” Kili said. “It’s s shame I don’t have one in real life.”

Dis nodded. “I had that problem a lot, actually. Thorin always used to have to get me out of my own messes.”

Kili slouched to the side, propping his head up on his hand. “Okay, so we’re doing this mother-son thing. What exactly do we do?”

Dis gave him a tiny half-smile. “Well, I would assume we talk, like normal people.”
“There is absolutely nothing normal about this family,” Kili said. “Nothing. We are so far from normal that I don’t know—“

“Well, Star Wars kind of shows that we’re not that unusual.”

Kili stared, jaw slightly unhinged. Wait. What?

“I mean, there was a few moments with Luke and Leia,” Dis said, taking a drink of her beer. “And obviously the parental issues. With your hair I’d have to place you as Leia, sadly. Fili doesn’t make a good Luke, though.”

“He’d make a shitty Leia,” Kili found himself saying.

“He’s a better Stormtrooper,” Dis said. There was a fond and rueful smile on her face. “I let Thorin raise him too much.”

“Can I tell him you called him a Stormtrooper?”

“I didn’t think the two of you were speaking.”

Kili shrugged. “Kind of, not really? This is complicated and messy and I don’t do messy. I don’t do any of this.” He straightened and rolled his shoulders, trying to crack his neck. “I should have cut and run after that first time, when I saw him with Kina and Sharon. That’s usually what I do. I give them one shot and I run. I gave him… Fuck. I can’t even count the number of chances I gave him.” Kili grabbed his beer and took a big gulp of it, wincing slightly. “Can only kill me once my ass.”

Dis let him talk before, thoughtfully, asking, “You stayed because you loved him?”


“He does have that annoying tendency of making people love him,” Dis said. She was grinning and swigging her beer. “His teenage years were hell.”

Kili snorted. “Why am I not surprised? Mine were…taxing, I guess. Dad drove himself to distraction trying to keep me out of things I had no business doing. Granted, military helped keep me out of most of the problems.”

“What did you get into?” Dis asked.

“Guns,” Kili said with a grin. “If I wasn’t so opinionated Dad said he’d toss me into training in a heartbeat. Unfortunately I’m not a big fan of orders.”

“Unfortunately?”

“I’d make a mean sniper,” Kili said. “That’s kind of what I do anyway.”

“Right, the private security,” Dis said as she nodded absent. “Have you ever thought about doing something else?”

Kili leaned away from the table as the waiter slid their burgers and fries over to them. There was the polite chitchat it seemed every American waitstaff were required to ask before the man vanished into the throng of customers. He picked up a fry and munched on it. “You know, Fili asked me the same thing a bit ago. I still don’t have an answer. I was always pretty against putting down roots, something that’s very much Dad’s fault. But, I don’t know, before? I was totally ready
to.

“And then Dwalin told you.”

“Yeah…”

Dis fiddled with her wedding ring before picking up her burger and taking a large bite of it. Kili took the hint and picked his own up, nibbling it absently. They settled into something like silence as they ate, Kili trying very hard not to squirm. He didn’t do good with silence.

“You don’t care?”

“I’d rather you didn’t,” Dis said. “I can’t stop you, though, and what’s done is done. The situation is unique, I suppose is the proper word for it, and there’s not a lot that can be done about it. You’re both grown ups.”

Kili set his burger down and poked at his fries. “I don’t…this is such a mess.”

Dis set her burger down and reached over to take Kili’s hand, smearing ketchup and mustard on his skin as she did so. “Don’t focus on it so much. Just have dinner with me and talk to me. You don’t even have to think of me as your mother, just someone else.” Kili nodded, squeezing her hand. “Don’t borrow trouble until you need to.”

“You know,” Kili said as he tried to smile. “You’re pretty cool for a mom.”

Dis pinked slightly and Kili’s smile managed to stay on his face.
Kili shut the door of his rented Jeep and looked at the base house. It had been a while since he’d last been “home”, not that this house was any different from any other house on any of the bases they’d lived in. True, this one was the one Kirin had lived in for the longest but it didn’t make it home.

A traitorous, vicious part of his brain piped up that Fili was home. Had been home. Was no longer allowed to be home…

“Just gonna stare at the place?” Kirin asked from the open door.

Kili smiled and stuck his hands in his pockets. “Yeah, maybe.”

Kirin shook his head and beckoned Kili inside. “C’mon, doofus, in out of the sun.”

“Should you really be calling your son a doofus?” Kili asked as he climbed the stairs and slipped inside. Kirin closed the door behind him and reached out, pulling Kili into a tight hug. Kili held on tight, basking just the slightest in the unyielding parental love. “Hey dad.”

“Hey son,” Kirin murmured. He kissed Kili’s forehead and pulled away, hands gripped Kili’s shoulders. “How’re you doing?”

“I’m fine,” Kili said as he flashed a bright smile.

“Fili—“

“Fili who?” Kili asked, stepping away from Kirin and further into the house. He didn’t want to talk about Fili, or anything about Fili, he just… He was tired. And heartsore. And he wanted everything and everyone to just, just stop.

He went into his dedicated bedroom and smiled at the dresser and desk. Kirin had unpacked each and every trinket Kili had ever sent him and arranged them on any flat surface in the room. Little bits of his life laid out in stones, figurines, postcards, anything that caught his eye when he was abroad. He always collected two things from wherever he went—postcards and magnets—and saved them. He had bought a huge photo album years ago to slide his postcards into to keep them safe while Kirin used his magnets.

“You know, you never sent me anything from Boston,” Kirin said from the doorway. “I think that, more than anything, told me how special the place was to you.”

Kili dug out the postcard from his back pocket and let it fall to the desk. He’d snagged it at the airport, a postcard showing Fenway for it’s 100th birthday, without really thinking about it.

“So that’s it, hunh?” Kirin asked.

Kili tried to smile at him. “Yeah, that’s it.”

Kirin crossed the room and tugged Kili into a tight hug as Kili felt himself start to cry. Kirin shushed him and stroked his hair as Kili let himself mourn every what could have been.
Kili looked up as Fili set a plate full on fluffy omelet in front of him. “Oooh, you’re a saint,” he said. He smiled up at the other man, finding the ruffled bed head ridiculously cute.

“I’m no saint,” Fili said. “I’m just a guy who knows how to make an omelet.”

“I can’t cook worth a damn,” Kili said as he dug into the eggs. Fili grabbed his own plate and sat next to him, sipping the coffee Kili had made first thing.

“You can definitely make coffee, though,” Fili said. He ate his food and watched Kili yawn between bites. It was cute, domestic, adorable. This was…this was nice.

“You know what we should do?” Fili asked impulsively. Kili looked at him, tilting his head as he chewed. “We should date. Like, actually date instead of just screwing.”

Kili reached for his coffee, taking a sip of it. “Date?”

“Yeah, you know. Precursor to relationship? Or the start of an actual relationship.”

“We do have a relationship,” Kili pointed out.

Fili smiled. “One outside of bed.”

“So, what?” Kili asked, stabbing some of his eggs and munching. “Like, go to the movies, hold hands, ice cream and walks in the park?”

“Along those lines but neither of us are those people,” Fili said as he set his coffee cup down. “I was thinking more like paintball, dinner out, maybe doing other things. Summer’s coming up and I’ve got some vacation time. I know a place that does white water rafting. I’ve kind of been wanting to try that for a bit.”

Kili snickered. “Okay, so. Activities plus sex.”

Fili forked some of the omelet into his mouth, chewing thoughtfully. “Have you never actually dated someone?”
“Nope,” Kili said. “Never saw the point. Never stayed in the same place long enough to try.”

“But you’ve stayed in Boston,” Fili pointed out.

Kili shrugged. “What can I say? I like you.”

“I like you too,” Fili said. “And not just because you’re a fantastic lay.”

Kili burst out laughing and slapped a hand over his mouth so he didn’t spray his eggs. “You sound like me,” he said in delight.

Fili grinned. “I think you’ve rubbed off on me.”

“Several times,” Kili said as he reached for his coffee. “Often. And quite happily.”

“Doing anything later?”

“Well, I was hoping you’d be doing me,” Kili drawled lazily, a predatory smile on his face. “But I could be convinced to do other things.”

“Yeah? Like what?”

“Penguins,” Kili said cheerfully, setting his coffee down. “I want to go see the penguins.”

Fili blinked, startled. “Wait, what?”

“I’m serious!” Kili said, looking very earnest all of a sudden. “The MBTA is covered in posters with penguin facts. I want to go see them.”

“You want to go to the aquarium, which is crawling with children and the smell of fish,” Fili said. Kili stuck his nose in the air as he took a big bite of his omelet. “Yes. I want to see the penguins.”

Fili smiled, utterly charmed. “Okay, we can go see the penguins.”

“Most excellent,” Kili said cheerfully, going for his coffee.
Kili stalked into the bathroom and slammed the door closed, throwing the lock and huffing. He paced the small confines of the room and finally sat on the closed lid of the toilet. He could hear Fili approach the door, chicken out, walk away, and then come back over.

Finally a knock.

“Kili?”

“NO!” Kili snapped. “Breathing room! Give me five fucking minutes would you?”

Silence.

Kili growled under his breath, reciting every curse word in every language he knew. He ripped his shirt up and over his head and threw it at the door, moving to turn the shower on. He could practically hear Fili sigh as the other man walked away.

Kili shucked the rest of his clothes and climbed into the shower. He muttered grumpily in Russian—a language he loved if only because of how nasty it sounded when he was angry—and started the long and tedious process of getting his hair wet and clean.

Maybe by the time he was done he would have gotten rid of the itch under his skin. Maybe by the time he was done he would be normal enough to be okay with having Fili close all the time.
“We should have a barbecue,” Fili said. He sipped his beer as he leaned against the wide island in the kitchen, watching Kili move around as he unpacked the Chinese food. “I’ve got a grill out back, this place has a pretty decent backyard, we could get all our friends together in one general area and kill a lot of birds with one stone.”

“What birds?” Kili asked. He handed Fili a pair of chopsticks and his styrofoam container. He used his foot to pull out the chair and hopped up before snapping his own chopsticks apart.

Fili set his beer down and got Kili his forgotten beer, handing it over before taking his own seat and ripped off the lid of his container. He pushed the torn styrofoam to the side, reminding himself silently to rise it before stashing it so Kina could use it for paint, before digging into his food. Kili watched him, twirling a chopstick around and across his fingers absently, waiting for his answer. Fili licked his lips, trying not to smile. “Sorry, seriously hungry.”

“Got that,” Kili said. He was smiling as he dug into his own food. “Birds?”

“Well, I want to meet your friends. You’ve made noise about meeting mine.”

“The ones who hate me,” Kili said.

“They don’t hate you,” Fili said. “They’re just. Well. We’ve been kind of…”

“We’ve had a fucked up on-off relationship?”

“But that’s all over,” Fili said. “We’re good. We’re gonna stop deliberately pushing buttons and we’re going to start talking.” Kili smiled at him absently, nibbling on a piece of General Tso chicken. “So we should do the whole friends and meeting the people in each other’s lives thing.”

“Song and dance,” Kili said. “Yeah, okay, we can do that. You do know that most of the people I know are like, all over the world, right?”

“So invite the ones in Boston,” Fili said.

“This is such a bad idea,” Kili said, “but sure. Why not. At least it’ll be entertaining to watch the inevitable meltdown.”

“Such a bright ray of sunshine,” Fili said, stealing a piece of Kili’s chicken.

“S’why you love me,” Kili said. He used his own chopsticks to steal a strip of orange beef from Fili’s plate. “For my absolute positivity,”

“Here I thought it was because you had a fantastic ass,” Fili said.

Dwalin sat with Fili at the bar, ordering them both a beer, as he watched the blond. Silence reigned until Dwalin cleared his throat. "Kili left." Fili nodded as he hunched over his glass. "Kid, you really know how to pick them."

Fili snorted though it sounded just the tiniest bit more watery than Dwalin was prepared to deal with. "You can't compare Sharon and the others to somehow ending up fucking my own little brother."

"I think a lot of this is our faults," Dwalin said. "We never asked names or to meet him. Kina never named him except for Daddy's Boyfriend."

"That's what this weekend was for," Fili said. "To move it into maybe something more. We've stopped fighting and breaking up and he lives with me and. I mean, he's gone a lot because of work but he comes home to me. He's been, it's been. He's stopped bouncing around so much? He stays pretty close to Boston. He's started settling down with me. I thought this was it."

Dwalin let out a slow breath. He knew Kili, knew how the kid couldn't stay still long enough to form an attachment to a pet goldfish let alone another human being. He had known, from Kirin, that Kili was sticking close to Boston and it had to do with a guy but nothing more. No one had thought it would... Well. This was their own fault come to bite them in the ass.

"He's gone, though," Fili said. He sat up straight, rolled his shoulders back, and picked up his beer. He studied the glass for a moment before draining half the pint in one gulp. "He's probably going to be gone from my life by the time I get home."

Dwalin nodded. "Sounds like our boy."

Fili looked at him, the tiniest narrowing of his eyes, and then a shake of his head. "I don't want to let him go but I don't have a choice. I. He's my brother."

Dwalin was quiet. "What the two of you have...you think it's real?"

Fili nodded. "I would have thought there was nothing that could have shaken it before this weekend. I'd met his friends. He'd met mine. His were...they were amused and dismissive but a lot of them have been emailing us both and they've just kind of, accepted us. Acknowledged that Kili is living in Boston with his boyfriend. Kinda loves and adores him and he's surprisingly good with her." Fili scrubbed violently at his mouth. "Why did this gave to happen? Can't we just, can't I just be happy for once?"

"Of course you do," Dwalin said. "I wish I had an answer to why this happened but I don't. Shit happens. Life happens. You gotta just roll with it sometimes."

"This is not one of those things you just roll with!" Fili snapped. He winced and curled down closer to his beer. "Sorry."

"Fili, of all people, you have the right to yell at us. You and Kili both. We made a right mess of your lives."

"I still want him," Fili whispered. "How can I want him? He's my brother, my younger brother."

Dwalin took a healthy drink of his own beer. "I wish I could tell you why or give you an answer
that would fix the whole situation. But I can’t. No one can. It’s not that simple.”


Dwalin looked away, out over the rest of the bar, as he thought. “You know how you said he’d be gone by the time you get home?” Fili nodded. “You’re right, he will be gone. He’s not going to give you the chance to talk to him, or to see him. He’s going to vanish in a puff of smoke and he’s never going to show up again.” Fili made a tiny sound of distress, his hand clenching tight on his beer glass. “I’ve know him for year, Fili. This is what he does. He roves around, traveling and working, never setting down roots or forming attachments.”

“He did with me,” Fili said.

“Exactly,” Dwalin said. “Despite everything he settled in with you, he formed attachments to you and Kina, he stayed in one place longer than a couple of months. You don’t understand how odd that is.”

“He has two bags,” Fili said. “That’s all. Just, you know, two duffel bags. His life fits in all of that and he doesn’t care.”

Dwalin chuckled. “That’s our boy, always making sure that he can just grab and go when the need strikes.”

“Why?” Fili asked.

“Why what?”

“Why does he only have two bags?” Fili asked. He hesitated and picked up his beer, drinking it slowly before setting it down. “I asked him once and he just shrugged at me.”

Dwalin dug out his wallet, fishing out a business card and snagging a pen off the bartop. He scribbled an email address down and handed it to Fili. “Kirin.”

Fili looked down at the card and took it, hands shaking slightly as he examined it before putting it in his back pocket.

“He’s got the answers you want, probably.”

“Probably?”

Dwalin smiled, scratching at his beard. “Kirin is an old friend, a good friend, but he doesn’t tend to give the straightest answers.”

“I’ll keep it in mind,” Fili said.

Dwalin reached out and tugged Fili half off his barstool, grasping him tight. “I’m here for you, Fili. No matter what. Way I see it? We fucked up, all us adults. You do what you need and I’ll be in your corner. It’s the least I can do.”
Kili glanced down at his phone and the text message.

"That's, what, the fifth time?" Dirk asked.

Kili licked his lips and ran his thumb along the side casing of his phone. "Nothing so drastic, just the third."

"This is hardly a one night stand, Haegan."

"The sex is incredible," Kili said. He swiped at his screen, keeping it from timing out on him as he continued to consider the text. "And he's actually pretty funny."

"You stay?" Dirk asked, incredulous. "You, who never stays, who taps it and leaves it, you stay?"

Kili considered the text. Just two words. Two very simply words. Nothing to even suggest that nature of what they'd be doing. Just... two simple words.

You free?

Kili bit his bottom lips, slowly letting it go from his teeth. He tapped out a response and looked at Dirk. "I stay. Do you know how much sex I can get if I stay an extra couple of hours?"

Dirk looked at him suspiciously.

Kili leaned back on his barstool and crossed his arms. His legs were hooked around the base of the stool, keeping him from falling back on his ass. Not that that had ever happened. Nope. That's his story and he's sticking to it. "What?"

"Exactly how good is the sex?"

Kili grinned, reaching out and pulling his beer closer so he could take a deep drink of it. "Really good."

"Pass out good?"

Kili couldn't help the cackle he let loose. "Oh yeah, that good. He, I can't. It's mind blowing. That asshole, I swear, he... I don't even know. I can't describe it. He kept me on edge for close to an hour before he let me come and I blacked out. It was awesome. I don't even remember what happened just that it was. It was... I've never had sex that great before."

"Right," Dirk said. "Anyway, you're going to have to leave Mr Fantastic soon. We've got a job in Dubai in a week. Some rich guy is paranoid and wants us to guard him and his daughter."

"Anything serious?" Kili asked.

"He claims he got a letter threatening a kidnapping before they left but you know those rich types. The littlest thing sets them off."

"His own security can't protect them?" Kili asked.

"You think I ask details?"
"No but I would have hoped Tauriel would have."

Dirk shrugged. "The Captain probably did but I don't question orders."

"You are such a soldier," Kili said as he slid off his stool. "Email me the details?"

Dirk saluted him with his glass. "Have fun getting fucked stupid."

Kili grinned, not even resisting the urge to lick his lips again. "Oh I intend to have lots of fun tonight. And maybe tomorrow morning too."
To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: AHAHAHA.Aaaaa i lost my phone

oops?

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: AHAHAHA.Aaaaa i lost my phone
dork

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: AHAHAHA.Aaaaa i lost my phone

and you made fun of me for having two cell phones

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: AHAHAHA.Aaaaa i lost my phone

you lost YOUR phone or the company phone?

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: AHAHAHA.Aaaaa i lost my phone

miiiiiiine. it got lost. in the woods. in the jungle. in the deeeeeeep.

whatever. i lost it. it’s gone. i m going to email you instead because no one is supposed to HAVE this number. ridiculous but i follow the rules cuz they pay me the big $$

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: AHAHAHAAAaaa i lost my phone

we’ll have to get you a new one

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: AHAHAHAAAaaa i lost my phone

know what i want more than a new phone? you. i had pictures on there dammit! major spank bank stuff. now i got nada. and this makes me mad and sad. i think i got it bad. is it dumb to say i just wanna see you smiling?

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: AHAHAHAAAaaa i lost my phone
Attachment: DSC323408000.jpg

smiles i can do

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: AHAHAHAAAaaa i lost my phone

fuck we’re dorks

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: AHAHAHAAAaaa i lost my phone

can you skype on the work phone or no?

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: AHAHAHAAAaaa i lost my phone

oh i know what you’re getting at. ;) i think i can arrange for some skype sex

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened

well. i got nothing.

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: so that happened

You want to know what I’m going to do to you when you get home? I am going to pick you up at the airport and take you back here. To my place. I am going to find a pair of handcuffs—actual handcuffs—and cuff you to the bed. And then I am going to keep you there for the next WEEK to make up for that. FOr this. For this whole trip.

Do you know I have never been this fucking frustrated since I discovered how to work my dick?
To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened
Attachment: nothelping.mp4

:D ?

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: so that happened

that was not fair

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: so that happened
Attachment: nothelping2.mp4

<3

To: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
From: fd1985@yahoo.com
Re: so that happened

WHO THE HELL IS TAPING YOU?

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened
Attachment: nothelping3.mp4

Waaaaaaaant yooooooooou

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened

nothing?

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened

FIIIIIIIIILIIIIIIIIIIII

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened
Attachment: kh_flightinfo_0926xx.jpg

so you’re picking me up, right?

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened
meet the boys. you’ll probably see them again at some point. leeeeeeft to right:

dirk, me, jake, terry, allison (she’s scary), and michelle (mighty mouse).

terry and michelle are married and micheeeeeeelle had some fun with the camera. she was cracking up the whole time

To: fd1985@yahoo.com
From: kili.haegan@woodsecurity.org
Re: so that happened

leaving now
It was the first time Fili had ever seen Kili so drunk. They’d met up at the club, drinking and
dancing and having fun, but the brunet had seemed almost…desperate in his need. He drank
whatever was handed to him with gusto, buying his own in the mix, pouring the alcohol down his
thirsty throat. He clung with Fili with tight hands and smiled too brightly and too widely, almost a
mimicry of happiness.

When they left Fili brought Kili back to his place, not knowing yet where the brunet lived, and
held him through the taxi ride. Kili was smiles and kisses but it changed when they got in the
apartment. The smile turned to bitten lips and hungry gazes as they moved back toward the
bedroom.

Fili has his hands on Kili’s hips, pressing him firmly into the wall as they kissed, roving hands
pulling away clothes and tossing them this way and that. Kili swore as he laughed, his hand
catching on a picture frame. He turned in Fili’s arms, picking it up and froze, his eyes focusing on
Kina’s smiling face.

Between one moment and the next Kili was in the bathroom throwing up.

Fili stared at the space Kili had been in, hands feelings full despite their apparent appearance. He
shrugged off his t-shirt and dropped it on top of Kili’s before going into the bathroom. He hadn’t
noticed when he’d picked up the photograph of Kina but he looked at it.

It was some silly candid picture of her smiling at a park. It was benign and innocent. What could
possibly have set Kili off? He set the picture down and knelt next to him, rubbing Kili’s back and
keeping his hair out of his face. There were tears flowing down Kili’s cheeks, more than just from
throwing up, actual tears. It took Fili a moment to realize that Kili was sobbing as his body rejected
everything he’d eaten and drank in the past twelve hours.

“Kili?” Fili asked when the heaves seemed to have stopped.

Kili sat back on his heels, wiping at his mouth with some toilet paper and then at his nose. “It’s a
work thing,” he said hoarsly. “Nothing big.”
“Except it’s big enough to have you sick,” Fili said.

Kili looked at him, studied him, focused his insanely gorgeous whisky colored eyes on him. “I work security,” he said finally. “Private security. There was a kidnapping and. And. And kids.” Kili lunged for the toilet again, bringing up bile as he gagged.

Fili could just imagine what Kili had seen if this was the response. Fili eased Kili away from the bathroom, tucking them both into bed and holding the other man close.
Fili watched as Dis and Kirin sized each other up. His mom had dressed for the occasion in a flattering blouse and dress slacks and heels while Fili had stuck to khakis and a button down. Kili and Kirin, though, hadn’t gotten the memo about the nice place they were going to. Kili had his hair braided back and was wearing a pair of black jeans and a blue henley while Kirin was wearing regular blue jeans and a black t-shirt.

It was nice, though, to see that Fili took after his dad with the blond hair. He could also see where Kili’s dark eyes had come from.

“So,” Kili said, looking at them. “I think a change in venue might be better.”

Fili shook his head, “Let me guess, you heard the name Flemming’s, googled it, and promptly decided hell no.”

“They sell glasses of wine for a couple hundred,” Kili said. Kirin winced. “That’s really not our style.”

“And what is your style?” Dis asked.

Kirin flashed Kili’s quicksilver smile at Dis. “Sweetheart, I’m sure you remember my style.”

“Right,” Dis said. “How about the Melting Pot? It’s close by and it doesn’t really care how you look.”

“Fondue?” Kirin asked.

“You remember Switzerland, don’t you?”

“Why do I get the feeling they’re flirting?” Fili asked.

“Because they are,” Kili said. He slid his hands into his pockets and offered Fili a wobbly smile. “This was a bad idea.”

“Trust me, okay?” Fili said, nudging Kili with his elbow. "This'll be fine."

"Yeah, fine, sure. We have both of our parents in the same room because we decided to get involved and now we're--"

Fili silenced him with a kiss. "Kili. Trust me. I've got this."

Kili sighed. "Fine. You got this. I'm just going to have a tiny panic attack while you do."

"You two coming?" Kirin asked.

"Yep," Fili said, taking Kili's hand and leading him to their table.
Kili squared his shoulders as he entered the Captain’s office. Well, she wasn’t really a Captain anymore but she was ex-military and his boss and he knew better than to disrespect the chain of command.

Tauriel, standing behind her desk and sorting through papers, looked up as he closed the door behind him. “Kili,” she said with a smile. “How are you?”

“Confused,” Kili said slowly, drawing the word out. “You kind of had me ambushed by your overzealous minion.”

Tauriel was too composed and poised to snicker but her lips twitched. “I got your request and I wanted to talk it over with you.”

Kili winced. “Yeaaaah, I figured that was going to bite me in the ass somehow.”

“Then why did you make the request?” Tauriel asked. “It’s a big deal to have one of your best freelance employees says they want to stay in the same general area and get attached to the office. Maybe, even, be hired by us.”

“It’s not—“

“Oh, but it is,” Tauriel said as she came around her desk, her long red hair swishing behind her. She was wearing it loose today instead of in one of her customary braids. “Kili, we’ve known each other for a very long time.”

Kili slid his hands into the pockets of his dress pants. “Yeah, I know.”

“You never do anything permanent.”

Kili smiled, unable to keep the cheekiness at bay, and pulled up his white dress shirt. “I’m pretty sure that this is considered permanent.”

“Imagine my shock when you got that,” Tauriel said with a raised eyebrow. “And that’s the only one you have.”

Kili let his shirt fall. “Yeah, and?”

“What’s changed?”

Kili shrugged. “I have to have a reason?”

“Dirk seems to think its a guy.”

Kili groaned. “Dirk has a big mouth.”

“Tell me about him?” Tauriel asked, sitting on top of her desk.

“It’s just a guy,” Kili said. “Nothing special.”

“Special enough to make you want to stay in Boston.”

Kili promptly dropped where he was, pulling his legs in close and setting his elbows on them and
his face in his hands. “Why are you being nosy?”

“You’re like my kid brother,” Tauriel said. “I have to make sure whoever this is has been properly vetted and had the terror of me put in him.”

“First, you are not meeting him.”

“No?”

“Nope,” Kili said. “Second, I already ran background checks on him.”

“I could just check your computer access,” Tauriel pointed out.

“Who said I used mine?” Kili asked. “Besides, he’s cool. Nothing criminal about him.”

“Shouldn’t I be the judge of that?” Tauriel asked. “I’m likely to dig a lot further than you are.”

“Tauriel…”


“Like hell,” Kili said.

“No, really. I’ll bring Legolas, we can double date.”

“Yes,” Kili said, getting to his feet and rolling his eyes. “Let’s do a double date with my CO and her husband who’s dad runs of the biggest security firms in the world. That sounds like my exact idea of a wonderful night out on the town. I love double dates. They’re as much fun as swallowing sulfuric acid.”

Tauriel smiled. “It was worth a shot.”

Kili shook his head. “We good here?”

“Dismissed,” Tauriel said, waving her hand at him. “Assigned to the Boston office, HR is drawing up the paperwork to have you attached in more than a freelance position, and you’re good.”

“Thank you, dearest,” Kili said, cupping her face and kissing her cheek. “Call me?”

“Maybe.”
Kili rolled over in the hotel bed and tugged the pillow close. He wanted to be holding Fili but that was no longer an option. Not that now they Knew.

Fuck.

How had this happened? Brothers? Family? These concepts were, for the most part, foreign to him. Family was his dad. Family was bouncing around, smiles and laughter, gunmetal and powder smoke, the smell of new carpet and fresh paint…

Family was different than Fili who was—had been—home. Home.

Well that was bullshit now.

How could he have been so stupid? He let himself get attached, settled, and it just. It blew up in his face, just like it had for everyone else he had ever known. Dirk had used to be married, or, well. He never made it to the alter.

Fuck this was such a disaster.

Kili buried his face in the pillow and squeezed his eyes closed tight. He tried to ignore the painful lump in his throat and the way his chest felt like Michelle had bear hugged him.

He had thought of forever. He had thought about Fili being in his life, his whole life, not just the little personal part he could share. He had wanted to bring Fili to one of his jobs, introduce him to the whole crew, to share everything of himself that he could. Yeah it had taken him almost two years to do so but he’d still been about to. Then this ridiculous wedding.

Kili sat up, grabbed the pillow, and threw it as hard as he could at the wall. He missed, hitting the TV instead and watched in numb shock as the TV teetered and then fell.

Well. Yeah, okay then.
Kili ran his hands over Fili’s chest. “Okay, here are some serious questions.”

“Serious questions?” Fili asked. “Really? You have serious questions for your one night stands?”

“I have serious questions for one night stands who keep up with me and give me amazing orgasms,” Kili grinned. He reached up and tapped Fili’s nose. “Ready?”

“Hit me.”

“Tempting,” Kili said. “Okay, Helman’s or Miracle Whip?”

“What?” Fili asked, staring at him.

“Helman’s or Miracle Whip,” Kili said. He was perfectly serious. These were some make or break questions, after all.

“Helman’s,” Fili said slowly. He was tilting his head and squirming slightly so he could see Kili more clearly.

“Good answer,” Kili said. “Okay, ready for the next one?”

Fili smiled. “I’m ready.”

“ Toilet paper, over or under?”

“Over,” Fili said promptly.

Kili nodded, his hair tangling and making him wince. Fili reached out and helped pull the trapped strands free. Kili smiled and scooted closer to kiss Fili slowly in thanks. “Okay, I just have one more.”

“Just one?”

“Just one,” Kili said, moving his head to drag his teeth along Fili’s stubbled jaw. “Wolverine or Batman?”

Fili jerked away, “Oh you did not just go there.”

Kili laughed and sat up. “Oh, I did. Whatcha gonna do about it?”

Fili sat up as well, eyes narrowed as he considered Kili before lunging forward and pinning Kili to the bed, kissing him demandingly. Teeth and lips and hunger and oh, Kili was very good with this. “I’m going to ask you some of my own questions. But you’re not going to tell me any answers,” Fili said. Kili shivered as Fili’s hands did this Thing. “Your body is going to give me all the answers I want.”

Kili arched into Fili as those hands did that Thing again and he gave into answering any and all of Fili’s questions.
“So…are we expected to do this whole father-son bonding thing?” Fili asked, eyeing Kirin awkwardly.

“Hell no,” Kirin said. “I’m not even sure how to do that. You’ve meet Kili, he does things his own way and, if I’m lucky, he takes me along for the ride.”

Fili laughed. “Yeah, that’s…that’s Kili all right.”

Kirin stuck his hands in his back pockets, one foot shifting to hold his altered weight. “So. Boston.” Fili nodded. “Red Sox and Pats?”

Fili snorted. “Nooooo thank you.”

“Sad day for the brat, he loves baseball.”

“Lucky for me he’s a Bruins’s fan,” Fili said. “Hockey is a lot more fun than baseball.”

“Not much of a fan there, I gotta say,” Kirin said. He scratched at the back of his head before sliding his hand back into his pocket. “Look, why don’t we grab some grub and you tell me about your little girl. And we’ll go from there.”

“So you were trying to do some father-son bonding,” Fili said, pulling an A-HA! moment finger and stance. They both ended up laughing and Kirin reach out, just as quick as Kili, and yanked Fili in close for a one-armed hug. They stayed that way for a moment before Kirin loosened his hold and they ambled down the street to the closest bar.
“This is going to be a short one,” Kili said. He rolled over in bed until he was straddling Fili’s waist. “Come with me?”

“Go with you? Where?” Fili asked, reaching out and snagging Kili’s hands with his.

“This is some ridiculously simple yawn job in Atlanta,” Kili said. “There’s a conference of some high level execs of something or other who are antsy and they asked us to help out.”

“Why don’t they ask the feds?”

“Because we’re better,” Kili said simply. He leaned in, his weight shifting to their linked hands, kissing Fili slowly, savoring the slight catch barely moist skin had on dry. “Come with me?”

“Am I there to be your kept man?” Fili asked in amusement.

“No,” Kili said. “My boyfriend. You come be my boyfriend, have a couple of drinks with the guys, play some darts and pool, enjoy a fancy hotel on the company’s dime, and have a bit of a vacation. It shouldn’t last more than a week and it’s nice down there right now.”

Fili smiled up at him, “Kili.”

“Come with me,” Kili said as he leaned in closer. “I’m tired of thinking myself to death. I want you with me.”

“You do, hunh?” Fili asked.

Kili smiled and sat up, pulling Fili with him. “I’ve moved in with you. We go out on dates. We’ve done the friend mesh thing.”

“We have,” Fili agreed.

“Come with me now,” Kili said, brushing a kiss over Fili’s forehead, “and consider this…well.”

Fili waited.
“You’re going to make me say it, aren’t you?” Kili asked.

“Maybe a little,” Fili said. His twitching lips gave his amusement away.

“Hmm, how does the song go? I think with my heart but move with my head?”

“Something like that.”

“Come with me,” Kili said, his lips pressed to Fili’s. “Let’s do this.”

“I’ve got my mother’s wedding in a week,” Fili said. "You said you'd come to that with me."

Kili huffed, leaning back and making a face at him. “Mood killer!”

“But, after, yeah? After we’ll go ahead and take a vacation, get a fancy hotel, have a couple of beers and play some pool,” Fili said. He reached out and grabbed Kili’s left hand, holding it tight. “We will.”

Kili smiled at him, squeezing back. “Yeah, we will.”
Fili looked up from his paperwork as Kili’s phone rang for the fifth time in a row. Each time it seemed like Kili was trying to make himself smaller on the couch and he was definitely flinching.

"You okay?" Fili asked.

Kili shook his head. "Not really."

"Anything to do with why you're ignoring your phone?"

Kili slid off the couch, all legs and arms, looking almost more like a reluctant and pouting Kina than a grown man, and stretched. "Remember that time I came back from a job and it was bad?"

"You come back from a lot of jobs bad, no offense," Fili said.

"Cute. Anyway this…is kind of like that last time. I know who is calling and I don't want to deal with her. I don't want this job. I want to stay here, with you, not... Not go out there."

Fili got up from his desk and sat down with Kili on the couch. “Can you tell me what the job is?”

Kili stretched out, half in and out of Fili’s lap, and rested his head on his shoulder. “It’s…” He sighed. “I don’t like things with kids. They never end well and they make me sick.”

“Kidnapping?” Fili guessed.

“Custodial interference,” Kili said. “I got the file this morning. It’s…not pretty. High powered family, issues upon issues. I just. I don’t want to do those any more.”

“Any more?”

“The last…you don’t want to hear this.”

Fili tugged Kili close, pulling him fully into his lap. “Kili, we’re in this together. You and me. That means I want it all. You can tell me everything, anything, things you won’t tell anyone else, things you tell everyone. I just. You know I love you, right?” Kili nodded. “I would tell you everything.”
Kili leaned forward, their foreheads touching. “I was part of a team that was going to go in and rescue a brother and a sister. It was a kidnapping gone wrong. They were snatched by an angry business partner and he screwed up the sedative he used. He tried to get rid of the kids and it. He used lye.”

“Lye?” Fili asked, the feeling of dread growing in his stomach.

Kili sighed. “Yeah. It, uh. We got the little girl to the hospital in time but the boy died. There were burns and it was just. It was horrible.”

Fili winced. “Kili…”

“So I don’t do the kids thing.”

“Why would they want you to after that?”

“Because I’m good with kids,” Kili said with a tiny smile. “Dirk tells me it’s because we’re the same level of maturity. We’re kindred spirits and all that.”

“You’re wonderful with Kina,” Fili said. Kili closed the distance and kissed Fili as his phone went off again. Fili reached over and snagged it, answering it. “So, he said no and I’m kidnapping him myself.”

There was a chuckle from a female voice. “I was actually calling to see how he was doing.”

“Not too good.”

“Take care of him for us, okay?”

“Will do,” Fili said as he tossed the phone aside. “Okay, you, me, beer, nachos, and whatever is on TV that’s mindless.”

Kili made a happy noise as he squirmed off Fili’s lap. “Nachos. That. Yeah, let’s do that.”
“So,” Kina said, looking at Kili speculatively.

“So yourself, Princess,” Kili said. He set the plate in front of her and leaned against the counter, arms crossed. “Eat.”

“Wanna answer something for me?”

“Depends,” Kili said. "What's the question?"

"I call you uncle but you're actually my uncle, aren't you?" Kina asked as she picked up the sandwich and took as large bite. "Like, related. Dad's brother and all."

Kili blinked at her before clearing his throat. "What makes you ask?"

"Science class," Kina said. "We're studying genetics and ancestry. Family trees and all. Turns out grandma married a Haegan, which is a matter of public record. So's babies and divorces."

Kili sighed and went to the fridge, pulling out a beer. The good type. The type he bribed his friends for when they left the States. "Well, that's certainly not how your dad thought you'd find out."

"So you guys were going to tell me?" Kina asked.

Kili twisted the cap off his beer and tossed it on the counter. He went around and sat next to Kina as he took a deep pull of the beer. "That's been a bit of an ongoing argument between all of us."

"All?"

"Me, your dad, Thorin, my dad, Dis, Dwalin, Frerin..." Kili sighed. "Basically, anyone who knew about us had an opinion to voice."

Kina took another bite of her sandwich, clearly waiting for Kili to get on with it.

"It's not like we set out to get into this mess," Kili said. "I sure as hell didn't even plan on settling down in the first place. But, well, your dad and I kind of." Kili coughed at Kina's smirk. "Yeah, shut up. We fell in love and then the bomb dropped and shit happened."

"Will you tell me?" Kina asked. "All of it, the whole thing. I wanna know."

"No you don't," Kili said, trying to keep the hysterical laughter at bay. "You really don't."

"I really do," Kina said. "Tell me how you met, all about the fights, the stuff I already know, the stuff I don't. I want to know what happened when you left dad and when you came back, what happened to make you stay."

Kili took a deep breath and let it out. "Okay. Well, first thing is that I met your dad at a club..."
Fili watched Kili dance about the kitchen to the radio. He had picked Kili up from Logan not too long ago and Kili had demanded Chinese and mad movies. Of course once Fili got Kili inside he noticed something different about his boyfriend.

"Your hair is red and you cut it," Fili said, wielding chopsticks with flair. He ate out of the white containers as Kili opened and closed cabinets at random.

"Henna," Kili said with a wide grin. He grabbed two shot glasses out of one cabinet and snagged the bottle of Jack from the other. He set both down in front of Fili and grinned, leaning across the table to kiss Fili. "It'll wash out and grow back. I make an excellent decoy if I do say so myself."

Fili rolled his eyes, poking Kili in the cheek with his chopsticks. "I don’t like it."

"Tough," Kili said, pushing Fili’s hand away. He straighten and poured them both shots. Fili took his and sipped at it while Kili threw his back. “C’mon, drink up.”

“Yeah?” Fili asked, tipping the whiskey down his throat and setting the shot glass down. “You could dye it back.”

Kili shook his head, snickering, and walked around to tug Fili out of his chair. “Is it that bad?”

“No,” Fili said, running his hands through the short hair. Well, all right, it wasn’t short-short like his own hair, but it was shorter than he’d ever seen Kili’s hair. Usually the other man’s hair brushed the middle of his back when it was down, all silk and dark and perfect. Now it brushed his shoulders and was lighter than his normal color. “It’s just…different.”

Kili kissed him, laughing into the kiss, bright as the sun and just as sweet. “It’ll grow back.”

“Was it worth it?” he asked.

Kili smirked, nipping at Fili’s bottom lip. “There are pictures of me in a pair of short ass shorts and flannel.”

“Who the hell?”
Kili laughed again, kissing Fili again. “Told you, decoy. I make the best decoy.”

“In shorts?”

“Nah, that was just for a laugh on the employer’s part. It was fun though.”

“You’re crazy,” Fili laughed.

“Exactly, now kiss me some more,” Kili demanded, his eyes twinkling.
"You wanted to show me…what?" Kili asked. He crossed his arms and leaned against Fili’s car.

Fili circled around and tugged Kili close, arms around his waist. “Do you like the street?” He nudged Kili in different directions, urging the other to look. “There’s a couple of decent bars down that way, and even a place that sells your ridiculous imports, and over there,” Fili turned Kili the other way, “is a bunch of grocery stores and pharmacies and a couple of fast food joints. There’s even a Friendly’s for Kina.”

Kili leaned back into Fili. “Okay, so the street is good. Which house is it?”

Fili nuzzled through Kili’s hair to his skin and kissed it. “The green one on the corner.”

Kili pulled away from him and started walking toward the corner. Fili watched as Kili went up the walkway and then through to the back. Fili waited, his hands in his pockets, kicking at a leaf idly. Kili came back over and nodded.

“All right.”

“Yeah?” Fili asked, smiling. “You like?”

“You knew I would,” Kili said. “You made a deposit already, haven’t you?”

Fili tried to look guilty but was smiling too much to pass. “Yeah, I got a loan for it.”

Kili rolled his eyes and reached out, grabbing Fili by the collar, and kissed him. “You ridiculous man. You bought yourself a house.”

“Nope,” Fili said. “I bought us a house.”

Kili leaned back. “What?”

“You, Kili Haegan, are going to join me in the mad endevour. Kina is important but not as much as you.” Fili kissed him as he linked their hands together. “So, brother mine, wanna make a life with me?”
Track 63 - Thinking Out Loud
Fili saw the brunet—Kili—in the middle of the crowd. He was dancing with his friends, his hair loose as he swayed, head moving back as forth as he laughed. A woman grabbed at Kili, pulling him close and dancing with him. Fili set his drink aside and made his way into the fray.

He got close to Kili and laid a hand on the other’s hip. Kili glanced back at him and laughed, the sound lost in the pounding of the bass line. Their bodies melded against each other perfectly, Kili leaning back just a little more to make up for the height difference, Fili’s hands sliding into the front pockets of Kili’s jeans.

There was something intense being pressed together so close in public, in the relative dark of the club, with speakers pounding out the beat of Shakira around them. They stayed there, though, dancing through song after song, changing positions as they felt like it. How they ended up against one of the back walls was a mystery to Fili but he had Kili’s tongue in his mouth and his hands were full of the brunet’s ass. All in all, it was an excellent way to end the night.
Kili rolled over in the large bed, half-awake, and curled around the warm body lying next to him. There was something so satisfying about waking up with some, even if he rarely did, but Fili made it worth his while. So very worth his while.

This time, though, he wanted to see more than just the bedroom.

He kissed Fili’s shoulder and rolled out of bed with the intention of poking around a little. It was always good to know who you were sleeping with. He started with the living room, looking at the cluttered coffee table, flopping down on the couch and poking at the mess.

Fili was a complete geek, Kili discovered with glee. There was a stack of unwrapped anime DVDs and library books balancing precariously on one corner. Kili nudged them, looking at the books: The Night Circus; A Game of Thrones; Ready Player One; Red Shirts; The Maze Runner. Kili grinned widely before poking through the rest of the table. There was a practically destroyed copy of Snow Crash as well as a few empty beer bottles. There was also the typical mass of loose change, receipts, gum wrappers, ticket stubs, and bits of lint.

The rest of the place was relatively clean, though there was a large stack of Manila folders taking up one of the arm chairs. Kili grabbed one and flipped through it, seeing nothing of interest--Fili was one of those who liked to take work home apparently. The TV was large and flat, the stand full of video games and consoles, and even more anime DVDs and other random ones. SciFi movies, fantasy, a large selection of action, and even some random kids movies.

"Did you want to watch something?" Fili asked from the doorway with a yawn.

Kili turned and flashed him a quick smile. "You. Are. A. Geek."

"I have no shame in that," Fili said. Kili went over to him and ruffled Fili’s bedhead. “Why? Is that a bad thing?”

“Nope,” Kili said. “Only, I have to ask a question and you have to answer honestly."

Fili leaned into Kili’s touch. “Go for it."

“Who shot first, Han or Greedo."

Fili stared at him for a moment before laughing. “Why is this such a turn on? I mean, really, I want to drag you back to bed, all because you know Star Wars."

“As I said, total geek."

“Han shot first, always and of course. Now, lets get you back into bed. I have plans for you."

“Fantastic,“ Kili said, pressing close and kissing him. “I love plans. They’re so…tactical. And tactile."

“Now who’s the geek?”
Track 66 - Rather Be
“Seriously?” Kili asked, staring at Kirin. “Bungee jumping?”

“You can handle it,” Kirin said with confidence. He helped get Kili strapped in, smiling at Kili as his son practically vibrated with glee and anticipation. “Jason told me you’d been pestering him to teach you how to repel so I figured this would be a good idea.”

“This is a most excellent idea,” Kili said. He hugged Kirin tight and bounced over to the edge when the instructor beckoned him. Kirin watched him with an idle smile, taking in his son’s effervescence. He didn’t want Kili to have any regrets in his life. If there was a jump that needed to be made, any leap—whether physical or of faith—he wanted Kili to be prepared.

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“C’mon,” Kili cajoled, smiling as he tugged on Fili’s arm.

“God, Kili, no,” Fili protested, flushing a bright red and digging his heels in. “I get that you like to push boundaries and get me outside of my comfort zone, but this! This is just, way, way...no. I can’t.”

“You totally can,” Kili said. “You’re going to go out there and own this. Remind yourself it’s all for charity if it helps.”

Fili gave him a dirty look. “Yes, because I’m dressed up as Sailor Mercury for charity.”

“You should never have told me you used to cosplay,” Kili agreed. “Now, c’mon. We’ve gotta get out there and strut our stuff!”

“I may hate Dirk but I am going to find some dirt on you,” Fili said, stabbing a gloved finger at Kili’s chest.

“C’mon, Durin!” Mary from Accounting said. “Shake a boot, we’re on stage in five!”

Kili straightened his own skirt and pushed Fili out in front of him. “Don’t worry, Mary, I’ve got him.”
Mary smiled and handed out the tiny microphones. “Cool. Now, we all know our lines?” Kili said something in perfect Japanese that had Fili wanting to strangle him. Asshole. Fili dutifully repeated his own lines for Mary and winced as she cackled and hugged them both tightly. “Fantastic! We’re going to raise so much money, boys!”

“She better hope we do, or I’m going to murder all of you,” Fili said from behind grit teeth.

Kili leaned in and kissed him. “You’ll be fine,” he said. “You know I’ll make it up to you.”

“You. Better.”

“I’m not the permanent type,” Kili said, looking through pictures of tattoos on Dirk’s phone.


“Therefore. Such big words out of you,” Kili said absently. “I don’t like of any of these.” He reached out and snagged a bit of paper before scribbling something. “Let’s try this.”

Dirk shook his head. “That is so girly.”

Kili twisted the paper this way and that. It was simple, just a word—free—written in his loose scrawl, and a bad drawing of a bird at the end. He liked the idea of always being free, of being a bird, of flying through life and. Well. That was about a permanent life idea as he’d get.

“I’ll see if we can manly it up with the artist,” Dirk said.

Kili let the other man collect the paper and shove it in his pocket. “You lot just said permanent,” he said. “That kind of has meaning now.”

Dirk stared at him before shaking his head and changing the subject.

It was hell, this Best Buddies thing. Fili had no idea how he’d been talked into it but he had. And he had raised a ton of money for the organization. That wasn't the hard part. The hard part was biking the one hundred miles from Boston to Hyannis Port on the Cape. He had trained and toned but it was... Well. It was a challenge, which is what he signed up for. One thing to check off his bucket list: participating in a marathon of any kind.

He wished he’d picked an easier one, though.

Kina curled in against Fili's side, sniffing, as father and daughter watched Trigun. Kili was sprawled on his stomach, Sharpie in hand, as he doodled on Kina's cast. She was holding onto Kili's other hand with her cast fingers and clinging to the hem of Fili's shirt with her other.

"You still feeling all icky?" Kili asked. Kina nodded miserably and Kili popped the cap on his Sharpie. "Okay, I think this deserves some serious pampering."

Fili flashed him a quick, grateful smile. "You do?"

"Absolutely," Kili said. "I'm thinking grilled cheese and chicken soup. And I'm pretty sure your
dad has some cookie dough hidden somewhere in the fridge."

Fili gaped at him. "No I don't!"

"Did you eat it all?" Kili asked with a sly smile. Kina giggled softly. Fili sighed and tugged his daughter closer. "See, we have some. Probably enough for a cookie or three, or we can try doing mug cakes." He winked at Kina. "What do you say, Princess? Do you want to possibly blow things up in the microwave?"

"I like cookies," Kina said quietly.

"Then that's what we'll do," Fili said. "Well, what Kili will do. You wanna watch something other than this?"

"Can we watch Sakura?" Kina asked hopefully. "I love Vash and Millie but, but I kinda like Lee too."

Fili nodded and stood, stretching out and grabbing the DVDs. Kili squirmed his way off the bed and handed Kina the Sharpie with strict instructions to guard it for him. He swooped over to kiss Fili on the cheek before going to take care of their little girl.
Kili slowly eased out from under Fili’s arm, trying not to wake the other man. He crept about, gathering his clothes, and edged out of the bedroom. He pulled on his clothes, foregoing his come-stained underwear, and searched for his sneakers.

He had no idea where his socks were.

Kili stuffed his underwear in his back pocket and snagged his jacket from where it had ended up over a lamp. He heard a noise and froze but when Fili failed to appear Kili breathed a sigh of relief and left the apartment.

He tried to call the elevator but it was taking forever so he took the stairs, nervous energy coursing through his veins. He had to be back at his apartment, changed and showered, before Dirk showed up. If his friend saw him like this there would be so much hell to pay. He’d gone far beyond booty call with Fili and, while nice, it wasn’t a smart move to make. Not with his life. Or anything. Actually, it was a horrible idea. But, oh fuck, the sex was amazing. He wouldn’t say he had no idea he could feel so good because that would be cheesy, cliche, and a lie, but Fili made his body thrum in a way that Kili found addicting.

Exiting the building (ignoring the knowing look from the doorman) Kili snagged a cab with little trouble and had them drop him off in front of his apartment.

Fucking Dirk was waiting for him.

Kili sighed and paid the cabbie and stood on the curb looking at Dirk.

“Is that your underwear in your pocket?” Dirk asked.

“Fuck you,” Kili said, pulling his keys out and heading his building.

“Have I ever mentioned how much I enjoy catching your walks of shame?”

“Bite me.”

“Been there, done that,” Dirk said easily. “Though, looking at the hickey on the back of your neck,
someone else has ben having fun biting you.”

Kili hunched his shoulders and unlocked his apartment. He hated getting caught. But he supposed Fili was worth it.
Kili laugh out a breathless laugh as Fili threw him up against a wall and then covered his body with his. They kissed, almost violent in their hunger, teeth and lips and tongue and the coppery taste of blood. Kili leaned his head back and licked his bitten lip.

Fili followed his tongue and took a step back. “I’m not feeling too nice tonight.”

“Nice is overrated,” Kili said, leaning his back against the wall and jutting his hips out. “You know I can take it.”

Fili stepped forward and grabbed Kili but the shirt, pulling him against him, the brunet stumbling slightly. He grabbed Fili’s shoulders to steady himself and groaned in surprise as his brother leaned in and bit at the side of his neck, teeth firm and just this side of painful, before sucking hungrily.

Hands shoved at clothes, Kili ending up naked before he even realized it. Fili had lost his shirt and belt, pants still zipped but his button free. Kili thought this was extremely unfair and reached out to remedy it—only to have Fili catch his wrists in one hand and hold them away.

Kili looked at him, head tilted to the side in curiosity, only to stumble slightly as Fili pushed him back. They walked that way, Kili trusting Fili not to let him trip and fall over something, to the bedroom where Fili pushed Kili down onto the bed. He went without complaint, being at compliant as he could. Something had raised Fili’s hackles and Kili wasn’t going to question right now.

Fili watched him silently, blue eyes stormy, and Kili stretched out on the bed for him. His cock—not totally sure what was going on—was half hard and laying heavy against his thigh. Kili tugged the hair tie holding his hair back free, letting it fall onto the duvet near his head before sweeping it to the side so he wasn’t laying on it.

Still Fili watched him.

Kili licked his lips and let one arm fall against his chest, running fingers through his chest hair and down over the curve of his ribs and the muscles of his stomach. Nothing from Fili. Kili shrugged mentally and moved both his hands, one going to toy idly with his left nipple while the other
reached down to cup and roll his balls.

Kili hummed in satisfaction as his blood started to thrum in his veins. He played with his balls, moving both hands down to work them, wanting only to play and not actually do more than that, not while Fili was looking…almost feral. He closed his eyes and squirmed, planting his feet more firmly and arching his hips up and resting more of his weight on his shoulders. He loved playing with his balls, tugging on them, rolling them, squeezing just the tiniest bit, tugging lightly at the soft skin around them.

He heard the sound of a zipper and opened his eyes, watching Fili pull his cock out. Kili cupped his balls, jiggling them just the slightest bit in his hand.

“Wanna help?” Kili asked.

Fili shook his head. He was stroking his cock, feet spread so he was balanced and braced. Well, all right then.

Kili rolled over and snagged the bottle of lube from the top of the nightstand, squirting a bit into his hand. He rolled back over, spreading the lube and making sure Fili had the best view possible before wrapping his hand around his cock. His other hand went down to rub circles around his hole, pressing one finger in just the tiniest bit.

Fili’s breathing picked up and he stepped closer to the bed.

Kili kept his eyes on Fili as he jerked off, alternating between fingering himself and playing with his balls, both actions making him moan. Somewhere around sliding two fingers inside himself and Fili standing by the edge of the bed he started begging. He needed Fili, needed his hands, his mouth, his cock. He needed him and wanted him.

When that got nothing Kili tried threatening. It held no weight, of course, but Kili felt better describing in excruciating detail how—if Fili didn’t get over here and put that fantastic cock of his to use—he would kill him and make sure no one ever found his body.

Fili only gave him a breathless laugh and nothing more.

Kili turned his face into the duvet and ignored Fili. He was just going to watch and Kili was done trying to draw everything out. He started working his cock hard, leaving his balls alone and fucking himself back on his fingers. He came, biting the duvet because if Fili wanted to be a dick then Fili didn’t get to listen to him.

He lay limp on the bed, gasping for breath, and watched Fili in annoyance. He brother had grabbed the lube at some point and was working his cock tightly. Kili could tell he was close with how fast his hand was moving and the hitches in his breathing but he couldn’t care less right now.

Fili surged forward, straddling Kili and fisting a hand painfully in his hair, kissing him greedily as he came, covering Kili’s stomach and chest in his come.

Kili reached back with his own come slicked hands and pried Fili’s hands away from his hair, nipping sharply at his lip. Fili pulled back, breathing hard.

“How the fuck?” Kili asked, holding Fili’s wrists. Fili looked down at him, his eyes straying to his chest, and smirked. Kili looked down as well and sighed. “Caveman much?”

Fili chuckled, tugging a hand free and running it through the cooling mess on Kili’s chest. “Graffiti.”
Kili stared at him. “Caveman. You are an absolute caveman.”

“I’m lick you clean,” Fili said, spreading his fingers wide and leaning some of his weight on Kili’s stomach. “And then I am going to fuck you. I am going to spend all night getting you as filthy as I can and when you’ve had enough and you can’t take anymore I am going to fuck you some more.”

Kili licked his lips. “Really.”

Fili leaned down, chasing Kili’s tongue with his own, the two of them determined to suck at the other’s tongue. “Yeah, really,” Fili said breathlessly, kissing along Kili’s jaw and down his neck.

Kili watched Fili move down his body, stopping to lick at the little drops of white on Kili’s collarbone before moving down further, tongue and mouth working in tandem to clean Kili from their mess. Kili gasped, grabbing onto Fili’s shoulders as the other man bit gently and sucked at his nipple.

He had no idea what had gotten into Fili but there was absolutely nothing he was complaining about. Especially not if Fili wanted to tag him with his graffiti.
“You play ball?” Kili asked as Fili stole one of his french fries. They were sprawled in the grass at the Boston Commons, a spread of McDonalds surrounding them in pieces. They were, surprisingly—or not so surprisingly—doing something as mundane as playing cards.

“Ball?” Fili asked. He chewed the fry thoughtfully and laid down a card.

Kili slid the cards over and tucked them at the bottom of his hand. “Yeah, basketball.”

Fili laid down another card, pulling over Kili’s as well once it was laid down. “I used to play in high school,” he said.

“Ever think about picking up a game?”

Fili hesitated before laying down three of his cards. “This is going somewhere, isn’t it?”

Kili snickered, laying his deck down, and grabbed his phone from where it was vibrating by his soda. “Couple of guys I know are over by the courts now. Wanna go see who can beat who?”

“Wasn’t that what War was for?” Fili asked as he waved his cards around.

“Nope, that was just for fun,” Kili said. He got to his feet and stretched, his t-shirt riding up to show off his stomach. “Basketball, on the other hand, means a lot of trash talking and getting dirty and sweaty.” He let his arms fall to his sides and smirked. “Besides, there’s a lot of awesome 90s music on Dirk’s iPod.”

Fili scowled.

Kili laughed. “You can be on a different team than him,” he offered. “Hell, you could even guard him and possibly knock him on his ass on court.”

Fili got to his feet as well. “Sure, let’s do that.”

“Part of me thinks it should be troubling how easily manipulated you were but hey, it all works out in the end,” Kili said.
“If it means I get the chance to make Dirk eat gravel then I am all for manipulation,” Fili said.

Kili refrained from grinning and squatted down to start cleaning up their little area of greenery. This was going to be fun.
Kili listened with rapt attention as Kirin and Dis told their story. Fili was slouched next to him, frowning, but Kili just smiled. He loved the idea of his parents having this epic love story. Romeo and Juliet was overrated but a real-life love story, even if it ended the way it did, somehow made the squishy bits of him happy. He felt, almost, validated in his feelings.

"So what happened?" Fili asked as he crossed his arms.

"Life," Kirin said with a shrug. Dis nodded and pulled one of Fili's hands free. "The happy endings in tales are only because that’s where they end. The truth is that tales like this go on. As much as Thror and Thrain hated me at the beginning they got over it and were happy about us."

“Daddy gave me mom’s ring,” Dis said with a smile. “I'm keeping it safe for Kina."

"I told you what happened," Kirin said to Kili. "About how everything kind of dissolved. It's not that we loved each other any less--"

"I still love him," Dis said with a slow smile. Kili gave her a startled look but Kirin just grinned, taking her hand instead of Kili's. Fili shuddered next to Kili.

"--it was just that things fell apart. It became tedious and harder than it should have been. Everything was falling apart all around us and things inside started to erode as well."

"Kind of like a sandcastle," Dis said.

Kirin smiled at her, "Exactly like."

"It wasn't ever bad-bad," Dis said. "My brothers would have gutted him if it was."

"As it is, you know Thorin and I still get on," Kirin said. "Frerin not so much."

"He's such a middle child," Dis said with a gusty sigh.

Fili shook his head. "At least I know that we're not the only family screw-ups."
"I resent that implication," Kili and Kirin said almost exactly the same.

Fili blinked. Dis snorted and then snickered and then laughed. Kili rolled his eyes while Kirin just sat back, slinging an arm around Dis's shoulder, and smirked.
It was a hot, sweaty, sticky kind of day in Puerto Rico and Kili had decided the best way to greet the day was by getting even hotter, sweatier, and stickier. Fili was not amused. Not even the impressive foliage was enough to change his attitude.

Kili nudged him. “C'mon, isn't this nice?”

“We’re on vacation,” Fili pointed out. “Vacation means time to lay back and relax.”

"What, you'd rather be on the beach and making waiters get you fru-fru drinks with umbrella?” Kili asked, hands on his hips.

Fili snorted, dropping his pack to the ground. "Yes. Though I'd prefer a Corona and lime."

Kili made a face. "Where did I go wrong? How could I possibly like a guy who... Nevermind. You, you told me you used to do bike marathons and stuff and you even ran a half-marathon."

"Yep."

"And you hate hiking?"

"With a passion."

Kili shook his head and went a little further through the clearing. "I thought I heard water," he said. "Fili, c'mere."

Fili groaned and hefted his packed, walking in the same direction Kili had gone. Now that he mentioned it he did hear rushing water. When he broke through the curtain of greenery he gaped at the sight before him. It was a magnificent--if smaller than the ones you could see online--waterfall. It was sunny and private and probably only big enough for a couple people to swim in. It was beautiful though, the mist it threw up radiant with colors, the water clear and cool looking.

"C'mon," Kili said with a smile. He looked around and picked out a path so they could get down to the water without breaking their necks. Fili followed, still awed. Once they were to a point they could get to the pool without dying horribly, Kili dropped his pack and stretched. "Wanna cool
"What?" Fili asked.

Kili had let his arms fall to his sides and was peeling his t-shirt off and leaning down to unlace his hiking boots and peel off his shoes. Fili watched him shuck his shorts and briefs with a shake of his head. "Swimming, you idiot."

“Skinny dipping?" Fili asked. “Really?"

Kili laughed, closing the few steps between him and Fili, and kissed him. “Yes, skinny dipping. C’mon. Get naked and jump in with me."

“I’m not really…”

Kili rolled his eyes. “I’m going to get in the water and cool off. And swim. You can sit here on the grass and sweat and bitch and moan, or you could join me."

“Well, when you put it like that,” Fili said. He set his pack down and paused. “Wait. This is why you packed towels."


Fili shook his head and undid his belt. He was the one who had gotten himself into this mess by loving Kili, it was only fair he suffered for it. Though, as Fili watched Kili stretch in the sunlight, all golden skin and long hair, he couldn’t help but feel his suffering was incredibly minor.
Kili groaned and fell, gracelessly, against the shiny hardwood floor of their new house. He was hot and sweaty and there wasn't enough air to breathe. Fili was laughing at him and, like a total jerk, upended an ice cold water bottle on him. Kili gave an unmanly shriek and flailed up off the floor and flattened himself against the wall.

"I hate you," Kili said, dripping in quickly warming water and sweat.

"Too bad," Fili said. "Because I love you."

Kili rolled his eyes. "You suck."

"And blow," Fili agreed. "What's up, Mr Bad Ass Security Dude? You can't handle a little moving?"

Kili rolled his eyes. "Shut up."

“Have you been beaten by the nasty boxes?” Fili asked. He dropped the water bottle to the floor and pressed himself up against Kili’s body, sweat mingling, fingers dragging through the other man’s hair. “How dare those nasty boxes get the better of you.”

Kili turned his head and nipped at Fili’s wrist. “I hate you.”

“No, you don’t,” Fili said. “You love me because I am going to christen every room with you. And it is going to be perfect. You know why?”

Kili leaned forward, draping himself on Fili, nuzzling into his sweaty neck. “Why?”

“Because this is our house,” Fili said. “Ours.”

Kili smiled, eyes closed. “Perfect.”
"You know," Fili said thoughtfully, picking up the stuffed penguin Kina had gifted Kili with last year. "For someone who claims they don't like owning things that can't fit in their duffles, you sure own a lot of stuff now."

Kili looked up at him, distracted from his coffee now that Fili was talking. "Bwuh?"

Fili took pity on his barely awake boyfriend. "You keep picking random things up here and there. Things I'm pretty sure you like too much to let go. Then there's the you helping me with redecorating, things I got because you looked so happy about them."

Kili buried his face back in his coffee. "Mmm..."

"The proper response, silly, is yes, Fili, I eat my words."

Kili sniffed. "Rather eat you."

"That could be arranged."
Track 75 - Best Day Of My Life

Kili hummed along to the radio as he ambled about the kitchen. The bacon was cooling and the
french toast was sizzling. Sometimes last year he’d given in and taken a cooking class; domesticity
suited him, according to Dirk who had been dragged to the classes with him. Fili, of course, just
grinned and enjoyed whatever Kili produced.

Today, though, was special so he was pulling out all the stops.

He’d enlisted Kina to go and get fresh juice from one of the local farmer’s markets yesterday (ah,
the beauty of teenagers who listen to you) which was currently chilling in a nice glass pitcher on
the counter. There were even a bunch of sunflowers Kina had gotten. Ridiculous. So girly. Kili was
going to break out in hives.

Today deserved girly.

Maybe.

Kind of.

Okay, it did. Kili gave up. Romance and flowers and cuteness and maybe something manly later
on. If they got around to it.

“That smells divine,” Fili said, voice rough from sleep. He was standing in the doorway, yawning
and scratching his stomach, hair everywhere and smiling a dopey smile.

“Hey you,” Kili said, turning the heat down on the french toast before he ambled over to his
brother. “Morning.”

Fili reached out and dragged Kili against him, hands tangling in Kili’s long hair, kissing him lazily.
“Good morning.”

“It is now,” Kili said with a quick kiss. He twisted out of Fili’s hold and checked the toast. He
reached out for the spatula and flipped them before going back to Fili. “Sleep well?”

Fili nodded, nuzzling Kili lazily. “Missed waking up with you.”
“I wanted to make breakfast,” Kili said. “I was going to surprise you but you ruined my plan by getting up.”

“I’m such a horrible person,” Fili said. He nudged Kili away. “Okay, breakfast me up.”

Kili rolled his eyes, unable to stop his smile, and pointed to the breakfast bar. Fili followed the unspoken instruction and sat with another wide yawn. Kili got them both glasses of juice and eyed the french toast until it looked right. He grabbed plates and slid the food onto them and handed one to Fili. The other man got up to grab utensils while Kili sat.

“Why the breakfast?” Fili asked.

Kili threw his napkin at Fili. “You’re a jerk.” Fili frowned, stuffing a bit of french toast in his mouth. Kili huffed. “It’s been five years.”

“Seven,” Fili corrected after he swallowed.

“No!” Kili protested. “Five. Five since that day I came back and it was for real.”

Fili hummed and stuffed a strip of bacon in his mouth. “I guess that works.”


“You love me,” Fili said as he continued to eat. “You made me breakfast. We’re gonna have fun the rest of the day.”

“Oh, we are, are we?”

Fili reached out and snagged Kili’s hand. “I’ve got Bruins tickets. Loge seats.”

Kili leaned over the counter and kissed Fili, tasting syrup and sugar. “You’re an asshole. Good thing I love assholes.”

Fili chuckled. “Five years with my brother deserves something special, don’t you think?”

Kili merely smiled and ate his breakfast.
Kili sat on the bed, one boot dangling from his fingers, as he watched Fili sleep. It was dark o’clock and he had to leave for an assignment. It wasn’t one he wanted to go on but it was his job. Granted, this last year or so had made it harder for him to want to do his job. He wanted to stay with Fili, with his boyfriend.

Fuck. Boyfriend. What a novel concept. He was still getting used to it thirteen months later. He was even living with his boyfriend. How absolutely mundane and normal and… And everything he had never thought he would ever have. Everything he never knew he wanted.

Kili turned away from Fili and did up his boots with practiced efficiency. He looked down at them, barely making out their tarnished tan forms in the shadows, and then over his shoulder at Fili.

He twisted at the waist, careful not to shift the bed or move too fast, and placed a soft, lingering kiss against Fili’s forehead. The blond mumbled, brow wrinkling slightly beneath Kili’s lips before smoothing out again, shifting and settling. Kili leaned back and brushed his fingers against Fili’s hair and then slowly slid off the bed.

It was time to go.
Fili tugged at one of the panels smooshed onto a pole and shoved into a tiny area of the display. “What about this one?”

Kili made a face. “Ew.”

Fili let the offensive curtain fall back to its brethren. “Okay, work with me here. Colors?” Kili stared at him. “Right. Fine.”

“Okay,” Kili said with a face and a sigh. He leaned against the cart, arms crossed. “Blackout curtains for the bedroom are a must. Let’s just get that out of the way.”

“Vampire,” Fili muttered.

“I am down the basic white or yellow or whatever,” Kili said, “for the rest of the house.”

“What about this?” Dis asked, beckoning the boys over. Their mother was holding up a panel of lace that made Fili roll his eyes and Kili snicker. “What? It’s a masculine style of lace. It’ll be good for bathrooms or kitchens.”

“It’s curtains for you, Dr. Horrible. Lacy, gently wafting curtains,” Kili said, pitching his voice. Fili started laughing while Kili smiled innocently at Dis. “Yeah, okay, that’ll work for the bathroom.”

Dis shook her head and grabbed what was needed before chucking them in the cart. She whacked Fili hard in the shoulder as he was still laughing, and laughing harder still, while Kili just observed smugly. If he had to pick out curtains for his house with his mother there then he was going to get his entertainment where he could.

Poor Fili was obviously an easy target.
Fili gripped Kili’s hand tightly in his own as they sat at the table. Thorin had gotten a private dining room for this, the whole family in one room, at the country club he belonged to. Kili was holding onto Fili just as tightly but for different reasons.

Fili was nervous, desperate to stick to his guns, adrenaline pumping as he readied himself for this fight. Kili was intimidated—as Thorin had planned for—underdressed and outclassed. This was a fight Kili wasn’t used to fighting; Thorin knew how to play dirty.

But Fili had hope and love on his side. He’d be damned if he gave Kili up just because of genetics and blood and because his uncles and grandfather said no.

Thrain was disinterested, that much was obvious after a few drinks and plates into the meal, inspecting his nails and pulling his iPhone out of his blazer pocket every now and then. Frerin, with his golden hair and nose that Fili had inherited, was watching the both of them curiously. He was more focused on Kili, who he had never met, and the weight of his gaze had Kili bristling unconsciously.

Dis was seated next to Thorin with Dwalin, looking fierce and ready to defend her sons, while Dwalin looked neutral. Kirin, seated further down the table next to Frerin’s wife, also looked highly uncomfortable.

Thorin, though, looked like a thundercloud.

“I’m going to need this explain again,” he rumbled.

Kili’s shoulders twitched just the tiniest bit upward before straightening out. “No,” he said. Fili squeezed his hand in support. “You’ve heard it three time already.”

“Leave the boys alone,” Kirin said tiredly. “Accept what has happened.”

“I don’t see what the problem is,” Frerin’s tiny wife chimed in. “I mean, yes, now it’s a little. Well. Not for polite society. Obviously now it’s over, right?”
“Like hell,” Kili muttered under his breath.

Fili took a deep breath, let it go, and leaned over to kiss Kili’s cheek. He stood, his hand leaving Kili’s only to settle on the table in front of him. He ignored the silverware, the plates and glasses, the trapping of civilization and society. “We are in love. We are going to continue our relationship. It is of no concern to anyone outside of this room who we are. It’s no one’s business except our own that we’re brothers.”

“Fili,” Thorin said, cutting his name out of the air like a bullet. “I expect better of you.”

Kili stood up next, his hand finding Fili’s on the table and twining their fingers together. “You can’t stop us,” he said. “There’s this thing called love. You can’t stop it. It’s a miracle when it’s real and should be revered. If you’re going to be a dick about it then you can keep it and your family and all your bullshit.”

“How dare—”

Kirin cleared his throat. “Thorin.”

“We’re letting you know,” Fili said. “As a courtesy.”

“A courtesy!” Thorin blustered. Frerin looked interested.

Kili squared his shoulders—wide and strong, like Thorin’s—and flashed Kirin’s wicked smile. “Yes. Courtesy. We are in love. We are going to stay together. We are going to revel in our incestuous relationship and keep the bed we’ve made. We’re going to fuck in that bed. We are going to raise Kina and protect her. We are going to keep on going as we have been and if that’s a problem with you—with any of you—then you can stay away. We don’t need you. We’ve got each other and that’s all we need.”

Fili nodded. “Now, if you’ll excuse us, Uncle. I’ve got a brother to bring home. We’ve got to pick Kina up later and we need to pick up the apartment a little.”

“What are you going to do about Kina and this, this…mess?”

“What else?” Fili asked. “Love her.”
Kili slumped tiredly in the hard plastic chair. He was at the airport with Dirk, Mike, and Stella waiting for their flight to LA. There was some sort of thing they’d been hired to contain by the government but there was no way they’d spring for anything but cheap economy on a commercial liner. They didn’t even rate a military plane.

It didn’t help he was in a funk.

He and Fili had gotten into a fight that morning that involved yelling and doors slamming and Kili leaving without a goodbye. He’d called from a payphone at the airport and they’d gotten into again and Kili had slammed the phone down hard on the receiver before stalking off. His team was good enough to not mention the red eyes he’d had when he’d sat down to wait with them with a cup of coffee.

What sucked about all of this was Kili was in love. Head over heels, Disney romance, singing in the rain, boombox outside the window in love. He wanted Fili all the time, wanted his arms, his smile...

He was tired and fighting because that’s all he knew. He knew how to fight and run but love? That wasn’t something he knew. Affection, sex, tolerance, normal liking yes. He knew those. He was comfortable with those. But this? He felt like he needed Fili to breathe, to make the grey and ugly all bright and spring-like.

“You’ve got it so bad,” Dirk said. Kili looked at him, startled. “You should just tell the dick.”

“What?” Kili asked, tucking shaking hands around his elbows as he leaned forward, bracing himself on his knees as he looked at his best friend.

“Tell him. Fili. The blond,” Dirk said. “You love him. You’re pining r some shit. Losing your focus. Just use your brain and tell him. Get it off your chest. We can’t afford our sniper to not have his head in the game.”

Kili stood, going over to the window and looking at the planes. Was it really that easy? He dug his cell out of his pocket and unlocked it with a simple swipe. He hit the phone icon and watched as it
brought up his recent call log. Fili was on it a lot.

“What?” Fili asked, practically snarling. Kili hadn’t even realized he’d dialed.

“I’ve gotta have you,” Kili whispered. “Nothing else, no one else will do.”

“What the fuckin—"

“I love you,” Kili blurted out.

Silence.

“Fili?” Kili asked, voice so quiet and small sounding he hardly recognized himself.

“You are such an asshole,” Fili said with a quick expulsion of air. “You tell me this over the phone when you’re leaving for who knows how long? What am I saying, of course you did this.”

Kili stayed quiet.

“We’re going to talk—actually talk—when you get home,” Fili said. “You are going to come home to me, in one piece, and you are going to tell me that to my face. You got that?”

Kili swallowed, his throat dry. The idea of saying it again, to Fili’s face, to having him in front of him where Kili could see the truth… “Yeah, okay.”

“You drive me crazy,” Fili said. Kili could heard the smile in his voice. “Stay safe, you hear me?”

Kili nodded. “Yeah, okay,” he said again.

“Good,” Fili said and then hung up on him.

Kili stared at his phone for a moment before heading back over to Dirk and sitting.

“Feel better?” his friend asked.

Kili shook his head. “No.”
Fili heard the music before he walked into the apartment. He was frowning as he opened and then closed the door, locking it behind him out of habit, and dropped his things in the hallway. He tried calling for Kili but the music was a bit louder than his voice.

When Fili found him Kili was in the living room. His shirt was off and he was dancing, eyes closed with a blissed out expression on his face, his jeans riding low on his hips. Fili’s mouth went dry as he watched Kili move. It had been a while since he’d last seen Kili dance and, while this wasn’t a club or any sort of place to show off, his brother was just…moving. Reveling in the music.

Of course there was also the bottle of Jack on the window sill he had just noticed. Kili’s hips moved, arms moving slightly in tune to the music, and Fili had to smile. Kili looked so comfortable with himself right then and there was nothing sexier than someone who knew their own skin.

They had been awkward lately. Well. Not lately. The brothers thing still threw them, threw Kili, but they were working it out. He needed to believe they were working it out. Then again...Kili was here, dancing, looking so fucking delicious that Fili had to sit down on his couch or his legs would give out. Kili hummed softly, his head tipping back as he continued to dance, moving as the song changed.

He had drifted close to the sill and took up the bottle of Jack and tipped it back against his lips. His throat moved as he swallowed, hips still slowly moving, head tilted back with his eyes closed. Fili sat as Kili danced through more songs, bottle dangling from his fingers, lips moving in time to the words. When Kili saw him, finally, it was because he had accidentally knocked into the coffee table. His eyes had flown open and his hands went out—spilling some of the Jack—and startled when he saw Fili.

“How long have you been watching?” Kili asked, setting the bottle down and making his shaken way to the couch. He ended up sprawled in Fili’s lap, hands resting heavily on Fili’s shoulders.

Fili smiled and wrangled Kili into a better position, cuddling his tipsy brother closely. “How are you so gorgeous?” he asked.
Kili snickered and nuzzled into Fili’s neck, hands plucking at Fili’s shirt. Had this be any other time then shirts would already be gone, but now? As skittish as Kili had been about the whole idea of intimacy? Fili kissed the crown of Kili’s head and captured his hands.

Kili squirmed up, somehow, and kissed him. “I love you,” he said. “I want you. I don’t want to but I want. And.” Kili mumbled softly and pushed himself away and off the couch.

“Good night,” Fili sighed as he heard the bedroom door close.
"Today's class will be about knife skills!" the teacher announced with a clap of her hands and with a perky voice.

Kili elbowed Dirk. "Knife skills. We can do this."

"We got this down cold," Dirk chuckled.

"We will be working with three different knives today: the utility, the paring, and the slicer. There is a ceramic set in front of each station. We will be using the knives to prepare vegetables for a stock."

Dirk and Kili glanced down at the knives at the same time and both fought back a sigh.

"That is the tiniest, babiest knife ever," Dirk said, indicating the paring blade.

"You remember those fist knives Chris used to use?" Kili asked. "Those were smaller."

"Well, I mean, yeah, but this one is just so...girly looking."

"I understand if you military types are unused to the sophistication chef knives require but do not think to dismiss them," the instructor said from behind them. Kili and Dirk both jumped slightly. "When sharpened any of those blades would be able to slice through skin, fat, and tissue. You would need a bigger knife than the utility to cut through bone but you could definitely manage cartilage with it."

Kili flashed a brilliant smile at the tiny blonde woman. "No disrespect, ma'am, we're just used to, you know, bigger--"

"Bigger knives, like the ones cavemen use?" she asked, eyebrow quirked, hands on her hips.

Kili and Dirk both kept their mouths shut. They knew better. The instructor narrowed her eyes at them and moved on. Kili glanced at Dirk out of the corner of his eye, both of them waiting for the blonde to turn around and make that "I've got my eye on you" hand gesture. She didn't but she was frosty with them for the remaining class time, ignoring them even when they made a royal mess of their vegetables.

Oops?
Fili frowned when he opened the door to two very well dressed people. A leggy red head in a green dress was standing in the hallway on her phone while a tall, blond man stood with his hands on the pockets of jeans that were obviously designer. Fili just stared at them, confused at who they were and what they wanted.

"You must be Fili," the man said. He pulled a hand out and offered it to Fili. "Legolad Woods, and my wife Tauriel."

Fili felt the lightbulb going off over his head and moved away to let them in. Kili was just getting out of the shower, loose cargo shorts hanging low on his thin hips as he dried his hair with his towel. Fili had the pleasure of seeing Kili stop, stare, and get a distinctly deer-in-the-headlights look in his eye when he saw Legolas.

"Uh, hey…boss?" Kili said slowly, very much like he had no idea what to do in this situation. Then he spotted Tauriel—who was shoving her phone into a very tiny purse—and hunched up. "Oh hell no."

That was a whine. Kili was making a definite whining noise. Fili glanced at the satisfied smirk on Tauriel’s face and then at the hunted one on his boyfriend. Oh, this was going to be good.

"Get a shirt on and pack this ridiculously gorgeous boyfriend of your up, we’re going shopping,“ Tauriel said.

Kili spun on his heel and tried to make a clean getaway into the bedroom. Legolas, obviously used to this routine, grabbed Kili by the back of his cargos and then yanked him close and down, using Kili’s speed against him. The brunet went down with a pained groan and stared up at them unhappily.

"It’s easier just to give in,” Legolas advised. He bent down and offered Kili a hand up.

"No," Kili said, not taking it. “I said no to the op. No! I don’t want to."

"You’re the only one I’ve got who speaks enough fluid German right now to not piss off the ambassador,” Tauriel said.

"German’s not that hard," Fili said. “Certainly you—"

"He speaks German?" Tauriel asked, a delighted shark-like grin spreading over her face. “Really.” Kili gave him a unhappy look and got to his feet slowly. “Look, boss, he’s a ci—"

“C’mon, shopping,” Tauriel said, clapping her hands. Legolas just smiled indulgently at his wife. “We’ve got two of you to outfit now."

“Two?" Fili asked. He had the feeling he probably should not have opened the door earlier.

“Two,” Tauriel said with a grin. “You’re going as well."

“As his date?” Fili asked, his eyes widening. He didn’t even know what this was but the idea of… Well. Not that he was ashamed of being bi or anything but he’d never. Not that he wouldn’t, but.

“No,” Legolas said. “He’s escorting the ambassador’s daughter. We’ll just get you an extra
invitation."

“I wouldn’t want to impose…”

Kili winced.

“Oh, it’s not a problem,” Tauriel said smoothly. She had pulled her phone out of her bag and was rapidly typing away. “All settled. Now, we have a town car waiting. Man up, boys, and let’s get you some sharp looking suits.”

Kili hunched up again. “Boss,” he started.

“Shirt. Shoes. Now,” Tauriel said, the orders flying off her tongue like bullets. Fili had never seen Kili move so fast. But then Legolas was nudging him in the direction of the bedroom as well and, well. Fili realized there wasn’t going to be any way of getting out of this with his dignity in tact.
Kili shoved his hands into his pockets and stared moodily around the showroom. Fili was very carefully not touching anything while Tauriel and Legolas wandered around, pointing this or that out.

“Idiot,” Kili said, nudging Fili gently. “You have no idea what you’ve gotten into.”

“No, I really haven’t,” Fili said. “Wanna clue me in?”

“There’s a job Tauriel wants me on, obviously you got that part, but it’s a fancy thing. Which means she gets to play Ken doll with me. She really, really likes dressing me up.” Kili turned, draping himself against Fili, chin resting on his shoulder. Fili, braced, held him as close as he could in that position. “Also she’s been wanting to meet you and this is another way to do that.”

“Oh really?” Fili asked, brushing a kiss against Kili’s cheek. “So this is basically playing dress up in expensive suits?”

“Yes,” Kili said.

“You two look perfect together,” Tauriel said, startling them both. “All dark and light. Very photogenic. Gorgeous. You wouldn’t be willing to—”

“No,” Kili said with a glare. “Captain, I love you like a sister but I’m not sharing.”

“Such a shame,” Tauriel said with a grin. “But that’s okay. Now, let’s see. Fili, you can help me decide what Kili will wear. Kili, precious, get naked.”

Kili rolled his eyes. “In your dreams.”

Legolas chuckled from behind Kili, so quiet he’d never noticed. Kili manfully resisted the urge to jump and squeak. “Well.”

“No!”

Fili wasn’t positive about Kili’s relationship with his two bosses but he was pretty sure he didn’t
like it. Kili was his.

“That’s all right,” Legolas said. He slipped his arm around Fili’s and tugged him away. “We’ll go get your clothes, you just be your charming self.”

“Charming?” Fili asked, glancing over his shoulder as he was led away.

“Yes, charming,” Legolas said. “Death glare, vicious pout, crossed arms, the whole air of ‘if you even think of bringing another scrap of clothing near me I will kill you with my mind’. It’s very charming.”

Fili blinked and laughed. “Oh, I see.

Legolas let go and nudged Fili over to the racks of suits. “Exactly. Now, you find pretty things to dress him up in and I will do the same.”

“And your wife?” Fili asked, curious.

“She’s keeping our target from rabbiting,” Legolas said with a wink.
Fili watched as Kili--his hair slicked back into a tamed tail, wearing a perfectly tailored dark blue and grey pinstriped suit with a stiff collared white shirt, a matching deep blue waistcoat and tie, and all of that concealed the shoulder holster and gun he was wearing--navigated the dance floor with the ambassador's daughter. The girl was barely sixteen and was bubbly and sweet, a permanent blush on her face from Kili's attention. Fili himself was sipping from a glass of champagne and listening to the ambassador himself as he stood next to Legolas and Tauriel.

He was just the tiniest bit bored. The ambassador's wife started talking to him and he responded, his German near perfect with a very obvious accent, but his attention on Kili.

He wanted to peel Kili out of that suit.

With his teeth.

Watching Kili work, being a bodyguard in a slick suit and the way the suit's lines hid the fact he was armed (and dangerous), was incredibly hot. Amusing. Ridiculous. And so many inappropriate things. Fili tried very hard to ignore him, though the knowing looks Tauriel kept sending him made it obvious his poker face needed some work.

As the current dance wound to a halt there were several women who swamped Kili, all wanting a chance to dance with him as well.

"He does clean up nice, doesn't he?" Tauriel asked Fili, leaning down to murmur close to his ear. Legolas was distracting the ambassadors, the tiny smile on his lips said how much he was enjoying watching Fili squirm as well. "There's a reason we like trotting him out at these things."

"Exactly how many suits does he have?" Fili asked. "I've never seen him with one before."

"Oh, no," Tauriel said. "We keep those away from him after the events. He'd set them on fire afterwards if he could."

Fili watched as Kili charmed his way free from his admirers, the ambassador's daughter's hand on his arm. "Mind if we keep that one?"
Tauriel only arched an eyebrow at him. "I think that could be arranged."

Fili nodded. "Good. That...yes. Thank you."

"Enjoy," Tauriel chuckled.
Kili cackled as Fili pushed him up against the wall of the apartment, kicking the door closed. The blond fastened his mouth over Kili’s to silence him, tongue and teeth and lips and Kili responded in kind, both of them far too interested in getting what they wanted. Fili had gotten Kili’s suit jacket open and had palmed him through his expensive pants.

“I want to fuck you stupid,” Fili said against Kili’s mouth.

“Yeah, I got that,” Kili said, pulling his mouth away. “You gonna do anything more than pin me to the wall and talk or are you gonna show me what you want?”

Fili growled, low and gravely, and Kili couldn’t hold back his shudder. He did manage to move himself out from under Fili and the wall and strode into the living room. He toed off his dress shoes and stuck his hands in his pockets, the suit jacket flaring back. He arched an eyebrow at Fili and smirked.

The other man just watched him, licking his lips. Kili reached up with one hand and tugged his tie loose. Fili moved, reaching out and grabbing the tie, tugging Kili close by it. Fili wrapped the length around his fist and kissed Kili, tongue plundering, licking, mouth sucking. Kili refused to let his knees buckle. He did managed to back away, licking and biting at his bruised lips, walking back into the bedroom.

Fili pushed Kili back onto the bed, pulling his fancy dress shoes off before straddling him on the bed. Kili, his hair coming free of the tail he had put it in, arched up under Fili.

"I do have to return this thing to Tauriel," Kili said as Fili yanked the jacket free of His arms. Kili stretched under Fili, reaching back to grab at the head board.

"Nope," Fili said. There was a hungry, shark-like grin on the blond's face that made Kili's mouth go dry. "She said I could keep it."

"You? Not we?"

Fili leaned down, his hands smoothing the dress shirt and vest over Kili’s chest. "Yes. Me. I get to
keep it. You'd just burn it, her words, but me? I'd put you in it just so I can take you out of it."

Kili licked his lips. "Well, Mr Durin, I guess you're going to have to remove this from me and keep it in tact."

Fili arched an eyebrow and reached down, fingerling the edge of Kili's vest before pulling at the edges with enough strength to send the buttons flying. Kili stared in shock as his cock jumped. "You were saying?"

"Hummana."

Fili laughed. "Let me tell you how the night is going to go, all right?" Kili licked his lips and nodded. "I am going to let you up and you are going to put that mouth of yours to use."

Kili chuckled softly, bringing his hands down to knead at Fili's crotch. "I can do that."

"Then I am going to strip you of that suit," Fili said. "And then I'm going to fuck you. I'll leave the tie on because, damn, that looks good on you. Maybe I'll even leave the shirt on. But I am going to fuck you, over and over again, until we can barely move. I am going to mess you up, get you all debaunched looking."

Kili wiggled under Fili so he could slide down to nuzzle at Fili's cock through his fine dress pants. He tugged at the fabric of the fly with his teeth, wanting what Fili had.

"I might even use this tie," Fili said, reaching down to tug at Kili's tie, "to tie you to the headboard. Or I could tie it around your cock. Oh, the uses..."

Kili looked up at him with wide eyes. "Oh my...less talking more action," he said eagerly, trying to move them.

Fili, though, reached down with his other hand and slid his fingers through Kili's hair. "Not yet," he said. "First, Kili, you're going to suck me."

Kili leaned into Fili's touch and smirked up at him. "Yeah, I think I can do that."

"Then get to it," Fili said with a sharp tug on Kili's hair.

Kili grinned and used his hands to free Fili from his pants and went to work. He would have no problem dressing up if it meant this was what he got as a reward.
It all happened so fast. He had been standing, reading through his emails on his phone, trying not to think about Kili or anything related to him. Then he was on the floor of the train. Then he was on a stretcher, people talking to him, shining lights at him. He had tried to wave them away when oh, oh...that hurt.

He was admitted, IV'ed, roomed, and left to try and get his head on straight. Then there was his little girl, and Kili, and Sharon, and his mom. Their mom. God, how weird was all this?

He was to stay the night, they told him, and he agreed. They told him someone would come check on him every one to two hours to make sure he was still all right but otherwise to try and get some rest.

That was a joke. Rest. Like he could rest with all these things--thoughts--swirling around in his head. Things like Kili, and brothers, and how could he keep him if they were related but even if they were related did it really matter its not like they could have kids together or anything they were two guys and oh but it was bad and he reacted so badly and. And.

Ugh.

And Kina. His little girl. What would happen to her if he died? He and Sharon had this whole arrangement because neither were very good with full-time kids. Sharon was...well. Fili didn't think she could handle Kina on her own, full-time. He should have a will drawn up, think about the future for her, if for nothing else.

A future with...out Kili? With? Without?

His head hurt.

Being an adult sucked.

Being an adult with a kid and a seriously messed up relationship sucked more.

On and on his mind went, in circles and in squares, dozing and waking, dozing and waking. He had no answers. Maybe there weren't any. that sucked even more.
Kili stared up at Fili from the mat on the floor. Fili was trying very hard not to smile, his hand extended to help Kili up. Kili was having none of it. He was also trying very hard to close his mouth. When he did, it was with a snap.

"You sneaky little shit!" he said as Fili rolled his eyes and pulled Kili to his feet. "You bastard! You, you. How?"

"You never asked," Fili said with a shrug. There was that hint of smugness around his mouth, barely hidden by that neatly trimmed beard. "I took judo and karate in college because the instructor was smoking hot. She kicked my ass all over the place but she did let me buy her coffee a couple of times. I think she took pity on me."

Kili really wished he could stop the jaw-drop effect Fili was having on him. "You secret bad ass!" he said. He couldn't help the hint of accusation in his voice. "What else do you know how to do that you're hiding from me?"

Fili shrugged. "I don't know. I've got good aim, but you know that."

"I still can beat your ass in darts," Kili said. It was slightly reassuring.

"Yeah, well. You're a sniper. That's what you do," Fili said. He set his hands on his hips, hitching his basketball shorts up a little more. "I'm really good at drinking games. I can do crosswords and sudoku puzzles in under ten minutes if I feel like it. All those brain teaser things are easy as hell."

"Okay," Kili said. "Good memory, good brain. You drink enough to keep up with me."

Fili grinned. "Yeah, I could out-drink you."

Kili eyed him, "We'll try that later."

Fili laughed out loud and, somehow, managed to knock Kili's legs out from under him again. Kili let out an oof as his back hit the mat. "Maybe later, soldier boy. First you gotta get up off the mat."
Fili watched Kili move about the bedroom, getting dressed. He drew his knees up in the bed and rested his elbows on them. "When do you have to be in?"

"Not for a little bit," Kili said "I was gonna swing by the diner and get breakfast."

Fili rubbed at his bearded chin. "Could you stay for a moment, I want to talk."

Kili glanced at him, in the process of pulling on a black t-shirt. "Okay..."

Fili started to try and organize his thoughts. "Do you remember when you were dancing in the living room?" Kili nodded, sitting on the bed. "You told me that you want me but that you don't want to want me."

Kili sighed, "Yeah, look. It's complicated. My head is complicated." He flopped back on the bed, his hair a tangled mess still. "I kind of slutted about this last year but I couldn't get you out of my head. It's sucked. I have never had sex that dissatisfying in my life. Don't get me wrong, getting off is still awesome but it wasn't you and it sucked. I kind of hate you for that."

Fili rubbed his hands over his face. He had a suspicion but he hadn't wanted it confirmed. So much for that. "I feel almost like I should apologize but I'm selfishly really glad about that."

Kili grinned. "That's fine."

"You keep pulling back from me," Fili said. "You came home to me, we're working on things."

"We are," Kili confirmed.

Fili was silent for a moment, thinking things through slowly. "I want you, Kili. I miss you. Can we fix this?"

Kili rolled over and looked at Fili. "We can. We will. It's just going to take time."

"It's been two months," Fili pointed out.

Kili smiled, reaching out and grabbing Fili's hand. "I love you," he said. "You love me. It'll happen and it'll be fine. But you gotta admit, it's still a huge thing to get over."

Fili tugged at Kili's hand, making the other man come up toward him. "Not as big a thing as here you've been screwing around," he said. He kissed Kili gently. "But I'll deal with that. I'm dealing with the brother thing. Dealt. Dealing."

"Have you really?" Kili asked. "Honestly? I mean, you're the one who threw up at the very idea. You're the one who refused and rejected everything. Are you honestly okay with the idea what we share a mother and a father and a lot of DNA?"

Fili hesitated.

Kili kissed him and pulled away. "That's what I thought." He climbed off the bed and grabbed his boots, heading out to the living room to finish getting dressed.
Fili eyed Kili. The other man was lounging on the couch, playing on his phone, humming a song. It took Fili a few minutes to place it but then he was rolling his eyes.

"Really?"

Kili smiled, biting his lip as he kept playing on his phone. He hummed louder.

"No."

Kili ignored him. He was now singing the chorus under his breath. Fili went over to him and...

"Really? You had to pull the lyrics up on your phone?"

Kili looked up. "You know... You have a very nice suit in the closet. You were mentioning how it's too tight for work and you needed to get it tailored."

Fili arched an eyebrow. "No."

Kili tried very hard to do puppy eyes at him. They failed. Kili sighed and reached up, tugging fili down for a kiss. "Please? You like me all security-ized. Wanna be my secretly bad ass sugar daddy?"

Fili shook his head, kissing Kili. "The answer is still no."
Fili glanced over at Kili, the other man sitting on the floor. He was leaning back against the couch, arms resting on his drawn-up knees, one boot on and one off. Fili himself was just as exhausted, leaning back against the wall, moments from sliding down to sit on the floor himself.

"You didn't walk out this time," Fili said after a moment, breaking the deafening silence.

Kili shrugged, looking up. "We decided we'd stop that, remember?"

"Didn't think you'd remember."

Kili opened his mouth, brows drawn in as if he was about to start yelling again. Fili braced himself, mentally and emotionally, but Kili only huffed out a long breath of air and dropped the boot he held in his other hand. "Let's just. Not."

"Not?" Fili asked. He gave up the fight with gravity and slid down the wall to sit on the floor.

"Pick at each other," Kili said. He reached down and yanked his other boot off and let it fall next to its mate before stretching his legs out. "We do this. We fight and we go straight for the throat. I know why I do it. I don't get why you do it."

"Kili..."

"No, really. I don't. You seem stable and everything but when we fight you kind of go wild. It's hot, don't get me wrong, but it also drives me crazy. Not in the yay way, a lot more in the I-want-to-punch-your-face-in way."

Fili sighed. "I started this one," he said.

"Yep."

"You didn't have to agree so fast," Fili said, glancing at his lover. Kili looked tired. "I'll try and knock it off."

Kili nodded and wiggled about, getting more comfortable on the floor. His head went back to rest
on the couch. "I love you."

"I know..." Fili said.
Fili frowned at the knock on the door. He got up from his desk and went to open the door. He was immediately presented with a gift bag and a cheerful "TA-DA!" Fili leaned around the bag to look at Kili, eyebrow arched.

"You have a key."

"But it's a surprise," Kili pointed out, jiggling the bag. "See? Surprise."

Fili took the bag with a roll of his eyes and a smile. "You are ridiculous."

"Well, yeah," Kili said. He stepped into the apartment, slinging his bag into a corner. "That's why you like me so much. Because I'm ridiculous." At a pointed glance from Fili Kili chuckled. "Okay, maybe not the only reason. A big reason? No? Okay, fine." He wrinkled his nose up childishly and stuck his tongue out.

Fili shook his head and smiled. "All right, crazy. What've you brought me?"

Kili pulled off his coat and tossed it over a chair before sitting on the couch and leaning down to untie his shoes. "Surprises are meant to be revealed by the intended recipient."

"You're ridiculous," Fili said again. He went to the breakfast bar and set the bag down. He tugged the tissue paper out, then the tinsel, and then the nondescript white, flimsy box. "What's this?"

"A gift?" Kili said, eyebrow arched, as he pulled off one of his boots. "I mean, it's in a gift bag, it's got tissue paper and tinsel, what else could it be?"

"I meant what's in it," Fili said. He was turning the box this way and that.

Kili sighed. "For someone so smart you honestly have no idea what the word surprise means."

Fili shook his head and opened the box. Inside was a jade elephant the size of his fist and a leather cuff bracelet. He carefully pulled the elephant free of the tissue paper inside the box and set it on the breakfast bar. "This is amazing," he said.

"Mmmh," Kili said, working on his other boot. "I got stuck waiting for a pick up near a popular temple and I figured why the hell not. It's local jade so that's why the color looks a little paler than the stuff you so other places."

"I like it," Fili said, tracing the trunk with a gentle finger. He turned his attention to the bracelet. "This is pretty cool too."

"Airport!" Kili chimed happily. He stood up and draped himself along Fili's back, nuzzling at the back of his neck. "I thought it would look nice with all the metal and the different colors and the pattern and stuff."

Fili shook his head. "You are so ridiculous," he said. He turned his head to kiss whatever bit of Kili he could reach. "You get some good postcards?"

Kili hummed and nuzzled closer. "I did," he said. "And now you have your gift. Can I have my welcome home?"

Fili bit his lip. "Oh, I see how it is. These aren't gifts, they're bribes!"
Kili shrugged. "Maybe." His hands drifted down to scratch at Fili's belly. "So, yes? Gimme, gimme?"

Fili turned around and pulled Kili in for a kiss. "Ri. Dic. U. Lous."

"Absolutely," Kili said against Fili's lips with a wide grin.
It was almost hypnotic the way they moved together. They were so in tune with each other that pushing clothes off bodies and falling into bed was free of the usual laughs and stumbles; there was only smooth intensity and heat.

Hands smoothed over skin, nails dragged the opposite direction from body hair. Mouths latched and teeth bit, hands pushing and hips moving. There was sweat and saliva, making grips slip and sheets stick. Legs spread and hips arched, fingers pushing and spreading, mouths falling open for moans and gasps. There was silence but there was the music of the beat only they knew.

“Please” was breathed. “Yes” was murmured.

Grunts and pleas, desperate moans and satisfied gasps.

“Harder” was demanded. A laugh answered. Hands reached back and headboards slammed. Soundless praise echoed in the deafening room.

“C’mon” was grunted. “Close” was whispered.

Sweat leached into the sheets, sticking to knees and backs, lube sliding and dripping from friction. Shouts grew louder, the room no longer suffocated in an silent void. Names were called, voices pleading, the slick slide of skin against skin adding to the music.

Silence and then a low and drawn out groan. A whimper. A hiss. More than just sweat and lube covering bodies and bed. Hands dragged along skin, smearing it all over flushed skin. Tan and brown skin, the difference in pigments and lives, a complimentary contrast.

Movement, a whine, springs groaning. Mumbling and sighs, the rustling of blankets and sheets. Dry lips brushing against damp skin, noses against disrupted hair. The sharp and sour tang of sweat. The bitter scent of come. The chemical scent of lube.

Nothing more than the satisfying aroma of a night well spent. Of love.
Fili watched Kili sleepily as the other man moved slowly from one movement to another. It didn't quite look like fighting as slow as it was but it also didn't look like yoga or any of that stuff. Then again he hadn't had his coffee so who the hell knew.

“What’re you doing?” Fili asked with a wide yawn.

“Tai chi,” Kili said as he moved, arms pushing out slowly.

“Why?” Fili asked.

“Because,” Kili said. He was smiling, eyes closed. Fili asked him a question every now and then but Kili merely hummed softly. There was a pause and then Kili brought his hands down in front of his chest and paused for a moment before shaking his limbs out and cracking his neck. “Okay, c’mom. Food.”

“That’s it?” Fili asked, examining his empty coffee mug.

Kili shook his head. "You have no room to talk, secret agent man."

Fili handed over his empty mug. "Fill it, wench."

"Lacking the parts to be a wench," Kili said. He took the mug anyway, leaning in to kiss Fili on the cheek and heading into the kitchen. Fili waited, leaning against the breakfast bar, watching as Kili moved about. "Wanna go out for breakfast?"

"I gots coffee," Fili said. He made grabby hands at the full mug Kili was holding out toward him. "Gimme."

Kili shook his head and held it further out to him so Fili could snatch it away and cuddle the mug. "Addict."

"Pot, kettle," Fili said. He yawned widely. He really hated big cases like the one he was dealing with. So many hours. So many long, long hours. He was sipping his coffee and pretty much falling asleep (if he was honest) on the breakfast bar when he felt someone tug his mug away. "No," he mumbled.

"C'mon," Kili said warmly. "Sleep time, pretty."

"You're pretty," Fili said. He let Kili steer him toward the bedroom and then onto the bed and then under the covers. "Stay?"

Track 95 - Battlefield
"Nope, nope, nope, nope," Kili chanted as he ran across the bombed out street. He dived behind the still burning remains of a car and clutched his gun tight to his chest, trying to calm his breathing. He heard the sound of a sniper rifle going off and hunched down more.

"Shitshitshitshitshit," Dirk yelled, running before dropping down to slide down behind the same car as Kili. "This is a total FUBAR."

"Nah, not a total one," Kili said. "Just a tiny one. Probably more like a SNAFU than a FUBAR."

Dirk reached down into one pocket and yanked out a compression bandage, tossing it at Kili. "My arm," he said. "Stay low, I'll watch your back."

Kili nodded, keeping very close to the car while he shook the bandage out. He took Dirk's injured arm while the other man braced his gun on Kili's shoulder. They knew this move, had done it ages before, and had the routine down pat.

"You think we're going to make it out of this one?" Dirk asked. "Like, really make it out. One piece, no missing limbs, not set on fire or anything like that."

Kili narrowed his eyes at Dirk and punched the other man in his other arm. "Don't talk like that, man, not here, not now. We're going home. Together. We're going to survive and we're going to get home. Now shut up and let's try and find the rest of the boys, all right?"

Dirk nodded, hitching his rifle up a little more in his arms. "Yeah, okay."

"Good," Kili said. He rolled to his knees, still staying low so he didn't present a target. "Now, can you watch my six or do we have a problem?"

"Nah, man, I got your back," Dirk said. He took a deep breath and nodded, rolling his shoulders slowly. "I got your back," he repeated.
"Are you kidding me?" Kili asked from between clenched teeth. "Are you seriously freaking kidding me?"

"What?" Dirk asked, tossing a dirty, fraying baseball in the air and catching it with ease. He was leaning back in one of the cushy conference chairs, booted feet up on the nice shiny table. "They asked for volunteers, I volunteered. I got friends over there who know what they're waling into but the military doesn't care. At least Thranduil and Legolas do."

"And you're not worried about maybe coming up against IS?" Kili asked, crossing his arms. "You know, the freaks burning people alive and beheading them? Syria's their home base."

Dirk shrugged, still tossing the ball. "I'm not asking you to go with me. You heard the boss man, it's volunteer only."

"And who the hell is going to watch your idiot back?" Kili asked. "We go out in pairs for a reason."

"I could get one of the others to watch my back," Dirk said.

Kili reached out and snatched the baseball out of the air. "No you couldn't."

"Killjoy," Dirk said. He swept his feet off the table and swung the chair around to face Kili. "Jackie."

"Jackson is ripping into Corey for pulling the same shithead stunt you pulled," Kili said. "Try again."

"Jake," Dirk said.

"Has unvolunteered after Andrea got done with him yesterday."

Dirk stared. "You've been waiting to see where the chips fall."

Kili took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Yeah. Tauriel gave everyone in our unit a heads up when others volunteered. I think she did it for all the teams but still. They know this is likely a one-way trip and they want to make sure everyone is serious. If they can get talked out of it then there's no point in letting them go through with it."

"I'm going," Dirk said.

Kili sat on the table and tossed Dirk the ball. "I know," he said.

"Good," Dirk said, catching the ball. "Then wha--"

"I'm going too."

"Like hell you are!" Dirk said. "You've got that brother and niece of yours!"

Kili blinked at him, caught off-guard. "How did you know?"

Dirk shook his head. "Kid, it don't matter none. But you can't go. You've got reasons to stay here."

"Like you don't?" Kili asked.
"All of mine know how to handle themselves," Dirk said.

"If that's the case then they don't need you to protect them," Kili said.

Dirk groaned and tipped his head back, hairs scrubbing viciously at his face. "Kili."

"Dirk."

"I need to go," Dirk said. "I need to help. This is what we do, we go where others can't. Yeah, we get paid well for it, but mostly it's because we do what we can where we can. The military is like a hammer, we are the very tiny splinter. We just go in and make it hurt real bad first."

"Are seriously giving me the company line right now?" Kili asked. "Can we just, I don't know, back up a few years and remember who brought who in?"

Dirk grinned. "Just reminding you what you already know."

"Which is why I'm coming with you," Kili said. "As you said, we do what we do because we can."

"But," Dirk said, standing. "You've got—"

"I've got your back," Kili said, holding out his fist. "Above all else, I got your back."

Dirk sighed and bumped his fist against Kili's. "Yeah, I got your back too."
Kili relaxed back against one of the darkened walls. This sucked. He hated deserts. He wanted to be home, in bed, with Fili. Not stuck in the desert with Dirk, both of them injured and bleeding, separated from the rest of the team they’d gone in with.

“At least it’s quiet,” Dirk said, sitting down kitty corner to Kili.

“For now,” Kili said. He looked at Dirk as he set his gun on his knees. “So. Let’s talk.”

“Talk?” Dirk asked. He stretched out his injured arm a few times, flexing it carefully. “What about?”

“You knew about Fil?” Kili asked. He hated the soft, hesitant tone in his voice. He hated how it made him feel but Dirk was important to him.

Dirk shifted and huffed out a breath. “Yeah, I knew. When you took off last year it didn’t make sense. Then you started whoring it up again so I did some digging. Found some stuff, put some other stuff together.”

“Digging?” Kili asked. He felt his stomach sink slowly. “You could find out?”

“I got Josh to hide some things,” Dirk said. “It should be okay.”

Kili looked at Dirk and waited.

“I already had my moments of disgust and disbelief,” Dirk said. “I know you love him and your niece. I think that outweighs everything else.”

Kili stared at him. “You don’t care about the incest?”

Dirk wrinkled his nose. “I’m not thinking about it. You shouldn’t either. The two of you didn’t know, right? I mean, jeez, if you knew then that is seriously fucked up.”

Kili let his head thunk back. “No way. If I knew? I’d have stayed way clear of Boston.”

“So, yeah, that’s not something I care about too much. But you do, don’t you?”

“Sometimes,” Kili said. “Not often, but sometimes. Fili does too, pretends not to, but he feels it more.”

“Well, that sucks,” Dirk said.

“You’re telling me,” Kili sighed.

Both men dove to the ground from where they sat as gunfire sounded. Bullets flew over their heads and into the walls of the house.

“Not good,” Dirk said.

“You’re telling me” Kili repeated. He hefted his rifle and moved, sighting and shooting as Dirk moved to his side. The two of them worked together, Dirk using a night vision scope, trying to find the guys shooting at them. Back to battle.
"How's the arm?" Kili asked, panting.

"I'm good," Dirk said. "You, not so much. Fuck, kid, I think you dislocated that shoulder."

"We jumped off a building," Kili said. "I'm surprised that's all I did."

"We didn't jump, we got blasted off," Dirk corrected.

"Same thing," Kili said. He grit his teeth as Dirk poked around at his shoulder. "Jeez, leave off already. Didn't we pick something up on getting over to the others?"

Dirk nodded. "Not too far now."

"Ready to go?" Kili asked. Dirk nodded and they both started to move. It had been almost 48 hours since they'd been separated from the rest of their team and both of them were tired, injured, and ready to just call this mission a bust. After everything that happened since their boots had hit the ground things had totally gone south.

He was so busy being in his head, tired but wired on adrenaline, that he didn't see the kid hiding behind a car. Kili went down, his thigh throbbing and he could see the blood, biting his lip and biting down his scream. Dirk swung his rifle and shot the kid in the head.

Guns sounded around them, two of their team coming out to cover them as Dirk grabbed Kili and dragged him to cover inside another crumbling building. Kili was gripping tight to Dirk's arms as Brent went to his knees next to them. Brent was their medic for this trip and knew what he was doing. He had snapped on gloves and cut enough of Kili's pants away to get at the wound.

"Brent? Brent, c'mon, how, how bad?" Kili asked, chest heaving as he panted through the pain.

Silence as Brent worked and then, "You're good. No arteries. Just a bit of damage. It's gonna hurt like hell when we move but you'll heal."

"His shoulder's all fucked up too," Dirk said.

“Well, damn, Haegan,” Brent said. “Nice job. Think you can still shoot?”

“Yeah,” Kili said. He was still clutching tightly at Dirk while Brent dug out the bullet and stitched him up. He slapped a compression bandage on Kili’s leg and fixed it tight. “Jeez, Brent, is that tight enough?”

“I could make it tighter,” Brent said as he helped Kili to his feet. Dirk reached out, helping to balance Kili until he got his feet under him. Kili hissed as he put pressure on his leg.

“Okay, let’s go,” Michelle said. She handed Kili his gun and gave him a tight smile. “Let’s go.”

Kili took it and made a few hobbling steps before nodding. “Yeah, we’re good.”
Fili was curled up on the couch, a bottle of beer dangling from his fingers as he watched Die hard. It was Christmas Eve and he was all alone. This wasn't exactly abnormal of his holidays. He would take Kina for half the day and then hand her over to Sharon for the rest of Christmas Eve and Christmas, then Fili would have her for New Years Eve and Day. It wasn't a bad arrangement but it was lonely. And, if he was honest, the only reason it sucked so much was that he had been looking forward to spending time with Kili, showing the other man what fun the holiday could be. Kili, as it turned out, was a horrible Grinch.

But Kili had been called away a week into December and hadn't returned. There were emails, WhatsApp, Snapchat, all random bits of social media between the two of them. Kili had even managed to get some Skype time in so he could wish Kina a Merry Christmas and say hi. A box full of wrapped gifts had shown up a couple of days ago and Fili had placed them carefully beneath the tree, missing his boyfriend.

"This is pathetic," Fili said. He got up from the couch and went into the kitchen, replacing his empty beer bottle with a new one. He surveyed the inside of his fridge and huffed softly, dragging out what he needed to make a sandwich. There was nothing attractive about someone who moped. He knew he was moping. He knew he was being pathetic. What he should do is pick up the phone and call one of the other single guys and go to the bar, maybe play a game of darts.

Or, even better, he could go by himself. Darts, pool, something ridiculous. Something distracting. Fili put his beer back in the fridge, still unopened, along with the sandwich stuff and went to get his shoes on. He was just finishing tying up his Timberlands when there was a knock on his door.

Fili looked up from his bots, frowning. He got up from the couch and went to the door, opening it without checking the peep hole. He was about to tell off whoever was knocking on his door on Christmas Eve when his voice froze in his throat.

It was Kili.

Kili, dressed in a beat-up green canvas jacket with one of his black duffles over one shoulder with ripped jeans, standing there with a half-smile. He had a split lip, a serious scrape over the left side of his face, and a black eye.
He was still the most gorgeous thing Fili had ever seen.

"Hey," Kili said awkwardly. "Merry Christmas?"

Fili reached out and pulled him in close. He heard Kili's bag thump to the floor as they hugged, both of them holding on tighter than strictly necessary, both needing the solid reality of the other. When they let go of each other, Fili cupped Kili's face in slightly shaking hands and brought him close for a kiss. He could feel Kili's cold nose and chapped lips but it didn't matter, it was perfect, because it was Kili.

"Missed me?" Kili asked, still trying for a full smile but now Fili saw the wince.

"What happened?" Fili asked, his hands hovering down Kili's chest until he grabbed the open edges of Kili's coat.

Kili leaned into his slightly. "Inside? I'm starving, cold, and tired and I really just kind of--"

Fili yanked him inside, scooping up the other's bag as he did so, closing the door and locking it behind them. He hustled Kili out of his coat and into the kitchen, smiling as he did so, listening to Kili's soft laughter. Both were quiet as Fili made them grilled cheese and chicken noodle soup, Fili sneaking glances at Kili while the brunet sat at the breakfast bar, chin in his hand. The silence held while they ate, Kili leaning against Fili just the slightest.

Once Fili had cleared their dishes, stacked in the dishwasher, and had fetched the bottle of cognac Kili preferred--and it was a good cognac, top shelf and pricey--and two glasses the other man was stashed comfortably on the couch. He was holding one of the throw pillows against his chest as he watched Fili.

"Are you okay?" Fili asked immediately. Kili snorted, taking a sip of his cognac. "Sorry, it's just. What happened?"

"Job kind of went sideways," Kili said. "We all got to play action hero." He gestured to his face with that half-smile that Fili was starting to hate. "Jumping out of a moving car is not as much fun as the movies make it seem."


Kili stretched out a leg and nudged Fili. "C'mon, I tell you this stuff and you drink with me. The whole No Freaking Out Deal we've got?" Fili sighed and took a bigger gulp of the cognac than it deserved. Kili nodded and left his leg stretched out, resting alongside Fili's thigh. "No one died, just so you know. I've got a decent case of road rash, Dirk broke his arm, and Jackson got shot in the arm. That's about it. Everyone else got off with some bruises and some minor heart attacks."

Fili shot him a glare. "Okay, fine, not funny, I got it."

"But you're okay," Fili said.

Kili set his cognac down on the coffee table and stretched out on the couch, hovering over Fili. "I might have left before I should have but I wasn't the only one who wanted to get home for Christmas. Corey wanted to hijack one of the helos to get us here faster."

"You--"

" Caught the red-eye from hell in Germany," Kili said. "So you can't beat up on me."

Fili set his own glass down and hugged Kili tightly, arranging them on the couch as he did so. "No
beating up," he agreed. "Just so happy you're here, alive, with me."

Kili closed his eyes and clutched tightly at Fili's shirt. "Yeah, I'm home."

Fili squeezed his eyes closed. "Yeah, you are. Just in time. Merry Christmas, Kili."

"Merry Christmas," Kili murmured into Fili's chest.
Fili stood outside the ICU and kept his shaking hands in his pockets. Two weeks of nothing from Woods Security on his missing brother/lover and then he had received an email with a flight confirmation and a phone call. And he had been driven from the airport to the private medical facility owned by Woods Security by a silent driver in an armored car.

"How?" Fili asked, not taking his eyes off Kili.

"It's classified," Legolas said. "I'd tell you, I really would, but I can't."

"Bull," Fili whispered.

"I can't," Legolas said. "There is nothing I can offer you to make you feel better. I can't offer details. I can't even offer any medical information because you aren't listed as next of kin or medical proxy."

Fili turned his head to look at Legolas, a tiny tendril of shock worming its way through him. "I'm not? I thought..."

"Dirk is his proxy," Legolas said. "Dirk's in there with him. Tauriel said to call you and I followed her suggestion."

Fili turned back to watching Kili. He looked so pale on the bed, tube shoved down his throat, monitors plastered to him, IVs in both his arms. He looked like death warmed over, or roadkill, or some combination of both. He could see where one leg was immobilized and where Kili was covered in bandages.

Fili turned to ask a question when he saw Kirin jogging down the hall. Legolas looked relieved, some of the tension melting out of his shoulders, at the sight of the older man.

"Sir," Legolas said with a nod.

"What happened?" Kirin demanded. He pointed to Fili. "He gets to know too, don't even think of telling him to go away."
Legolas sighed and shoved his hands in his pockets. "They were in Syria."

Fili felt like he'd been punched. Kirin didn't look much better.

"You put my kid in the middle of--"

"It was volunteers only," Legolas said. "Dirk volunteered, then Kili did. You taught him well, sir, to always have your partner's back."

Kirin shook his head, reaching back to scratch at his neck. "How bad is he?"

"They took a lot of fire," Legolas said. "Brent said they fought their way out. Two of my men got captured." Here the blond man hesitated. "Kili shot them before they could be used by IS."

"Jesus," Kirin whispered. He looked at Kili through the viewing window. "Wounds?"

"Gunshot wounds on the right upper thigh, abdomen, and left bicep," Legolas said. "Two broken ribs and a dislocated shoulder. We've kept him sedated because of the shot to the stomach he took."

"He wasn't wearing a vest?" Kirin demanded. Legolas looked helpless in the moment as Kirin laid into him with the force of an angry father and angry soldier. Fili wandered away, pressing a hand against the window, watching the machines that showed him Kili still lived. He watched a nurse open the door and go into the room to check on Kili and the two other men in the room. He didn't even realize what he was doing until he was sitting on the edge of the bed and holding Kili's hand.

It was cold to the touch, though Fili could tell it was from the IV and not because...well. Fili looked at the side of Kili's hand, the long bruise starting right at the base of Kili's pinky and spreading to his wrist. Fili made sure he wasn't jostling Kili but fuck, he just wanted to hold Kili's hand. To feel the pulse in his wrist, to watch his chest move (even if it was because of a machine at the moment), to just be with him.

"Excuse me, sir?" the nurse said, standing to the side. "You need to leave."

Fili nodded slowly, acknowledging her and her words. But he couldn't leave, not just yet. He needed to be there for Kili. He had to be there for Kili to come back to, to be something for him to fight for. He looked at the nurse and her stubborn expression masked as compassion and sighed. He leaned down and brushed his lips over Kili's cheek.

"Come back to me," he said. "Please."

"Sir!"

Fili gently set Kili's hand down and got to his feet, letting the nurse firmly show him the door.
Kili rubbed at his eyes with shaking hands, trying to wrap his brain around what was happening. "Are you mad at me for getting hurt?" he asked. "Is that what this is?"

"No," Fili said. "I'm not mad, I'm worried."

"You want me to quit."

"Yes."

"Because you're worried."

"Yes."

"Do you know how ridiculous you sound right now?" Kili asked. He let his hands drop into his blanket-covered lap. "You don't like my job so I should just quit."

"You almost died," Fili said, stressing the last word. "You were injured so bad they induced a coma so you could heal without opening your wounds. You weren't wearing a vest!"

"Okay, to be fair, I lost the vest," Kili said. "There was a thing."

"I can't do this," Fili said, leaning back against the wall. "I can't. Jesus, Kili, do you have any idea how terrifying it was to hear that you were in Syria?"

"Would it help if I said I've been to Yemen too?" Kili asked. He could see Fili's jaw tighten from where he was. "Look. This is what I do. Not all of it is protecting rich idiots. Some of it is going where governments can't, or won't, and some of it is getting hurt."

"I can't--"

"You knew what you were signing up for," Kili said, interrupting whatever Fili was going to say. "You knew this was what I do. You've seen the scars. You've heard the drunken stories Dirk and I have told."

"It was never real before this," Fili said. "Yeah, you went on trips and did things. I got that. But I've never... You were missing, Kili, and then they flew me out here and you were here in the hospital in a goddamn coma. Do you not understand how that? Kirin is the same. He was pissed and scared and--"

"And used to it," Kili said. "He was probably angrier about the fact I volunteered to cover Dirk's dumb ass." Fili made a pained noise and Kili flinched. "All right, so. Now what?"

"I don't know," Fili said softly. "I need to head back to Boston. Legolas said they're going to keep you here until you were healed and then transfer you somewhere for rehab."

"That's it?" Kili asked.

"I'll visit," Fili said. "But, I mean, I've got Kina and work."

Kili didn't say anything. Kina would be fine with Sharon and Dis; work could be done anywhere Fili had his laptop. Visiting meant costly plane trips, even if Kili or Woods Security paid for them, the time spent traveling could be better spent. Kili could feel everything slipping away all over
again.

"I'll see you later," Fili said before leaving the room.

Kili sighed and leaned further back against his pillows. Fantastic.
Track 103

Dis found her eldest at a bar. It was a college dive bar, nothing too horrible, but still nothing to write home about. Fili was sitting at a table in the corner, picking up a fry from the plate in front of him, twirling it slowly, and dropping it back to the plate. Dis sighed and made her way to the free chair opposite him.

“Hey,” Fili said, voice flat.


Fili picked up his beer and drained the glass.

Dis shook her head. She took the glass and stood up, going over to the bar and getting them both fresh glasses. She brought them back over and nudged the plate of fries closer with the base of the pint glass.

“Eat,” she ordered. Fili sighed and started to eat the fries as she set the beers down.

“How could you?” Fili asked as he slowly ate the cold fries. “I mean, dad is actually a soldier. He’s in the freaking army. He goes where they tell him and, and.”

Dis drank from her beer and resisted smacking her lips. They poured a good beer for a dive bar. “Why do you think I left? We fought constantly about it, especially when we would move from base to base with him. It drove me crazy.”

“Why do you think I left? We fought constantly about it, especially when we would move from base to base with him. It drove me crazy.”

Fili pushed the plate of fries away. “Mom,” he started to say before stopping and shaking his head.

“You didn’t see what I saw,” Fili snapped. “You didn’t see him with all those wires and the bandages and realizing that if the bullet had been just a little to the left then he’d be dead. He would have come home in a box, if they recovered his body at all.”

Dis took a large sip of her beer. The idea of her baby, her youngest, the bubbly little child she had let Kirin take from her, dead hurt. The thought of his body abandoned to the elements of wherever he had fallen and the weather… She remembered Somali. She remembered those copters going down.

“How can I do this? Put Kina though this? He won’t change, won’t give up going out there and doing things like this. Fucking Dirk… He won’t let that asshole go out with his back covered.”

“Our Kili is a good man,” Dis said. She reached out and took Fili’s hand, giving it a gentle squeeze. “A question you have to ask yourself is if you can handle this happening more and more often. You know now, you can't take that back. It will drive you crazy, not knowing if he's out
there risking his life or if he's doing nothing more than sitting around and shooting hoops."

"Kili hates basketball," Fili whispered.

"Hate it or not that's a lot of what they do," Dis said.

Fili shook his head, pulling his hand away from hers and picked up his beer. He drained it in three large gulps. "I can't do this," he said. "I can't. I can't put Kina through it. I can't put me through it."

Dis nodded and sipped her beer. "Then you have to tell him, baby. You can't just drop contact like you've been doing. You have to tell him."
Kili stopped in the doorway of his room and stared.

Dis was sitting on his bed, his bags at her feet.

"Uh."

Her arms were crossed and she arched an eyebrow at him.

"Oh, that's where I get it from," Kili said. He wiped his face on the towel around his neck, grousing silently at how his hair stuck and tangled and just, ugh, and limped his way into the room. "This is going to be fun. A mix of dad and Fili, right? Guilt and shaming. Hate to tell you but I'm getting plenty of it already. You're not going to get any reaction out of me from it."

Dis stood up and sighed, reaching out and pulling Kili into a tight hug, heedless of the sweat. Kili's arms came up automatically, so used to hugs these past four years, though he didn't hug nearly as tight as Dis did.

"I'm happy you're alive," she said. She pulled back and cupped his face in his hands, swiping her thumbs over his cheeks. "You're my baby, Kili, my baby who I let go of. I will never stop regretting that."

Kili felt his throat thicken with the urge to cry.

"I'm not here to guilt or shame you," she said, pulling back. She kissed his scruffy cheek. "I'm here to be your mother, to be thankful you weren't taken from me after knowing you for so little of your life."

Kili nodded, trying to smile for her. "Thank you," he said, voice hoarse.

"I've got Dwalin looking into find a month-to-month place out here," Dis said, leading Kili to the bed. "I know your dad's leave is coming up soon so he's going to have to go back to work. I work from home anyway and Dwalin's got a friend out here who'd let him chip in on a few jobs."

Kili just stared at her dumbly as she talked, moving easily back and forth across his small room, smiling at him. Why was it so easy for someone he barely knew to drop everything for him when Fili cou--wouldn't. Fili wouldn't. It wasn't a matter of ability, it was a matter of want. He didn't realize he was crying until Dis handed him the tissue box.

"It's a lot, I know. Unless you'd rather...?"

Kili shook his head. "No, I. Yes. Please." Dis smiled at him. Kili cleared his throat. "Would you mind doing something for me?"

"Anything," Dis said immediately.

He leaned over and rummaged in the nightstand, coming up with a pair of scissors and waving them at her. "Cut my hair?"
"You look good," Kirin said, ruffling Kili's short hair. "You could almost pass muster at boot camp."

Kili shot a shy smile at Dis. "Yeah, she...did a good job."

"She cut your hair when you were a kid because you used to try and bite the barber," Kirin said. He had his hands in his back pockets, a habit Kili had picked up, and was wearing that sad, sort of happy smile he wore when he thought about the past. Kili wondered if maybe, years down the line, he'd pick that habit up as well.

"I'll see if I can find some pictures," Dis said.

Kili nodded, still rather hesitant. He had thought what he had had with Fili, and Kina when she was there, was what family felt like. But having his dad's standing at his back in that calm way he had and the way Dis was smiling happily at him...

"Oh, hey," Kirin said, pulling something out of his back pocket. It was in a gift store brown bag sleeve and he handed it over to Kili. "Figured you'd be happy to leave this place behind."

Kili took it, trusting the brace to actually hold him up, and pulled out the postcard. He rolled his eyes. "Gee, thanks, dad."

"Postcards?"

"It's a hobby of his," Kirin said. "His way of kissing off a place."

Dis arched an eyebrow as Kili handed the postcard and sleeve back to Kirin. "Really?"

"Every place has postcards, no matter how obscure they are. Whether it's about a state or a tourist place or whatever. Gas stations around the world have it. Good industry."

"If no postcards then a magnet," Kirin said.

"I'd love to see them all some time," Dis said.

Kili nodded. "Think you could post them to us?" At Kirin's nod he offered another unsure smile at Dis. "That's okay, right?"

Dis reached out, just the tiniest bit up, and ruffled his hair until it was sticking up all over the place and he was laughing. "There we go," Dis said. "Better."

"I should be able to help you lug this one home before I leave," Kirin said. "Docs here said he didn't have to have the constant supervision anymore but they like you and Dwalin being there in case anything happens."

"My stitches are out," Kili said.

"Doesn't mean anything and you know it," Kirin said, pointing a finger at Kili. "You are ridiculously skilled at hurting yourself."

Kili rolled his eyes at him. "Shut up. You are such a liar."
“We’ll be fine,” Dis said.

“Of course you will,” Kirin said, “you always are.”
Kili watched the insurgents drop Allison and Jake to the ground. He let his gun fall to his side and tried to swallow around his tears. Their bodies would rot in the sun and be food for local animals and… Kili turned and ran, Dirk covering his back like always.

They were too close. Too damned close.

He felt the tears running down his face, drying quickly.

He knew he did them mercy. They wouldn’t be beheaded, or burned, or tortured. They died quickly, cleanly. Kili would never forget that it was his bullets that had killed his friends.
“Hey, thanks for meeting me,” Kirin said, dropping into a seat across from Fili. “Never been here, what’s good?”

Fili shrugged. “It’s generally a pretty good place. Tasty Burger can do no wrong.”

“I have had a lot of amazing burgers, let me tell you,” Kirin laughed. “We’ll see how this Tasty Burger holds up.”

Fili grinned and tapped the menu. “Prepare to have your mouth schooled, old man.”

“Nice, trash talk, I like it,” Kirin said. He looked over the menu and set it aside before studying his son. "So. Wanna do the talking now or after we get the food and beer?"

Fili froze for a moment before slouching and nodding slowly. "Yeah, after beer. A lot of beer. We can get a pitcher?"

Kirin nodded. "Sounds good. Now. Tell me about my granddaughter. I wanna meet her before I head back to base."

Fili smiled, relaxing. "Kina's good. She's eleven, in seventh grade."

"Isn't she a little young for that?"

"She skipped second grade," Fili said. "She's a bit of a handful right now but she's good. Fantastic. She likes school a lot and is getting into the whole...female stuff. I let Sharon deal with that. I did put my foot down when she comes over in short skirts. I mean, she's eleven. Hell no."

Kirin chuckled. "I was thrilled when we had two boys. I'd have been terrified to have girls."

Fili grinned. "It's a challenge, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. Although, it'll be interesting when she hits high school. I'll need to borrow Kili's guns..." He trailed off and sighed, sliding down in his seat. "What am I doing?"

Kirin smiled as the waitress came over and asked for the beer and his burger while Fili did the same. He poured himself a glass and drank half of it in one go. Kirin poured his own and waited, watching Fili's distress. "Well?"

"I'd rather not," Fili said with the tiniest cringe.

"When did you become a coward?" Kirin asked with a frown. "I mean, I remember you facing us all down and announcing you and Kili were going to be a thing, brothers or not. And now you can't even discuss why you've essentially broken up?"

"You were there!" Fili said, leaning forward. "You saw what I did. How could I. I mean. That?"

Kirin studied his flustered son. "Fili." Fili leaned back as the beer was set down in front of them. He poured himself a glass and drank half of it in one go. Kirin poured his own and waited, watching Fili's distress. "Well?"

"I'm an idiot," Fili said softly.
"Possibly," Kirin said. "Talk me through your head."

"I talked to mom about this," Fili said.

"She's not military," Kirin said. "Maybe I can try to help you think about this whole thing better."

"Okay, fine," Fili said, setting his glass down and refilling it. He sounded flustered, angry, and talked fast. "He claimed that I knew what he went through, that I heard his and Dirk's stories, that I saw the scars, so I should know. I went on a job with him once or twice, random things Wood sent him on. Nothing prepared me for seeing that, for seeing him hooked up in a bed in an induced coma. That's, no. I almost lost him!"

"So now you've lost him," Kirin pointed out, "through your own actions."


"Your leaving does the opposite," Kirin said. He picked up his beer and took a healthy sip. He loved coming to Boston for the good Sam Adams. "He's going to stop taking jobs over here. He's drawn to conflict because he likes helping. In another life he would have gotten into teaching or social work or anything that would helps people. He's stuck in North Carolina until he heals up enough to ditch the brace and wheelchair, which they're saying is probably about a year, but after that?" Kirin shrugged. "Who knows what's going to happen with Russia, or with the Middle East, or anywhere in the world."

Fili looked sick.

"You know what you can count on?"

"What?" he asked.

"That you probably won't see him again," Kirin said. He sat back in his seat and watched the emotions flit about Fili's face--shock, disbelief, sadness. "You know that, though. After you got hurt, after the truth came out, he ran off for what, ten months?" Fili nodded. "This is going to be a lot longer."

Fili leaned forward, head in his hands. "He'd do it. He'd stay away and he'd resent me. That would be it."

Kirin kept his peace, sipping his beer. He'd said what he had come to say, it was Fili's turn to figure things out.

"I can't..."

"Can't you?"

Their waitress served their food and Kirin dug it. Okay, he had to admit, Tasty Burger made a damned fine burger.

Fili looked at him, idly poking at the fries. "What should I do?"

"Nope," Kirin said. "That's not how this works. You gotta figure it out yourself. Whether you do it now, in a week, a month, five months. Kili ain't going anywhere and Dis is taking complete advantage of it to be a mother to him. You have your in, use it if you're going to."

Fili picked up his burger and took a bite.
"Now, back to my granddaughter," Kirin said with a wide smile.
Kili growled and gritted his teeth as he gripped the wooden bars tight. He tried once more to put weight on his leg, careful not to do too much, but wanting to do more than he should. It had taken him twenty minutes to go from one end of the walking rail to the next and he was sweating enough his hands started to slip.

He cursed, seeing the fall before it came, bracing for the pain of the impact that never came.

"Didn't I teach you better than this?" Kirin asked, helping Kili up. He swung Kili's arm over his shoulder—the good arm—and helped him over to the closest chair. "You don't pull this shit. Especially when there's no one looking after your skinny ass."

Kili rolled his eyes and made grabby hands for the water bottle on the other side of the room. Kirin smacked the back of his head and went to get it.

"I know what I can handle," Kili said. "I got this under control." It was a bald-face lie. He did know what he could handle, that was true, but this? He was pushing himself past his limits and he knew it. If he didn't watch it he'd end up hurting himself worse or setting his recovery back by months.

Kirin handed the water bottle over and crossed his arms, levelling an unimpressed look at Kili.

"Fine," Kili muttered. He took a deep drink of the water, draining it in one go, and letting the bottle and his hands fall to rest on his knees. "I'm watching it, okay?"

"No, not okay," Kirin said. "Recovery is going to take some time and work. You can't just work harder to cut the corners on time. If anything else you're making it worse. You caught a nasty infection after you woke up and that already screwed you up. Dirk's still flat on his back."

Kili shook his head, not really sure how to explain his anxiety to his dad. He leaned back in the chair and tossed the empty bottle from one hand to the other. "It's just... Fili."

"I figured as much," Kirin said. "He's been very absent."

"You don't--"

"Oh, I do," Kirin said with a bitter chuckle. "Your mother was the same way."

"Doomed to repeat our parents mistakes," Kili said. "Isn't that usually how the phrase goes?"

Kirin reached out and ruffled Kili's hair. "It'll work out."

Kili shook his head. "Don't think so. But thanks for trying to cheer me up."

"It will be fine, don't be dramatic," Kirin said. "After everything else this is nothing."

Kili kept his mouth shut. Fili had dodged his few calls, ignored the texts and emails, and Kili was starting to get the picture. He didn't like it. But he had to respect it. "Can you do me a favor?" he asked. "Can you get Dis's number for me?"

Kirin frowned but nodded, "Yeah, I can do that."

"Cool," Kili said. He leaned back in his chair and wiggled his bottle at Krin. "Please?" He smiled
as his dad rolled his eyes but got him more water anyway. Hopefully he could convinced Dis to grab his stuff and ship it to wherever-the-hell-he-was.
Kili took a few careful steps, paused, took a couple more, paused, and grinned.

"Nice," Dwalin said from the couch.

"No brace, no cane, no nothing," Kili said cheerfully. He could feel his leg tremble so he made a couple more careful steps and sank into an armchair. "Okay, i can't d a lot but I can move."

"I'd keep the cane just in case, soldier boy," Dwalin said.

Kili wrinkled his nose. "Do you really have to call me that? I'm not even in the military. As I've told you. So many times before."

Dwalin shrugged and went back to reading his paper. Kili stuck his tongue out and wiggled, making himself comfortable. His stomach still ached from the ricochet but it was fine. The deepest part of the wound, which had taken a little out of his side and was partially responsible for the broken ribs, was covered in shiny pink skin. He tugged his shirt up to look and poked his stomach absently; he really needed to start working out again. He was just a little squishy. Not that he could do anything about that, not with his leg, but soon. Soon he would have definition again, and muscles, and he would be...

Yeah, he really was never going to turn into the Terminator, as fun as that would be.

"I'll be back," Kili mumbled to himself in silent amusement. He ignored Dwalin's raised eyebrow and turned his attention to his leg. The wound was technically still healing though the stitches had come out a few weeks ago. The entry and exit wounds were also all pink and shiny, but Kili knew the issues were really nerve and muscle damage.

The doorbell rang.

Kili looked over at Dwalin, curious, but the other man looked as confused as Kili. He set the paper down and went to answer the door.

"It's good, I've got it," Dis cried, running down the stairs.
Kili tilted his head to the side and--oh, he loved these recliner things--swiveled to watch the door drama. He was not expecting to see Dis pulling Fili through the door into a tight hug. He felt himself go cold as he fought his way out of the chair. He should have known better; of course Fili would come visit his mother. Why shouldn’t he?

Of course he wouldn’t visit Kili but Dis was another matter altogether.

Kili could feel his leg scream at him, his knee feeling unsteady and his thigh burning, but he kept going. He made it to the wall and breathed a silent sigh of relief before making his way into the kitchen and then out the back door. It felt like it took years to get to the back porch when it was probably only five minutes. He hadn’t moved that fast in some time.

He felt the muscle seize and cramp and he bit his lip, trying to silence his scream. It hurt, oh hell, it hurt so much. He tried digging his fingers in and massaging away the cramp but he couldn’t find the right place. He reached out, gripping at the edge of the porch, and leaned back. He couldn’t straighten his leg. He tried breathing, tears running down his cheek, gritting his teeth.

He felt hands on his leg, rubbing circles and digging in with firm hands, finding the cramp and easing it. There was a heating pack pressed against his thigh in short order and soothing hands on his forehead. He choked back a scream as his leg gave one more vicious spasm and let himself cry.

He kept his eyes closed, just barely making out Dis humming and stroking his short hair, his body easing out of exhaustion. The heating pad helped, as did the fingers, and he let out the tiniest of whimpers.

“Kili?” Dis asked, petting the side of his face.

“Nngh,” he managed.

“Fool,” Dwalin said. “You know better. There’s no reason for you to have done this.”

“Stop,” Fili said. His voice was low and Kili realized with a jolt that it was his fingers gently rubbing circles around his knee. “He was running from me, we all know that. No one told him I was coming, apparently, so it’s no surprise he acted this way.”

“Ffffuck ‘ou,” Kili slurred out.

Fili chuckled, “Not just yet.”

“I’m going to get the pain killers and water,” Dwalin said. “Dis?”

“I’m staying,” she said, moving to be Kili’s support. She arranged him in her arms, letting him lean into her chest, his head going to her shoulder out of habit.

“Fili, you want anything?”

“If you have anything easy to eat? I didn’t really eat on the plane or in the airport.”

Kili could hear Dwalin walk away and he slowly opened his eyes. He felt awful. Fili was kneeling on the grass at the edge of the porch and looked up, giving Kili a weak smile. Kili watched him, wary, quiet and waiting.

“So…hey?” Fili said, shrugging and giving a sheepish smile. “I came to see how you were doing. Like I said I would.”
“Seven months,” Kili said.

Fili had the grace to look down and remove his hands from Kili’s leg. “I had some things to work out.”

Kili closed his eyes and tried to hide his face against Dis’s shoulder. She nudged him, not letting him, and he sighed. He opened his eyes and looked at Fili, really looked. “Look like hell.”

“Gee, thanks,” Fili said. “Not looking too swift yourself.”

“Boys,” Dis chided softly.

Kili stayed quiet and still, though he direct a cautious gaze at the hand on his thigh. Fili saw and offered a small smile.

"I came so we could talk," Fili said, eyes going up to where Dis was and then back to Kili's face. "We have a lot to say."

"No, we don't," Kili said.

Fili sat back on his heels. "No, we do. You have to listen to me for a little bit."

Dis hummed softly, nudging Kili into sitting up. "I'm going to go help Dwalin in the kitchen. You're going to need to eat something too, Kili."

"Just a yogurt," Kili said. Dis nodded, leaving, and he moved, supporting himself and looking at Fili unhappily. He didn't want him here. He was letting that wound heal as well, though it was still raw, and having Fili here just infected it. He was getting gangrene on his feelings. He wrinkled his nose and tried to ignore the way Fili frowned at him.

"Kili?"

"Why are you even here?" Kili asked. "It's been seven months. Shouldn't you be, I don't know, dealing with Kina and work? Since all that was more important."

"Kina has school vacation so Sharon is taking her to Universal," Fili said. He slowly took his hands off Kili's leg. "I'm sorry."

"That's what you're going to lead with?" Kili asked, incredulous. Was he honestly serious? "I'm sorry? What are you apologizing for, Fili? I mean, really, tell me exactly what you're apologizing for. And don't cop out and say everything. List it. Detail it."

Fili stared at him. "Kili..."

Kili couldn't get up and leave, they both knew that, but he could move just enough to get his leg away from Fili and cross his arms. He looked away, toward the door, willing Dis or Dwalin to show up.
Fili hid in the bedroom Dis had given him--a whole hallway away from Kili--and paced. He had not expected it to be this bad. He looked down at his hands and noticed they were shaking. He tucked them in his armpits and sat down on the bed. It was unsettling how Kili had looked at him, had struggled to get away from him...

He shifted, pulling his phone out of his pocket, and called up his favorites. Sigrid would help him. She had to help. He couldn't reach out to Carter or Dori, but he could talk to Sigrid. She was the one who pushed him into actually coming out here. Yes, Kirin had something to do with it, but Sigird had bought his tickets, packed his bag, and pushed him through security.

"Please tell me you aren't drinking at the airport," Sigrid said as she picked up the phone. He could hear laughter and crashes in the background and smiled. Sigrid's house was an eruption of the biggest sense of family Fili had ever experienced. He had ached for that for almost all his life.

"I'm at my mom's," Fili said.

"And?"

"Remember I told you Kili hurt his leg?"

"Shot, needed lots of rehab, yadda yadda," Sigrid said. "TILDA! Put that cookie down!"

Fili tried to smile but failed. He flopped against the bed, making sure his head hit the pillow. "Well, he can't walk all that well, but that didn't stop him in practically running away from me. Which screwed up his leg. Sig, he hurt himself to get away from me."

Sigrid sighed. "Fili..."

"He's snowed on pain killers right now," Fili said. "I don't know what to do."

"You don't know what to do with your boyfriend."

"We kind of...broke up. I freaked out on him."

"You told me," Sigrid said. "Bain, can you keep an eye on dinner? Dad should be home soon." The was a muffled response and the sound of a kiss smacking against skin. Fili waited and then Sigrid was back. "Okay, so let's see. You were a jerk and probably broke his heart. His dad came to talk to you. You couldn't decide what to do. I kicked your butt."

"Yeah, pretty much."

"And now he is hurt and angry with you and refusing to deal with you," Sigrid said.

"Yep."

"Well, considering the evidence, I'd have to say you've been a dick and the only way to fix any of this is to get on your knees and beg," Sigrid said.

Fili sighed. "Is that your professional opinion?"

"As a female? Yes. As a psychologist? Yes."
"Are you calling Kili a girl?" Fili asked, unable to stop the smile.

"If the hair fits," Sigrid said with a chuckle.

Fili squeezed his eyes closed. "He cut it," he said. "Just, chopped it all off."

"Oh, baby," Sigrid sighed. "It's going to be okay."

"Sig..."

"Suck it up, Fili, and grovel. A lot. And if it doesn't happen, if you guys stay broken up? Then accept it. Get over it. Move on."

"I don't think I can."

"You'll have to."
Kili sat outside the rehabilitation center and breathed in the warm summer air. He rolled the water bottle in his hands from one to the other, one to the other, rolling and rolling, thinking.

He had a lot to think about.

Fili had shown up two weeks ago. He was leaving for a little to hash stuff out with Sharon and see Kina, and then he would be back. Or he claimed he would be back. Kili wasn't holding his breath. Dis and Dwalin were sure he'd be back and were trying to push for the two of them to, at the very least, talk. Kili wasn't in the mood.

"Yo," Dirk said, wheeling himself over in his wheelchair. "You look like shit."

Kili handed Dirk his water bottle. "How's the rehab going?"

"I'll never be a ballerina," Dirk said. "But I'm good." He took the water and drained the bottle in one go, wiping his mouth on his t-shirt.

"You were never going to be a ballerina," Kili said. He winced, hearing the underlying viciousness in his voice. "Sorry. I'm just--"

"Rage monstering?" Dirk asked. "Do you need a Snickers? Some Hulk-tranqs?"

Kili looked away from Dirk and down at his empty hands.

"C'mere," Dirk said, grabbing Kili's hand and tugging him gently. Kili let himself be led into awkwardly straddling Dirk's lap. Dirk raised his hands and ruffled Kili's hair gently, resting his forehead against Kili's. "You've lost your rudder."

Kili sighed and closed his eyes. He let Dirk play with his fingers and just breathed. "Yeah."

"You sure staying with your mom and your step-dad is the best thing for you? Especially now you've got that brother of yours there?"

Kili laughed, his breath hitching into silence, eyes squeezed closed. "Dirk."
"They've got me set up in a pretty sweet apartment," Dirk said. "You know you're welcome at any time. I mean it."

Kili nodded, leaning into him for a moment before pulling away, smiling slightly at him. "Yeah."

"Hey, Kili, Dwa--"

Kili felt his back snap straight and his hands tightened on Dirk's. Dirk frowned, looking around Kili to pin Fili with a flat look.

"I came to pick you up," Fili said, keys jiggling, voice that blank press voice.

Dirk tugged at Kili and, not knowing what else to do, Kili went with it. He let Dirk kiss him, his lips gentle on his, soft and fond. Kili squeezed his eyes closed; he didn't want to cry. "Anytime, Haegan."

Kili nodded and got to his feet, fetching his cane and walking over to Fili. They silently made their way out of the rehab center and to Dwalin's truck. Fili had to help Kili into the cab but he did so silently. The drive, a 25 to 40 minute affair, was quiet and it started to itch at Kili.

"Say it," Kili said as they pulled onto the street where Dis and Dwalin rented. "I know you want to."

"You've moved on?" Fili asked. There was hurt in his voice, entirely unearned, and made Kili want to scream and rage and storm off. He couldn't, though, so he stayed silent. "Or, well, backwards I guess since it's Dirk."

"Moving on has never been an option for me," Kili said. Fili had pulled into the driveway and turned the truck off. "You're the one who broke up with me, remember?"

"I didn't break up with you," Fili said.

"Might as well have," Kili said. "You vanish for seven months and then you wander back into my life and expect everything to just go back to normal. Shit like this? You can't go back to normal. You can't just expect me to be there, constantly, while you run off and panic. We did that shit already, remember?"

"And we worked it out," Fili pointed out.

"Did we?" Kili asked. "Did we really figure things out or just defer them?"

Fili was silent.

Kili pushed his hands through his hair, revelling in it's shortness. "We have issues," he said. "We don't know what issues we have until we trip over them but we have them. You really have one with me job now that you know the full extent of it."

"I don't know the full extent," Fili said.

"I'll get Tauriel to send you a job description," Kili said. He wiggled about and grabbed his phone. "No, you know what? Let's fucking Wikipedia this shit."

Fili looked over at him, brow furrowed. "What?"

"Woods Security is a private military company," Kili said. "You thought it was some sort of mall cop shit and that's actually a little offensive. Okay, here. Let's read this out loud:
"The services and expertise offered by PMCs are typically similar to those of governmental security, military or police forces, most often on a smaller scale. While PMCs often provide services to train or supplement official armed forces in service of governments, they can also be employed by private companies to provide bodyguards for key staff or protection of company premises, especially in hostile territories. However, contractors who use offensive force in a war zone could be considered unlawful combatants, in reference to a concept outlined in the Geneva Conventions and explicitly specified by the 2006 American Military Commissions Act.”

Fili was silent for a long moment. Kili shoved his phone into the front pocket of his jeans and waited.

“You could be brought up on charges or war crimes,” Fili said.

Kili shrugged, eyebrow cocked slightly. “Yeah, I suppose. I won’t, though, neither would any in my unit. We don’t do that shit.”

“Okay,” Fili said, hands tightening on the wheel. He hadn’t removed his hands from them since they had parked and turned the truck off. “Okay, so, that’s the job. Your actual job. The one that can get you killed and the only way I’d be told is if Dirk makes it back alive or Kirin finds out.”

“You have a problem with Dirk being my emergency contact?” Kili asked. He frowned. That was actually kind of petty.

Fili shook his head. “I know I’ve asked before but…what exactly is he to you? I know he’s your partner, best friend, and sometimes ex.”

Kili shook his head. “We never dated, I told you that. We screwed around. Friends with benefits.”

“I don’t even know what to ask,” Fili said. “Or what to do.”

“Then fuck off and leave me alone,” Kili said. “You were good enough at doing that for seven months. This whole sticking around thing isn’t going to work and you know it. Accept the defeat and move on.”

“I’m not losing you,” Fili said. “I love you. We’ve spent so much time and energy in making this work for almost four years. Can’t we work on getting over this as well?”

“No,” Kili said, voice flat. “We can’t.” He opened the door and grabbed his cane, using it to help him jump down. He felt his leg twinge but he ignored it as he made his careful way into the house.
Kili packed his duffel without thinking, hands moving automatically. Fili was at work right now and would be coming home soon but Kili wasn't sure what to do about him. It had been almost a year since he had come home and... Well. It had been awkward. It still was a little awkward. They would never be how they once were, the ease of their kisses had vanished, but there was still love.

Kili sat on the bed and stared at the shirt in his hands. It was Fili's. He set it next to him on the covers and looked inside his duffel: three more of Fili's shirts had ended up in his bag. After a moment of hesitation he tucked the forth in with the rest. He finished packing, paying more attention, and set it down next to the couch and his boots.

By the time Fili came home Kili had dinner cooking on the stove. He'd been doing better when it came to food--the cooking class had helped--but he didn't have the widest range of things he could cook preoccupied.

Fili chuckled, kissed his cheek, and peered over his shoulder. "Something smells good."

Kili smiled, leaning back into Fili's warmth and arms. "Quinoa cakes and potato salad and coleslaw."

"Really?" Fili asked. "Those look like other things. Crab cakes or something."

"I don't trust myself with fish. Eggs and cheese, yes, fish, no."

"Lobster is easy to make," Fili pointed out.

Kili shot him a glance. "They're sea aliens. They have eye stalks. I ain't touching those things."

Fili laughed and moved away. "Never change."

"Hey, I need to talk to you about something," Kili called after him. Fili made some sort of noise from the direction of the bedroom. Kili huffed out a puff of hair, sending the shorter hair in his face to go flying up. He had two things he wanted to talk about: Dirk and Syria. And he knew both of those subjects were going to send Fili through the roof.
Kili made a face and turned the stove off, grabbing plates and pushing the patties onto them. He tugged the fridge open and started dumping out the leftover varied salads onto the plates until the containers were empty. He slid them onto the breakfast bar counter and leaned against the wall.

He didn't have the strength for this. He could argue with Dirk but, Fili? Suddenly he understood why some of the other guys and gals had been talked out of going.

"What's up?" Fili asked, offering Kili a beer. Kili stared at him, not having heard him, but took it. "You've got a job?"

"Yeah," Kili said, taking a big gulp of his beer. Oh, it was the good stuff. He hummed happily and took another drink, savoring the taste. "Overseas this time." Which was the truth, in a way.

"Gonna be gone for long?" Fili asked. He set his beer down and sat down at the bar, turning his plate this way and that.

"Shut up, it's not going to eat you," Kili said. He sat next to him and smiled.

"That would be a 'yes, Fili, I'm going to be gone for a long time."

"Two weeks, max," Kili said. "Probably less." If everything went as planned.

"Anything interesting?" Fili asked, shoveling a forkful of potato salad into his mouth.

Kili shrugged, stabbing one of the cakes and pulling a bite free. "Probably not, just a lot of nothingness." Lots and lots of never ending sand and ocean and bad guys and dead bodies.

"Well, we'll just have to give you a proper send-off, something to make you come home faster," Fili said with a leer.

Kili snorted, reaching out and ruffle-tugging on Fili's hair. He smiled, fond and happy but with that growing itch of fear inside his gut. "Damned straight, you will." For all he knew this would be his last night with Fili.
Dirk watched Kili with a sharp look. Kili waved him off, trying to breathe through the pain. He'd been careless. He could have gotten his entire team killed. He didn't do well with kids, he never really had, but it was worse since Kina. He'd given his vest to the kid, having used his body as a living shield in the first place, and then he'd been shot by the kid's mother.

Of course.

It was just a side wound, not a good thing, but something that Dirk and Brent had moved fast over. Michelle had peeled off his glove and shoved it in his mouth as they worked on him. They were all tired and the more tired they became the more likely they were to lose control.

Kili had started getting messy about five hours after his leg had been hit. Dirk, who had been shot in the arm twice--same arm, even--and had a broken leg and several bruised ribs. He was just starting to get messy. Jake and Allison were dead, not two hours past; they couldn't get much messier than that. Brent was starting to break, most of his gear covered in blood, though a fair bit of it was his own as well. He'd been hit pretty hard with some bricks from some locals. He hid injuries better than anyone because he was the one fixing everyone else up. Michelle was just as beat up as Kili, her ankle pretty solidly fucked along with her knee and shoulder, but she didn't get holes like he did. He bled, she broke. It was a good reason why they never paired up.

“Okay,” Michelle said. “We’ve got extraction in an hour. We need to get out of East Homs first.”

“Easier said than done,” Dirk said.

“We’re close,” Michelle said. She had a map pulled up on her tablet. “We’re in a buffer zone right now and it should be easy to slip out.”

“Least we did our job,” Kili said. “Guys are dead, supply lines are restored, we’re good.”

“All it cost was two friends,” Brett said.

“They knew the odds,” Michelle said, tucking her tablet away. “We all did. Now, let’s get moving and see if we can get home.”

Home...

Kili nodded. Home would be nice. He’d be able to see Fili again. Fuck, all he wanted was to be held by him, to be kissed, to curl up in bed and watch lame anime, to just go back to a normal life. Those thoughts gave him the energy to get to his feet and get moving. Home, home, home. It was a chant he said in time with the throbbing of his side and his leg, his arm and his ribs. Home, home, home.
Kili fisted one hand in Fili’s shirt, the other clutching at the short ponytail Fili had thrown his hair into. Fili had him pressed against the edge of the couch, the two of them deliciously close as they kissed. Kili could feel his heart pounding in his chest, mouths sliding slick against each other’s, tongues touching.

“Kili,” Fili breathed against his lips.

Kili nipped his bottom lip. “Shhh,” he murmured, moving his knee so Fili could get closer. Closer was good now, as was having Fili’s lips back against his. There was a hand by his hip, reaching down to stroke his hip, Fili’s fingers a hot brand against his skin. He arched up into Fili unconsciously, moaning into the blond’s mouth.

“Kili,” Fili said, voice a little louder and firmer.

Kili pulled Fili in for more kisses, drinking them up, sucking on Fili’s tongue and shifting a little as his cock tried to distract him. He didn’t want sex; he wanted kisses. He wanted Fili’s mouth on his, wanted the heat and intimacy, the slick slide of easy affection. He didn’t want to take his clothes off, to negotiate his leg, to deal with any of that.

He just wanted--

Fili pulled away, breathing quickly. Kili couldn’t help the upset noise it drew out of him and then Fili was up off the couch and leaving him. Kili licked his lips and pushed himself into a sitting position. He sighed, glaring down at his lap as he willed his erection to go away, and waited.

Fili was back ten minutes later, flushed, that look on his face...

Kili chuckled. “Your hand treat you right?” he asked

Fili narrowed his eyes and pinned Kili to the couch, straddling his lap and pushing him down into the soft suede to kiss him. Fili had Kili’s hands in one hand and pressed them against the arm rest as they kissed. Kili gave in, kissing back and making pleased little noises.
Slowly, fluidly, they shifted and moved. The two of them ended up against a corner of the couch, legs twined as together as their tongues, fingers stroking cheeks and chins and knees and throats and chests and hips. It was innocent—hungry, but innocent—the way they fell.

The rest would come later, heh, but this. Kili was just glad he was alive just for the feel of Fili’s kisses.
Kili took a deep breath, sprawled as he was on the deck, and watched Fili. The other man was grilling burgers and hot dogs, a bottle of beer dangling from his fingers absently as he flipped the meat. He could still hear the news through the open living room windows and he shuddered.

He could hear the sharp report of guns and see the way his bullets had hit Allison and Jake through their skulls. He felt his throat thicken, making it hard to swallow, and he levered himself up. He made his careful way over to Fili, grabbing his beer and downing it in one quick swallow. The other man stared at him as Kili let the bottle fall to the grass.

“Shut up,” Kili said quietly, reaching out and wrapping his arms around Fili. He clung, half ashamed and half desperate, holding on tight. He felt Fili’s arms come up around him, holding him just as tight.

“Kili?”

“Shut up,” he choked out.

Fili did, holding Kili and angling their bodies to the side, still working the grill. Kili held on to Fili, trying to hold onto his anger as well, but he couldn’t hate him anymore. He needed him too much, wanted him too much, and his will crumbled in the face of that need.

He wasn’t about to jump right back into what they had had before but this, Fili’s arms, he could take those. Maybe later he would take Fili’s eyes, his smile, his kisses, his chest, his heart…but that was later. That wasn’t now. Now Kili just breathed, holding on tight, letting Fili hold him up.
Kili stretched out on the bed, doing his best to breathe as Fili kissed down his body. The other man lingered over the still healing scar on his stomach, tongue tracing around the area and lips caressing the scar itself. His beard scraped against Kili’s too-sensitive skin and he whined a soft protest.

Fili glanced up at him, bracing himself on his hands and surging up to kiss Kili desperately. Kili could feel all of Fili’s fear and regret in that kiss and his brought his hands up to tangle in Fili’s hair, keeping his brother’s mouth against his.

“Kili,” Fili murmured against his lips.

“Shh,” Kili said. He continued to kiss Fili, keeping him kissing him, but then Fili used hands. Kili broke the kiss to groan and Fili chuckled. “Cheater.”

“I want to touch,” Fili said, doing just that. He stroked the inside of Kili’s thigh lightly, trailing his fingers ever so gently over the sensitive skin. “This is the first time you’ve let me.”

Kili sighed and let go of Fili’s hair. He wanted. He did. He was just…nervous. It wasn’t like they had never had sex before—honestly the amount of sex they had usually was probably unhealthy—but there was something to be said for just kissing.

Fili slid down Kili’s body again, dropping kisses and gently bites as he went, hands sliding through leg hair, chest hair, cupping ass and balls. Kili let himself focus on breathing and feeling, watching Fili through heavy-lidded eyes.

He was burning, slowly smoldering, and Fili’s hands kept it at that level. Kili knew what it was like to feel like he was exploding and would have taken control if Fili had spent this much time touching the rest of his body before. Now, though, he let his head fall to the side and breathed, arching and squirming, letting his moans and gasps fall from his lips.

Fili hesitated over Kili’s injured leg, having pulled the limb up and over his hip. Kili looked at him, the way Fili sat back on his heels, hands tracing the ugly and thick scar tissue there. He waited in silence, watching, and biting his lip.
“Thank you,” Fili said finally. He smiled slightly at Kili’s curious noise. “For this, for coming back to me, for being alive. I’m so sorry, Kili, for panicking. Thank you, love, for taking me back.”

“I love you more than I hate you,” Kili said.

Fili nodded and reached for the lube. It was the work of minutes—heated minutes, one that brought out sweat and precome and moans—for Fili to slip slicked fingers inside him. Only moments for Fili to sink inside Kili. He kept Kili’s injured leg in mind, hands carefully, moving slowly together. Kili arched and begged, hands grabbing and pulling.

They kissed, lips dripping promises and love, as their hips moved. This was what Kili had come home for, to, and he was now. Home.
Kili twisted the top off his beer bottle and leaned against the counter. It had been a hard, boring
day. So long that he had come straight home instead of changing in the locker rooms at work. Beer
felt so good after his day. He loved it.

“Hey, Kili,” Fili said. He had come up behind Kili and set down a pizza. “Sausage and pepper
pizza and jalepeno poppers.”

Kili set the beer down and made a happy noise. He turned and pulled the pizza open, grabbing a
slice and shoving it in his mouth. His gloves were going to be such a mess. The pizza was so good
he didn’t care. Fili was staring at him, jaw slightly dropped. Kili frowned, chewing.

“What?” he mumbled through his mouthful of pizza.

“Holy shit,” Fili said.

“What?” Kili asked again, setting the pizza down and looking over himself. “What?!”

“You look amazing,” Fili said slowly. “Like, wow. I didn’t think I had a uniform kink.”

Kili looked down at himself again, taking in the grey and black camo cargos, a gun still strapped to
his thigh and the pouch with his zip tie cuffs, pepper spray, and other things. He’d stripped off the
vest and arm guards, leaving the black t-shirt on and his fingerless gloves. It looked plain and
normal time him but Fili was looking at him like he was a wet dream come true.

“This is a uniform you lust over?” Kili asked.

“Apparently,” Fili said. He reached down and adjusted himself.

Kili grinned, picking up his beer and taking a long drink of it, before walking over to Fili and
tugging him in close. He could feel Fili’s erection and he cupped Fili’s face in his hands. “You like
this?”

“My dick hurts from how fast I got hard,” Fili said, licking his lips.
Kili reached down into his pocket and pulled out a pair of zip tie cuffs. He wiggled them at Fili. “Why, you wanna play?”

Fili swallowed. “Fuck me,” he said.

Kili pushed Fili back, grabbed his shoulder, and twirled him. Fili went, surprised, and didn’t fight as Kili pushed him into the wall and cuffed his wrists. Fili whimpered; Kili smirked.

He walked Fili into the bedroom and brushed the hair off the back of his neck. He kissed his neck and nuzzled it.

“Strip,” he whispered.

“I can’t,” Fili said.

Kili grinned. There was a knife strapped to his thigh next to the thigh pouch. He undid Fili’s belt and pulled the leather free with a loud snap before he dropped it. He pulled out the knife and set it between Fili’s skin and his jeans.

“I’ll replace them,” he said. He bit down on the meaty flesh of Fili’s neck and sliced through the denim and underwear on Fili. He listened to the sounds Fili made in shock and arousal, saw the way Fili’s cock sprung to his stomach. Kili licked his lips and pushed Fili toward the bed, then down onto the bed itself.

“Oh, lover, we are going to have so much fun together,” Kili said, tracing the tip of the knife along the curve of Fili’s ass.
Kili let his phone fall back down to his blanket-covered lap, frowning. It had gone straight to voice mail. Was Fili screening his calls? Did he have Kili's profile marked "send to voice mail"? Would he really be that cruel?

Yes, his heart whispered. He would.

"You okay over there?" Dirk asked, voice hoarse.

Kili glanced at him and then down at his phone again. He sighed and set it aside on the bedside table. "Yeah, I guess so."

"You don't look so good," Dirk said.

"Hey, Dirk?"

"Yeah?"

"Do me a favor and shut the hell up."

Kili turned his back on Dirk, ignoring his friend as his mind spun. It had been a month since he had woken up. A month since Fili had bolted. He felt his stomach turn and his head hurt. He wasn't going to cry because it wasn't worth it. He reached out and grabbed his phone, angry with himself, and froze as he noticed the date.

Dis and Dwalin's anniversary.

It had been two years since he'd found out he was dating his brother.

Kili felt numb, as if he were disconnected from his body, as he began to delete everything he had in his phone from Fili. Contact, email, pictures, text messages, emails... He deleted it all. He went through his backups and deleted those. He went into his Dropbox and Google Drive and deleted the pictures there too.

He purged his phone of Fili, trying to purge Fili from his life, from his heart.
He guessed that was that.
Kili sulked outside the rehabilitation center, waiting for Fili or Dwalin or Dis to pick him up. He couldn't help but be angry and annoyed and he wanted nothing more than punch a wall. Or something. Anything. He'd even settle for Fili's hesitant smiles.

He looked up when the SUV stopped in front of him. Fili hopped out and came around the side. Kili grit his teeth, trying to suppress his anger, getting to his feet carefully. Fili stopped, a frown crossing his face.

"Kili?"

"Don't start," Kili said. He avoided Fili's hands and got into the SUV by himself. His leg twinged and he reached down, rubbing it gently, waiting silently.

Fili got into the SUV equally as silently and drove. Kili looked out the window, unseeing, as he let himself stew in his anger. Anger was better than guilt. He looked up when Fili parked the SUV and turned it off. They were at a lake.

"Wher--?"

"Lake Jordan," Fili said. "They're got a good place for swimming."

Kili chewed the inside of his cheek. "Take me home."

"Not until you talk to me," Fili said.

"You don't want to push me right now," Kili said.

"I kind of do," Fili said. "You've been avoiding me unless I corner you in the car. You flat out ignore me when you can't get away with avoidance. Kili, I know you're falling apart. I've seen it happen with you before."

"Bull."

"Any job involving kids," Fili pointed out.

Kili flinched.

Fili sighed and looked out over the water and greenery. "Talk to me. Please."

Kili flexed his hands, not sure when they had curled into tight fists, and blew out a shaky breath. "I killed two of my friends." Fili jerked, head whipping around to stare at him, his hair following seconds behind. "Jake and Allison. They fell behind and got grabbed. I shot them in the head before they could be dragged off."

Fili was silent.

"They dropped the bodies to rot in the sun," Kili said. "I did that to them. I'm the reason they're dead."

"But isn't it better that you did it than ISIS?" Fili asked. His words were slow and careful, his eyes fixed on Kili's face, judging how his words were being taken.
Kili lashed out, smashing his fist into the dash. Fili fell back into the door, hitting his head against the window, eyes wide. Kili hit the dash again and again before throwing himself back in the seat. He pushed his hands into his hair, nails digging into his scalp.

All he could see was the panic on Allison's face as she was grabbed. She had been shot in the leg as they ran and Jake had slowed to help her. The men they were fleeing from grabbed them, like a swarm, and Allison had screamed. Jake had shouted and there had been the sharp rat-tat-tat of guns going off. Kili had shouted to Dirk and the others, bringing his gun up to track Allison in his scope.

A shot.

She went down, blood exploding out. Kili stumbled back further, almost running backwards, as he sighted Jake and took aim.

Another shot.

Jake went down, the shot going off target and hitting him in the throat.

Kili choked back a cry, shaking his head. He wanted to scream and rage and destroy everything he could get his hands on. He wanted to cry and hide and ignore the world. He jumped, slamming his leg into the car door and yelped, as Fili had taken firm hold of his hands. Kili could feel his chest heave, his breath hurting in his throat and chest, and stared at Fili.

"Hey," Fili said, trying an awkward smile. "Breathe with me?" Kili rolled his eyes, weakly trying to yank his hands away. "Okay, you're good with that. You want to go outside and walk a little?"

Kili stared at him. "Did you not hear what I said?" he demanded.

"Yes," Fili said. "Thank you for telling me, cracker."

Kili wrinkled his nose at the nickname. Fire cracker was something Fili called him rarely but he did it out of affection. There were others, but fire cracker was one of the least used and most likely to get his attention. For some reason.

"Sweetheart?" Fili tried.

Kili tried not to smile.

"Sugar bee?" Fili said with his own twitching lips.

"Oh god, shut up," Kili said.

"Love," Fili said with a full smile on his face. "Blue bell."

Kili twisted in his seat and punched Fili in the shoulder, pulling his strength. Fili laughed, leaning away and rubbing his arm. "You suck," Kili announced. He sighed and looked out at the water.

"All right, fine. Let's go."

"I brought swim stuff," Fili said. "This is hardly Puerto Rico."

Kili nodded and was about to open the door when Fili pulled him close by the neck. Kili turned and let out a soft meep as Fili kissed him. It had been their first kiss in almost a year and Kili hadn't realized how much he'd missed it. He leaned back, licking his lips, and opened the car door.
Kili flinched every time a firework went off. He had the TV on loudly as well as the radio on his phone going. Dwalin and Dis had watched him worryingly but had gone to pick up dinner. Fili was outside, driven out by Kili’s need to drown out the sound of explosions.

He used to love fireworks. Sky flowers. He still did. He wanted to enjoy them. He could see them on TV and be fine about it, but hearing them go off? At first he had thought it was a loud gun but then there was the hiss and spatter of the firework igniting and he had dove for cover.

Dis had dropped her glass in shock.

Kili sat in a corner, hands over his ears, eyes screwed shut. He could still hear the fireworks. The explosions. He kept thinking he was one place when he wasn’t. It was like he couldn’t scrub the sand out from under his skin, no matter what he did. Sometimes he tried, standing in the shower for long minutes, scrubbing fiercely at his skin. It never worked, even if Kili needed it to.

A cold glass was pressed against his forehead and Kili jerked back. He looked up to see Fili squatting down in front of him, a glass of water on offer.

Kili took it, his hands shaking, and took a sip. Then he took a gulp. Then he drained it.

Fili took the glass and stood to refill it. He shut the TV off, leaving Kili’s phone playing Metallica, and returned. This time he sat with Kili, a hand on his knee. Kili sipped his water, trying to keep his breathing even, and watched Fili watch him.

“Do you remember the last 4th?” Fili asked. “We went to Castle Island with Kina. She loved the fort and the Constitution’s cannons going off.”

Kili remembered. That had been a good day. They’d ended up meeting up with a bunch of others on the Esplanade later, listening to music and watching the fireworks over the Charles. Kina had been thrilled, playing with other kids, everyone chatting with strangers and being decent human beings. It had been nice. The two of them had ended up caught kissing on camera, which had then been shown nationally, which had ended up with Kili’s phone exploding in catcalls.

“I remember,” Kili said, voice hoarse.

There was a series of loud BOOMS that sent Kili crashing back the few inches into the wall. His back hurt from all the tension. His shoulders too. He wanted to run, to hide, to have a gun or a knife or something in his hands to defend himself.

“Please don’t hate me for this,” Fili said.

Kili looked at him, bewildered, and almost meeped as Fili leaned in, taking his face in his hands, and kissed him. It was awkward but as Kili heard the whine and screech of air being displaced by heat he surged forward. Fili held him, kissing him, letting Kili crawl into his lap and cling to him. They kissed, ignoring the salt from Kili’s tears and the way his hands clenched too tightly in Fili’s shirt, distracting from everything else around them.

“We’re home!” Dis called out, door banging open. “Sorry it took so long, we grabbed a case of beer while we were out.”

Kili broke the kiss, head falling down to thunk against Fili’s shoulder, trying to even his breath out.
The blond held him, hand rubbing up and down his spine slowly, saying nothing.

“Interrupting?” Dwalin asked, standing in the doorway with an arched eyebrow.

“Distraction,” Fili said. “It was kind of working?”

“C’mon, let’s eat,” Dwalin said. He had this look on his face, this knowing smile, like he knew something that they didn’t. Kili didn’t like it. “Figure we can break out some card games after. Cards Against Humanity or we wanna see who bluffs best in Bullshit?”

Kili tumbled inelegantly out of Fili’s lap and got to his feet. When he got to the kitchen he was pulled into another hug, this one from Dis. She patted his scruffy cheek and smiled.

“My poor boy,” she said softly. He flinched at another firework and let his mom boss him around. She put him to work, getting the table set and the food out, and then all three of them put their collective minds to keep Kili from thinking. If Kili jerked suddenly or looked skittish Fili would take his hand and squeeze. Kili couldn’t bring himself to get angry or reject him, not now, not when he needed what Fili was offering.

Maybe he could let the other in a little. Just a little, mind, just to test the waters. Maybe. Maybe...
Kili nudged Dwalin with his uninjured leg. Dwalin opened a lazy eye and looked at him. Kili nudged him again.

"What?" Dwalin asked, voice hoarse from sleep.

"It's May," Kili said.

"Fancy that," Dwalin said, closing his eye.

"Mother's Day is in May," Kili said.

Dwalin opened both eyes and frowned at him. "Yes, it is. Why?"

"Well, it'd be pretty shitty of me if I ignored it. Especially because I'm living with you guys."

Dwalin sat up and rubbed his eyes, scratched his bearded chin. "I see your point."

Kili leaned back in his wheelchair. "So I was thinking we could go somewhere, find her something?"

"Like what?" Dwalin asked.

Kili made a frustrated noise and waved his hands around. "I don't know! I mean, she's pretty kick ass and it's pretty awesome she's my mum and all. But I don't know what she likes. Or dislikes. Or any of that stuff. You're married to her. You are totally my inside informant."

"So you want to cheat," Dwalin said.

"It's not cheating if you use all the resources available to you," Kili said. "Also, I need someone to drive."

"You need the chair or is the cane okay?" Dwalin asked.

Kili looked down at his leg, chewing his lip as he thought. "Chair," he said. "My leg feels angry today."

Dwalin nodded and got off the sofa. "I'll get the SUV then."

They wandered about the mall, Kili letting Dwalin push him around, looking for things Dis might appreciate. Also things that would fit the bill for Mother's Day and not something else.

"She'd look totally badass in that leather jacket," Kili said. He reached up as if to play with his ponytail and then let his hand fall back to his lap. Right. Short hair.

"Save it for her birthday," Dwalin said.

"I don't even know when that is," Kili said. He huffed out a puff of air and was resolutely not pouting. He watched as Dwalin pushed him toward the jewelry section of the mall. "She likes sparkly stuff?"
"All women like sparkly stuff," Dwalin said.

"Not the ones I know," Kili said. "Most of them prefer a good gun. Or random things. I work with complicated ladies."

"Dis is pretty easy," Dwalin said.

Kili twisted in his seat, catching sight of a kiosk they'd just passed. "Does she liked hair stuff?"

Dwalin stopped, turning to look. "She snapped one of her hair sticks last week."

He wheeled Kili over to one side of the kiosk and they looked together. There were a few hair sticks, sparkly and made of metal, some wooden ones that were simple and carved, and then ones reminiscent of ones in China and Japan. There was one with two hair combs with strands of Swarovski crystals draped between them that had tiny flowers studded along the strands.

"That one," Kili said, pointing.

Dwalin smiled and the clerk boxed it up. Kili dug out his wallet and paid the clerk, trying not to wiggle in his chair. It was perfect--he hoped.

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Dis looked surprised when Kili handed her the bag on Mother's Day. Fili and Kina had sent flowers and a cashmere shawl that would keep her warm while she puttered about. She hadn't expected anything from Kili, obviously, but he was trying.

Dwalin had brought her flowers and had cooked a ridiculously tasty breakfast for them all.

"Open it," Kili urged, his shoulders hunching slightly in nerves.

Dis nodded and took the box out of the bag and opened it. She stared at the hair combs and crystal in shock for a moment before lifting it out of the box. She got up and went into the bathroom with them. Kili glanced at Dwalin who only nodded and smiled. Kili slouched down in his chair, nervous. He'd never done this before. Usually with his dad he'd get a big thing from Omaha Steaks and they'd grill them up, have some beer, and just kick around. Baseball tickets worked as well. But mothers were a whole different story.

Dis came back into the kitchen, her hair arranged with the two combs, smiling. Kili stared.

"Those looks really good," he said.

"They're perfect," she said, leaning down to kiss his cheek. "Thank you."

"Happy Mother's Day," he said, fighting off a blush.
Kili woke up, not sure where he was, his leg screaming at him. He remembered being shot. He was shot. He grabbed his leg and grit his teeth to keep from screaming. He reached down, groping for his knife, wanting to cut the bullet out.

He had no knife. His legs were bare. He was in a t-shirt and his boxer-breifs. He panicked, his breathing speeding up, his hands shaking. He was in a bed. He didn’t recognize where he was. It didn’t look like Syria.

He got out of the bed, stumbling, grabbing onto the door frame. He looked around, wanting his mirror, his gun, his knife. He wanted someway to protect himself, to make sure no one caught him off guard. He needed to get somewhere he could get the bullet out of his leg.

He carefully moved, hyper aware, tense, limping and in pain. His stomach hurt too. He looked down, pressing a hand to the source of the pain. His hand came away with blood. He’d been shot there too? Was the bullet still in him there too? He tried not to cry out and managed to strangle the sound, only letting loose a whimper.

He found himself in a kitchen. It was a nice kitchen.

No…no, it wasn’t. It was in rags. He could smell the heat and the sand, the smell of burning rubber. Blood, he could smell his blood. Where was his team? Had they all been captured?

He stumbled about the kitchen until he found a knife. It was a good knife. It wasn’t his tac knife but it was good. He slid down to sit against a cabinet, hidden with decent cover, and looked at his leg. Fuck, there was so much blood.

He took the knife and plunged it down, unable to bite back the strangled scream. Fuck, fuck, fuck. He dug it in, letting the knife fall to the side as he pushed two fingers into his leg, searching for the bullet. He couldn’t find it. Where was it? Where was Brett, he needed his medic. He picked the knife up and pushed his shirt aside. His stomach was bleeding too. He needed to get the bullet out. Who knew what kind of metal they used for bullets over here. His hands shook and he poised the knife over the wound, sliding the knife in and trying to see if he could hear the sound of metal on metal.

Nothing. He pulled the knife out, groaning loudly as he let it fall to the ground. Blood, so much blood… It wasn’t all his, was it? It couldn’t be. There had to be other bodies, maybe of the family that had lived here. They’d done that, killed innocents, to protect themselves. They’d had to. Fuck, he was sitting in the blood of that woman, wasn’t he? And her son. But the son had had a bomb. They’d had to shoot him. Allison had done it, right through the head, while Michelle had dove in to disarm the bomb. His hands shook, pressing them to his side.

“Brett,” he cried out. “Fuck, Brett, I need some help here. I can’t get the bullets out.”

“Kili?” someone asked, lights going on.

It was a flash bomb. He was under attack. He reached for the knife, slippery with blood. He slashed it about, warning off the insurgent. He could see the woman in a thawb and shouted in Arabic, threatening to stay back or he would kill her.

Someone came up behind him and grabbed the knife, tossing it aside. Kili screamed, fighting, fists swinging. His leg screamed at him and he slipped in his own blood.
“Kili!” someone said, grabbing onto his face as the other man restrained him. It sounded like Fili but Fili was back in Boston, safe. He couldn’t be here in Syria. It wasn’t safe. “Kili, c’mon, baby, come back to me. You’re safe, you’re home. You’re in North Carolina with me and mom and Dwalin.”

“Call an ambulance,” the man behind him said. “He’s bleeding a lot. I don’t know what he did but he might have cut something serious.”

“Kili,” Fili said, voice tight and high. It sounded like Fili, the hands on his face almost felt like Fili, and then there were lips on his. “Fire Cracker, remember? Remember why I gave you that name? Sparky just didn’t work and you are… You just are. And you’re the captain, just like Captain America, saving the world.”

“That is disgustingly adorable,” Dwalin said from behind him. “Exactly how many nicknames do you have for him?”

“Tons,” Fili said. There was a tiny laugh, high and almost hysterical sounding. “Mom, can you get us some towels? Something to try and stop the bleeding?”

Kili could feel his breathing ease, his head swimming from the extra oxygen of almost hyperventilating, and the pain in his leg and stomach. He leaned back limply against Dwalin, eyelids fluttering slightly. He felt so tired all of a sudden.

“Hey, kid, you with us?” Dwalin asked, relaxing his hold on Kili’s arms.

“Tired,” Kili mumbled.

“That’s gonna be the adrenaline crash,” Dwalin said. “C’mon, gotta stay awake.”

There was suddenly a sharp, shooting pain from his leg. He shouted out, trying to jerk away, but firm hands stopped him. He stared down at Fili, who was holding a towel to Kili’s bleeding leg, putting almost all his strength behind it. Dwalin was pressing one to his side and Kili gasped.

“It’s only until the EMTs get here,” Fili said. He tried to smile but it didn’t work. He had blood smeared across his cheek and Kili could see his hands were covered in it. “Just stay with us, okay?”

“What happened?” Dis asked, kneeling down next to them. It was her bathrobe he had seen that had freaked him out. A bathrobe, not a thawb, not a Abayah, just a plain old bathrobe and sweats. She took his hand, giving it a squeeze.

“Bad dream,” Kili said. “I guess. My leg woke me up and I didn’t know where I was.” Dis looked like she wanted to cry. “Thought I was back in Syria, that I’d been shot and had to get the bullets out.”

“That’s why you went for the knife,” Fili said. “Jeez.”

“Maybe you two should stay in the same room,” Dis said. “Make sure Kili knows he’s safe.”

“No,” Kili said. “I’m pretty much destroying the bed every night. Who knows what I’d do before I woke up.”

Fili looked up, applying a little more pressure, and gave Kili a small smile. “I can take care of myself, you know.”

Kili was silent. He knew Fili knew how to fight. Kili knew how to kill. He wasn’t going to take the
chance that he’d be startled out of sleep and accidentally break Fili’s neck. That’d be unacceptable.

The four of them waited, near silent, for the ambulance. They tried to keep Kili awake but it was so hard. The EMTs came and loaded Kili onto a stretcher. He let his eyes fall closed as Fili climbed into the back with him, grabbing his hand and holding tight. His last thought was one of dread, knowing that this wouldn’t be the last time he’d wake in a cold sweat.
Fili sat in the grass in his mom and Dwalin's backyard as Kina ran around screeching. Dwalin was chasing her around the yard, along with two other children that belonged to Dirk. That had been a surprise. Fili hadn't expected Dirk to have kids, certainly not a seven-year-old girl and five-year-old boy. Dirk was still in a wheelchair while Kili was mostly healed. From what Kili had said it was unlikely Dirk would be quick to recover. He'd taken the brunt of an explosion that had injured his spine. The bruising would take time to heal.

Kili was sitting in a chair next to Dirk, the two of them talking, hands holding beer bottles waving about as they talked. Kirin was perched on the porch railing, drinking his own beer and interjecting his own thoughts into their conversation.

Fili leaned over, nudging his mom a little, as they watched together. "This is good," he said. "Like, the best right now."

Dis chuckled. "Enjoy it why you can, kiddo. Your uncles Thorin and Frerin are joining us for dinner."

Fili laughed out loud, drawing everyone's attention. Kina turned and ran straight for him, shrieking "DADDY!" at the top of her tiny lungs, and slammed into his legs. Fili oofed, bracing himself and ruffled her hair. "Hey, imp," he said. "Having fun?"

"Uncle Kili said there was ice cream," Kina said excitedly. She sounded much younger than her twelve years, eyes sparkling and cheeks flushed. "Can I have ice cream?"

"Traitor," Fili called out to Kili. The other man cackled and saluted Fili with his bottle. He rolled his eyes and reached down, making exaggerated noises as he heft his little girl up into his arms. She giggled and wrapped her arms around his neck and her legs around his waist. "All right, ice cream it is."

A short time later after the kids had crashed from sugar and the other adults had sprawled in the living room with beer and wine, Fili cornered Kili in the kitchen. Kili tried not to smile and Fili tugged him close.
"Hey you," he said.

"Hey," Fili said. He kissed Kili's cheek. "How you doing?"

"Good," Kili said. "Want to go to bed."

"Want me there with you?" Fili asked, a hand running down Kili's arm.

Kili leaned into him, head resting against Fili's shoulder. "Yeah, okay."

"I'll keep you safe," Fili said. He wrapped his arms around Kili and kept him close, offering all the protection he was able.
Kili stayed in bed, leg propped up on one of those awesome memory form wedge things, and watched Netflix. He had a tab in his browser open to a news site dedicated to what was going on in Syria but he was careful not to look at it too often. If he had articles open or looked like he was openly torturing himself with news of the fight against IS and Dwalin or Dis walked in then he was in some serious trouble. But right now he was having fun watching random horror movies while flipping to his other tabs.

He wiggled about in bed, wrapped in his blankets, ignoring the way his leg twitched. His windows were all open and he could hear the chirping birds that one of the stray cats would inevitably try to attack.

A knock on his door made Kili look up from his screen. Fili gave him a tiny smile. “Hey, whatcha watching?”

Kili turned back to his screen. And there went his glee about his bed.

“Anything good?”

Kili flexed his toes under the covers and felt the muscles in his leg contract. He stretched a little, nothing too bad, but it felt good. He continued to ignore Fili.

The blond sat down on the other side of the large bed. Kili frowned and tugged his laptop closer. Fili stretched out next to him and lay quietly, trying to see the screen. They lay like that as one episode of the crime show he watched slipped into another. Kili almost forgot Fili was there as he tabbed over to his news feeds, catching up on whatever news he’d missed in the past forty minutes.

“Kili,” Fili murmured.

Kili glanced at him. “What?”

Fili looked at him, blue eyes intense under frowny blond brows. His lips were pursed but he said nothing for a moment. Then: “The episode is playing in the other tab.”

Kili went back to Netflix and watched Fili watch the screen. When the other man said nothing he relaxed, not even aware he had tensed in the first place, and focused on cops trying to solve predictable crimes.
Fili smiled as they sprawled on the couch together, Kili's back to his chest with the other man's head almost on his shoulder. Technically they were watching some inane TV show but he had stopped paying attention to it ages ago. He tentatively set a hand on Kili's hip, rubbing little circles with his thumb while he waited to see if he'd be rejected or accepted.

Kili shifted and let out a soft snort but did not make him stop.

Fili dropped a kiss on the top of Kili's head and kept exploring. He didn't know where their boundaries were and he wanted desperately to know. Kill was still but did not push him away. Fill slipped his hand down lower...

“Nope,” Kili said.

“Above belt?”

“Yep.”

“Anything else?”

Kili hummed softly and leaned back into him. “You’ll find out.”

Fili nodded, not surprised. He ran a hand over Kili’s arm and basked in the other’s warmth. It had been so long that he’d forgotten how he felt. Yes, Kili was bonier, lighter, and more standoffish, but he was still Kili. Fill focused on the feel and smell and just closed his eyes. There was nothing more he wanted at this point.

“Ugh, give me the remote, I can’t stand this show,” Kili said. He wiggled about on the couch, making it quite hard to be held onto, until he got the remote. Fili nosed along the back of Kili’s neck as the other man turned the TV to a different channel.

“You know,” Kili said, linking their fingers together. Fili’s fingers tightened on his and rubbed at Kili’s stomach slowly. “You’re a little weird. I mean, I knew this before but it’s even more now.”

“Shut up and let me hold you,” Fili said.

Kili snickered. “Yeah, all right. Go for it. Hold me as long as you want, crazy.”

Fili smiled and kissed the back of Kili’s neck. Yes, this will work. He’ll make it work.
Kili let himself be moved, his body limp and slick with sweat, his breathing still uneven. His arms came up, moving the pillow into a better position under his head, and watched Fili. The other man had gotten out of bed and ducked into the bathroom, probably to fetch something to clean up their mess. Kili closed his eyes and wiggled slightly, enjoying the stretched and sore feeling his body gave him.

He shouldn’t be this happy over something as mundane as sex.

Kili squeaked, eyes flying open as Fili lay cold hands on his body. He was all nice and warm! And loose and languid and what the hell?

Oh.

Kili made a face at Fili who chuckled.

“No gonna have you shouting out in the middle of the night and waking up in pain,” Fili said. He was rubbing firm circles around the scars on Kili’s thigh, working the arnica cream into the scar tissue and surrounding flesh. “Remember what Josh said.”

Kili rolled his eyes and waited until Fili was done before using his bum leg to draw the blond closer. “Josh said to be careful,” he said. “Josh also said no sex.”

“Strenuous sex,” Fili corrected.

“All sex is strenuous,” Kili said. “This was some excellent sex.” He reached up and tugged Fili down close. “Exactly what I needed. Feeling you, being so close to you again... I don’t want to move, leave, anything. I want to stay right here.”

Fili leaned in, their hips pressing close and Kili had to wiggle from how sensitive his cock still was. “I’m done leaving you,” he said. “I’m here until the end of time.”

Kili used his legs, both of them, to manuever them about. He got them on their sides and tangled their legs together, torsos pressed close, as they kissed. He was surrounded and filled and
enveloped by everything that was Fili. He didn’t want anything else in the entire world, just this man and this bed and this exact moment in time.

He was at peace.
Kili closed his aching eyes, his tongue so dry it stuck to his mouth. He groaned low in his throat and twisted about his bed. He was hot and aching and he wanted to claw his skin from his bones. He was coughing so hard he felt like he was going to break his ribs. He felt someone take his arm and the prick of a needle and then his head started to swim. He stopped moving and let himself drift.

“Mr Haegan, you with us?” someone asked.

Kili hummed and turned his head to the side. He wanted to sing Nirvana, to hum it, to hear Tool, to get high on pot. He was high on painkillers and other crap right now but damn, he missed pot.

A chuckle. “I think you gave him too much.”

“I gave him what the chart said to give him!” The voice was indignant. Kili couldn’t care less. He felt fingers along his stomach.

“The stitches got torn,” one voice in a sea of voices said. “That’s not helping the infection.”

“The pneumonia is wrecking havoc,” someone else said. “I don’t like his stats.”

Kili tuned them out, drifting further. He didn’t want to hear any of it. He wanted Fili. He was waiting for him, actually, waiting for him to come to the hospital and hold his hand.

“Mr Haegan!” someone shouted, shaking him.

“Get me some epi,” another voice said. “He’s crashing.”

Kili barely felt his body. I like it, I’m not gonna crack. I love you, I’m not gonna crack. I miss you, I’m not gonna crack. I kill you, I’m not gonna crack.

“Oh, sweetheart, look at you,” Allison said. He felt a hand brushing hair away from his forehead, voices around him.

“You, Haegan, are a hot mess,” Jake said.
Allison was next to him, smiling affectionately at him. Her dark hair was pulled into a high ponytail that she wore long and braided, ears shining with multiple gold studs, and had a perfect entry site in the middle of her forehead. Jake, leaning against the wall, was chewing on the end of a lollipop stick while he had his arms crossed. He also had a bullet hole, but this one was through his right eye.

“Shush, Jake,” Allison said. She rolled her eyes at Kili, smiling. “He’s just worried. We both are.”

Kili’s mouth opened and closed, trying to talk, but his throat swelled with unshed tears and pain. He coughed and coughed, unable to stop. Allison made soft, cooing noises at him, trying to calm him. He could hear Jake mouthing off at the doctors as they turned him onto his back and stuck IVs in him.

Allison was still stroking Kili’s forehead as he coughed. He could hear her singing something calming in Russian. Tears leaked out of his eyes, rolling down the sides of his face to pool, cooling, in his ears.

“Relax, kiddo, we’ve got the watch,” Jake said.

I’m so happy cuz today I found my friends—they’re in my head.

Kili let himself go and closed his eyes.
“Oh no,” Kili said, hands out as he backed out of the house. “Fuck no.”

“I told you it was going to be bad,” Fili said. “But you said you wanted the floors refinished. And have the walls fixed to the original Wainscoting.”

“You demanded better lights and freaking built-in speakers in the living room!” Kili said. He was pointing an accusing finger at Fili. “You also said we’d be fine living here during this!”

“We can!” Fili said.

“I ain’t living in that mess,” Kili protested. “I’d rather sleep at my desk!”

“Look, a hotel for the length of this isn’t an option,” Fili said. “The bedroom is still fine.”

“The shower’s not,” Kili said. “You wanted that new double-sink vanity thingy.”

“It makes it easier in the morning,” Fili protested. “You didn’t argue about redoing the second bathroom with that huge ass tub and a separate shower.”

“Yeah, it’s next to the spare bedroom in case I want to kill you,” Kili said. “Like now.”

“You do realize we’re arguing with you outside the damned house, right?” Fili said. Kili glared and Fili rolled his eyes, reaching out and yanking Kili into the house, kicking the door closed behind them. He tugged Kili in close and kissed him. “There. Now stop acting like a petulant child.”

Kili opened his mouth but there was a loud rattle, a soft hiss, and then a woosh. They both looked down the hall and then at the water slowly edging their way.

“Fuck this,” Kili said. He sidestepped the stunned Fili and went into the kitchen. He opened the freezer, took out the tequila, and poured himself a shot.
It seemed to be a habit, something that was becoming a habit, at least, to come home to music blasting from the speaker and to see Kili swaying to music. Fili set his keys on the hook near the door and nudged his briefcase over to the corner as he shut the door. He looked about and didn't see any hard liquor, just a plate of food on the breakfast bar and a bottle of beer. The other few times he'd seen Kili dancing in the apartment there had been some sort of booze involved, harder than beer, but now there was beer. A change in habit? Interesting.

"C'mere," Kili said, voice low. His back was to Fili but his hearing was excellent, even over the music. "Dance with me."

Fili loosened his tie and shrugged off his suit jacket. He tossed it over over one of the bar chairs before stepping up behind Kili. He rested his hands on Kili's hips, closing his eyes and holding the other man close. Kili was humming the song softly, reaching back to slip his fingers through Fili's shoulder length hair.

They moved, not doing much more than a lazy sway, until the music changed to a different song. Kili dragged his nails along Fili's scalp before Fili leaned in, nuzzling into the curve of Kili's neck. Fili's mind whirled and he slid his hands down off Kili's hips to splay them on his thighs, tugging him back closer against him.

Kili laughed softly, his nails digging deeper against Fili's scalp as he moved them, letting them fall down to Fili's hands. Their fingers linked, bodies moving to close any distance between them, heads moving to kiss each other. Fili felt his blood surge, his heart leap, and closed his eyes. Holding Kili, having him so close, and kissing him was popping cliches into his head. It was perfection, heaven, like coming home. They just...fit. And felt utterly right.

The kiss melted into another and then another. It was chaste until it wasn't, and Fili didn't know if it was his tongue or Kili's but it happened. They stopped moving, ignoring the music, turning and pulling each other closer. Fili reached down and grabbed Kili's ass as Kili grabbed at his chin, keeping them kissing, his other arm draped over his shoulder.

"Bed," Kili murmured, nipping at Fili's bottom lip. He kept it between his teeth and tugged and bit sharp before letting go. "Now."
The music drove them back into the bedroom, hands flying to rip clothes off, both of them growling in frustration. Kili fell on the bed, struggling to get his jeans off while Fili fumbled with his belt. There was desperation to match the thudding beat of the song playing through the speaker that melted into the release of breath and stroking of hands once clothes were gone. A different song came on and Kili leaned up, pulling Fili into a kiss, long fingered hands cupping his scruffy jaw.

“Kili,” Fili murmured against his lips.

“Shh,” Kili said softly, their eyes meeting.

Fili nodded and nudged them back further on the bed, crawling over Kili as the other man scooted up on his elbows. Kili twisted to grab all the pillows and flop back on them, reclining and looking gorgeous doing so. He smiled slightly at Fili, a wariness in his eyes that Fili ached to erase, and reached down to cup his balls. Fili licked his lips, kneeling over Kili’s legs, and watched. Kili played with his balls, eyes fixed on Fili’s, before stroking his cock.

He wasn’t hard, not yet, but the way he was working himself it wouldn’t take much more. Fili leaned in and kissed him before leaning over to grab the lube from the nightstand. He flicked the top open and squeezed just a little into his palm. He reached down and hesitantly touched Kili, holding his breath until Kili moved his hand and let his head fall back.

Fili used his memory to stroke Kili, running fingers slowly over his length, feeling his pulse and relearning what made his brother groan and whimper. Kili let his legs spread wider to accommodate Fili scooting closer. He used his free hand to train over Kili’s stomach and chest, running his blunt and broken nails over the tensed muscles of Kili’s abdomen, feeling them tighten even more. He leaned in as he took a firmer grip of Kili’s cock and licked and bit his way up Kili’s throat and jaw until he got to his lips.

The kiss was messy and desperate, Kili reaching up to grab at Fili’s hair, holding onto him.

“Fili,” he whispered, voice breaking and so needy. Fili’s heart felt painful, his breath catching, as he realized how scared Kili was. The way Kili looked at him, holding on so tight, the expression in
those honey eyes.

“Trust me?” Fili asked, letting go of Kili’s cock.

Kili swallowed, hesitation so obvious it hurt, and let his hand fall to Fili’s cheek and then his neck until it slid to his chest. He licked his lips and nodded, biting his lip. “Yeah, I can do that.”

Fili felt the weight of those words, hoping that maybe this would really fix things, that he could show Kili how much he meant to him. Who cared if they were brothers? They were so much more than that. Brothers couldn’t define them. Fili refused to let that be what drove them apart when all he wanted was to hold Kili so close.

He picked up the lube again and slicked his fingers, nudging one of Kili’s legs to curl around his hips, as he reached down to press fingers in. Kili shifted uncomfortably when Fili tried two and then still when he tried one. Fili worked him, slowly and carefully, opening him up and kissing him through the little winces and huffs.

“I thought…?”

“Women,” Kili said. “Mostly.”

Fili nodded and nibbled at Kili’s lips. He pressed two fingers in, moving them independent of each other, making Kili snort and thrust down against them.

“Jerk,” Kili said with a smile.

“Maybe a little,” Fili admitted as he added another finger.

Kili drew in a deep breath, just short of a gasp, and shifted down on Fili’s fingers. He reached back and grabbed the headboard, biting his lip, as Fili stretched him. Fili leaned in again, kissing and nuzzling at Kili’s neck, his free hand pushing Kili’s cock against his abs and rubbing. Kili let out a strangled noise at that, his stomach tensing, the muscles of his abdomen helping Fili with friction as he moved his hand and his fingers. He didn’t set just one pace but two, trying to drive Kili crazy just from this.

“No,” Kili said, biting his lip. Fili froze before slowly removing his fingers and his hand. No? Kili opened his eyes and grabbed at Fili, using his hands to pull Fili in for a hungry kiss. There was tongue and teeth and Fili grabbed Kili’s hips. “This,” Kili said against Fili’s lips. “I want this.”

Fili leaned into Kili’s mouth, the two of them twisting and moving so they could press close. Fili hissed, his cock coming into contact with Kili’s body and leaking, but stayed focus on what he had in his arms. Kili’s hair was still in a ponytail, messy and coming free, plastering itself to their cheeks and forehead. Fili’s merely added to keeping the heat trapped between them.

Kili rolled on top of him, pinning Fili to the covers as they kissed. There was so much desperation in him, so much need bottled up that Fili was surprised he hadn’t exploded.

“Kili?” Fili asked against his lips.

“Yes,” Kili whispered. He fumbled for the lube and squeezed, getting lube all over his hand and covers. He grabbed Fili’s cock tightly, making Fili wince, but stroking him wetly. They kissed, needy, somehow a lip being bit and blood smearing over their lips and chins.

Fili rose up and pushed Kili off him, getting him on his knees and biting at his shoulders. Those tan and freckled shoulder, biting and sucking kisses into them as he used what was left of the abused
tube of lube to get his fingers slick again. He pushed them into Kili, making sure he was loose, before pushing Kili’s back down. Kili spread his knees and arched his hips up as his head rested down on the covers, bunching them in his hands.

Fili took his cock, stroking it quickly, before guiding it to Kili’s ass, rubbing the head against the pucker. He pushed in just a little before pulling back, just the tip, back and forth, edging just the tiniest bit more into Kili each time. Kili was panting, gasping, his hips moving of their own accord.

“Fili,” he said through gritted teeth.

“Trust me,” Fili murmured, leaning down and dragging his teeth along what part of Kili’s spine he could. He pushed in, letting the head slip into Kili this time, staying there long enough for them both to tremble before pulling back out.

“Fuck you,” Kili said, his voice harsh. “Goddamn fucking give it to me or I will push you down and fucking take it myself.”

Fili chuckled and stroked his cock, fingers rubbing against the slit in his cock. Fuck, he wanted so bad, he was leaking as aching but this wasn’t about him. He could… It didn’t matter. What mattered was Kili. He rolled his shoulders and pressed against the length of Kili’s back, hands going to Kili’s hips and nuzzling him. Kili pushed off the bed and twisted to kiss Fili, grabbing his face and growling, the noise rumbling in his throat and deep in his chest.

Fili moved one hand off Kili’s hip to grab his cock and push it into Kili. The other man gasped, nails digging into Fili’s cheeks before letting go. He leaned back against the bed and Fili straightened, moving his knees so he could get better balance, ask he sank fully into Kili. He waited, eyes squeezed closed, as he listened to Kili. The other man was making tiny noises, his hips and ass flexing as he adjusted, until he stillled, breathing still quick but calm.

“Go,” Kili murmured. “Go, go, go.”

Fili started moving, thrusting slowly in and out until Kili cursed at him, and moved faster. He grabbed at Kili’s hips, gripping tight, as he moved. Kili groaned and shouted encouragement, egging Fili on until he was practically pounding into him, balls slapping against Kili’s ass.

“Fili,” Kili choked out. “Stop, hold on.”

It took him a moment, groaned from effort, but he did. He leaned down, forehead resting against Kili’s back. “What? Is there, are you?”

Kili rolled his shoulders, pushing Fili back just a little. “On your heels?”

Fili’s mind was fogged, need clouding everything, but he leaned back. His cock pulled almost completely out of Kili, sending them both gulping air, before Kili pushed back against him, legs spreading so he was in Fili’s lap. His cock slipped further into Kili and his arms went around Kili’s waist. His grabbed at his brother’s shaking thighs as Kili moved slowly against him.

“Yes, yes, this,” Kili said, hips rolling. Fili leaned in, kissing and biting and licking at the sweat on the back of Kili’s neck and shoulders, thrusting up as Kili rocked down.

It took them time to figure out a rhythm that worked but they did, moving and thrusting, using legs and knees and thighs and motion to drive each other further and further. Kili reached back, digging his nails into Fili’s shoulder, scratching, as Fili clutched so hard at the inside of Kili’s thighs he was probably leaving bruises.
“Touch me,” Kili begged as they lost the easy tempo they had started. Fili bit at Kili’s shoulder again, sucking a hickey and almost drawing blood, as he wrapped hand tight around his cock. It took effort to let go of Kili’s thigh to grab at his sack, pulling and rolling. Kili gave a strangled cry, ass flexing and clenching around Fili’s cock, as Fili squeezed and moved his hand, stripping Kili’s cock.

Fili was breathing hard as he moved, letting go of Kili’s shoulder to growl against his skin. “Kili. Gonna!”

“C’mon, do it,” Kili said. There was almost a hint of joy mixed with the need. He ground down against Fili’s cock as he moved, demanding. “Do it, c’mon, you can do it, fucking come, Fili. Do it. I want it, need it!”

Fili ran his thumb along the slit of Kili’s cock, pushing down and holding on almost too tight as he came, shouting, moving his hand to pushed Kili down into the bed. Kili groaned encouragement as Fili thrust quickly as he came, making a mess as he did so. Kili had moved a hand, bracing himself with his shoulder as he jerked himself off. Fili slumped over him, kissing and lethargically moving a hand to Kili’s balls. He moved them, pressing them up, as Kili shouted. Fili moved his hand, rubbing his fingers along the base of Kili’s cock as the heel of his hand cradled his balls.

They lay there, panting, eyes heavy with satisfaction. Fili moved, after a moment, sliding easily out of the other man. Kili made a tiny noise of loss and rolled over to press close. He tucked his head under Fili’s chin, reaching up to flick at Fili’s nipple.

“Oy,” Fili said as he flinched back.

“Moron,” Kili said. He licked his lips and Fili felt the tip of his tongue.

Fili stroked Kili’s back idly, fingers following the bumps of Kili’s spine. “I love you.”

Kili was quiet for a moment before tilting his head and kissing the underside of Fili’s chin. “That was never in question.”

“I fucked up.”

“We both did.”

“This doesn’t really fix things, does it?” Fili said. “I mean, it helps, but it doesn’t fix it.”

“Sex does not cure all, no,” Kili said. He was playing with Fili’s chest hair, twirling his fingers through the hair and tugging absentively. “But we’re working on it.”

“We are,” Fili said. He tugged Kili closer, twisting their legs together. “So… I have one question.”

Kili snorted. “Just one?”

“Please tell me you didn’t screw around with Dirk?”

Kili pulled away enough that he could punch Fili in the shoulder. Fili flinched away, laughing. “The fucking hell? That’s what you’re—what is this irrational jealousy over Dirk? I mean, c’mon, you fucking moron!”

Fili kept laughing, pulling Kili in close, and kissed him even as Kili ranted against his lips.
Fili didn’t see it coming.

He had come home from work and popped a bottle of beer, taking a deep drink of it. He heard Kili doing something in the bedroom and didn't quite care. It'd been A Day at work and he was exhausted. He wanted nothing more to order Chinese or Falafel and conk out in front of the TV.

Of course then Kili came out of the bedroom in a pair of lounge pants and a white tank. Fili looked over at him and raised an eyebrow at the gobsmacked expression on his face.

“Uh?” he started.

And then Kili had him pressed against the breakfast bar, mouthing along his neck.

“Kili?” Fili asked breathlessly.

“I fucking love this suit,” Kili said.

Fili could feel how much he liked it as Kili rolled his hips against Fili’s ass. Fili gripped the edge of the breakfast bar as Kili pulled down his jacket, pulling his hands off the bar and trapping them in the jacket. Kili stepped back and turned Fili around. There was a flush in his cheeks and that hunger that made it quite obvious that Kili was going to have his way with him.

“What’s with this suit?” Fili asked as Kili dropped to his knees. “You have a thing for pinstripes?”

“It’s a grey with blue stripes,” Kili murmured, nuzzling his crotch. “It’s perfect. And you are just. Yes. The vest and the blue shirt and, and.” He mouthed at the front of Fili’s pants.

“Fuck,” Fili laughed breathlessly. “Guess I’ll have to buy more pinstripes.”

Kili whimpered and pulled back, fumbling with Fili’s belt and the zipper. “God, hell, Fili, you just. I can’t.” He pulled Fili’s cock free and took him in his mouth, fitting as much of it in his mouth as he could.

Fili let his head fall back and wished he could get his arms free. Kili was sucking on him, pulling off and licking, dragging his teeth lightly over him, before pushing down on his cock again. Kili gave head like it was an art usually but now he was sucking him like he needed it more than air. Fili tried to keep his breathing even as Kili looked up at him and sank down on his cock. Fili let his head fall back and swore over and over again, not even sure of what he was saying as Kili nosed his pubic hair and swallowed around the head of his cock.

“Kili,” Fili warned, hips rolling.

Kili slowly pulled off, tongue swirling around him and then rubbing and slipping along the slit in his cock. He curled his tongue and pushed the tiniest bit inside and Fili gasped.

“No, I’m gonna! Kili, please!”

Kili pulled away reluctantly. He looked up at Fili and licked his red lips before leaning in and nuzzling him absently, hands kneading his thighs. Fili’s cock leaked against Kili’s cheek.

“I wanna fuck you,” Kili said. “Yes?”
“Yes,” Fili breathed.

Kili rolled to his feet and kissed Fili. He tasted like come and cock and Fili wanted to suck on his tongue. Kili pulled away and vanished into the bedroom, adjusting himself as he went. Fili stayed where he was, rolling his shoulders absently, waiting for Kili to come back to him.

When he did it was with lube and not a stitch of clothing. Fili grinned, knowing that the neighbours were about to get a wonderful show. Kili reached out and freed Fili from his suit jacket. He carefully draped it over the back of one of the kitchen chairs and kissed Fili.

“The vest really makes this,” Kili said. He drew one of Fili’s hands to his mouth, nibbling along his thumb and wrist. He pulled back with a frown. “You have the phaser cufflinks on.”

Fili grinned. “Yep.”

“I gave you those.”

“Yep.”

Kili groaned softly and grabbed at Fili’s tie, wrapping it around his hand and kissing him.

“Couch,” he said. He slid his other hand to pull the shirt out from his pants. He slid that hand up and scratched his hand down through Fili’s chest hair to his public hair peeking out from his briefs. “Fuck, I want you so bad.”

Fili raised an eyebrow and looked down. Kili’s cock was curved toward his stomach, red, leaking, and Fili desperately wanted it. It wasn’t often that he wanted to get fucked but this time? Yeah, he’d be good for that.

Kili let go of the tie, tossing it over Fili’s shoulder, and went for his nipples. Fili hissed as Kili’s clever fingers found the simple bars he had through his shirt and vest and twisted and tugged on them through the fabric.

“Kili,” Fili sighed.

Kili leaned in, ignoring him, and bit at one through vest, shirt, and undershirt. Fili could still feel it, felt the wetness from Kili’s mouth, groaned when Kili used his teeth to tug and twist the bar. It was dulled from all the cloth in the way but guck if it didn’t still feel amazing. Fili reached out, his hand sliding in between Kili’s ass cheeks, rubbing, and just let Kili do his thing.

His brother tugged, opening the blue oxford down to the vest and biting his lip in thought.

“Couch,” Kili said again. He stepped back, out of Fili’s range, and pushed him none too gently toward the couch. “Bend over.”

Fili, arching an eyebrow, did as he was told. He had to reach down and grab his pants so he could walk without tripping and he smirked at Kili’s growl. He didn’t expect the shove as much as he should have and he reached out, grabbing the arm. He winced, just the tiniest bit, as his cock and balls were trapped against the couch. Kili tugged the pants down around Fili’s ankles, underwear going with, before sliding a hand up the back of Fili’s shorts. Kili leaned in, growling and tugging at the back of the vest where there was the clip that kept it fitted.

“Don’t you dare break that. I like this vest,” Fili warned.

Kili hummed in acknowledgement and pulled away for a moment. When he returned it was with slick fingers. Fili closed his eyes and focused on relaxing. Kili probed at his hole and slowly
worked him open, being careful not to hurt him, and soon Fili was gasping and thrusting back on his fingers.

“Gonna make you mess up this vest,” Kili said. He was pressing inside Fili, slow and careful, oh so careful, hips making tiny motions. “Gonna come and stain the couch, the vest, gonna be awesome. Love you messy.”

“You give me enough facials that I couldn’t tell,” Fili said, focusing on getting his words out. It felt like the only thing he could focus on was Kili’s cock in his ass.

Kili reached down and grabbed Fili’s tie, wrapping it around his fist as he started thrusting. Fili could feel the pressure at his throat, nothing too severe, but the mere presence of pressure made his cock jump. He ground against the couch, getting friction as Kili picked up his pace.

Fili bit back a whine, gripping the arm and then yelping as Kili pushed him further down, a hand at the middle of his back. He unsnapped the vest and kept Fili down as his hips moved faster. Fili panted and clawed at the cushions, giving himself over to the feelings. The force from Kili’s hips ground Fili’s cock into the couch even more, proving all the friction he needed.

“Close,” he gasped out. “Kili, gonna…”

Kili laughed, joyful and breathless, “C’mon, gimme that come stained vest.” Fili groaned, reaching back to try and smack at Kili’s ass. “I wanna feel you grab my cock and milk it dry. I wanna have you full of me. You want that?”

Fili growled and pushed back against Kili. He grit his teeth and grabbed at his cock, jerking himself off quickly as the couch helped and Kili’s cock started hitting that perfect sweet spot. Kili want grunting and there was that twitch and Fili squeezed his eyes shut as Kili came, the force of Kili coming inside him making him come moments after. Kili gasped loudly as Fili’s ass clenched around him and there was shuddering and the tiniest of second orgasms.

Fili was limp, feeling too full and so sensitive and Kili wasn’t moving. “Move,” Fili whined. Kili could have Fili inside him for minutes after coming but Fili couldn’t. His body started to get all itchy and twitchy.

Kili pulled out and helped Fili upright. Fili glanced down at himself and made a disgusted noise. His vest was completely covered. Kili had looked over his shoulder and made one of the happiest noises he had made in a long time. Fili watched as Kili slinked around him and went to his knees again, carefully licking at the come.

Fili reached down and threaded his fingers through Kili’s hair and let him clean up his mess.
Kili gasped as Fili shoved him face first up against the bathroom wall. He pulled the towel away and sank to his knees, kneading Kili’s ass.

“Fili,” Kili whispered.

Fili leaned in and bit one of Kili’s cheeks, pulling back slightly before leaning back in and sicking a kiss into the damp flesh. Kili clung to the wall, nails biting into the plaster, trying not to whimper. Fili trailed his fingers along Kili’s spine and his thighs, biting and sucking at the firm flesh.

“Fuck, please, I need!”

Fili spread Kili’s cheeks and licked a long path from top to bottom. He used the tip of his tongue along the pucker of Kili’s hole, teasing it, pushing it, working it to the point where it easily opened for him. Kili felt like his knees were going to fail him, wobbling as Fili finally pushed his tongue in. There was hunger in Kili’s groans, need, and so much want. Fili pulled back just a little to push a finger in to crook it as he searched and pushed his tongue in again.

“Fuck, fuck, Fili, fuuuh—!”

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“Words are cheap,” Kili said as he looked over his shoulder. “Get over here and show me you mean it.”

Fili dug into the back pocket of his jeans and pulled out a small tube of lube. Kili rolled his eyes at him, utterly unsurprised, and shifted his weight off his bad leg. Fili noticed, a slight narrowing of his eyes, but he wet his fingers before pushing two in. Kili couldn’t help the whimper that escaped from his throat. Fili tugged and moved Kili so he was up against the wall but his bad leg and resting more against Fili’s shoulder than the floor.

Kili closed his eyes and breathed, losing himself in the feel of Fili’s fingers moving inside him. His eyes opened as he felt Fili’s tongue licking around his hole as he fingered him. Kili’s stomach
heaved with each quick breath he took, feeling the third finger and that tongue, Fili’s fucking tongue, working him as well.

“You asshole,” Kili gasped.

“Almost literally,” Fili said. He pulled away, jabbing his fingers at Kili’s prostate before removing them. Kili’s knees buckled and Fili held him in place. There was some definite man handling as Fili grabbed him, turning him and shoving him against the wall. Kili pushed back before Fili nearly slammed him back. That touch of violence and need made his breath quicken and his cock pulse.

“Ready?” Fili asked.

Kili licked his lips and nodded, the two of them working together for Fili to pin him up against the wall and Kili wrapping his legs around Fili’s waist. Fili braced himself and used his leverage to push his cock right into Kili. The breath was punched out of his lungs and Kili let his head fall back against the wall, hands gripping Fili’s shoulders as the blond fucked steadily into him.

“C’mon,” Kili begged. “I need it so bad.”

Fili laughed and kissed him. “I did this to you.”

“Fucker,” Kili said affectionately. He gasped and shouted as Fili shifted, readjusting them, hands curling around Kili’s ass as he snapped his hips up. Kili grabbed at the wall and found something to hold onto as they moved together, Kili pushing down and Fili thrusting up.

“Think you can support yourself?” Fili asked, hand sliding down to stroke the scar on Kili’s leg.

Kili nodded and Fili careful slid out and let Kili down. Kili groaned at the way his ass flexed, missing the thickness of Fili’s cock, but he turned and spread his hands wide on the wall with his ass arched. Fili stepped up behind him, hands kneading his ass checks before sliding up to stroke his sides and chest, nuzzling at his neck.

Just as Kili was about to turn and swear at him, threaten him, Fili pushed into him in one solid stroke. Kili closed his eyes in bliss and held on for dear life as Fili moved his hands, gripping hips and pulling Kili down to the perfect angle. Kili bit his bottom lip, panting and making tiny noises he couldn’t stop, as Fili owned him.

“Close?” Fili asked, reaching down to grab Kili’s cock. “You gonna come for me? Make a mess?”

Kili tried to respond but there was a strong thrust from Fili that sent him almost into the wall and Fili’s hand gripping the base of his cock tightly.

“Bet you’ll come so much,” Fili whispered into his ear, leaning in. He nipped the lobe of his ear and tugged, teeth sliding down and off the flesh before biting at the back of Kili’s neck. “Get that wall all dirty, push you into it so you’re just as dirty.” Kili’s breath caught. “Make you clean it up afterward.” Fili pulled away, hand moving to rub along the underside of Kili’s cock. “Maybe even lick it.”

Kili shoved back on Fili’s cock. “C’mon, then, give it to me.”

“This ain’t enough?” Fili demanded.

Kili made a negative noise and could only hold on as Fili did his level best to fuck him so hard he nearly hit the wall each time. It didn’t take too much longer before Kili was reaching back to grab Fili’s hair and practically scream as he came. He was so glad Dis and Dwalin weren’t home. He
clung to Fili, leaning back against him, almost unaware as Fili came as well. He was limp and spent and he couldn’t help but look at the wall.

Damn but that was a fine mess.

Fili nuzzled him and swayed forward, pushing Kili into the wall and mess, smearing come all along his thighs and stomach. Kili laughed softly, turning his head to kiss Fili.

“You gonna clean me up?” he asked. “Take another shower with me?”

“Gotta clean that wall first,” Fili said. He pulled out of Kili with a tiny hiss and then leaned in to kiss him. “I’ll get you a cloth, you get on your knees.” He reached down and rubbed at Kili’s hole, a finger slipping inside. “Don’t forget the floor if you leak.”

Kili’s knees went weak and he slid down the wall, his come spreading over him more. “I hate you,” he managed.

Fili chuckled. “Lies. You love me.”

Kili just managed to lean over enough to hit Fili in the calf as the other walked into the bathroom to get a cloth. “Such a fucker.”

“And a good one at that.”
Fili frowned as Dwalin took a long crate off the bed of his truck. Kili, who had been idly tossing a baseball around with him, wandered over.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Dunno, but it's for you from your dad," Dwalin said. He stood it upright and swiped a hand over his face. "Got the letter from the post office yesterday."

Fili caught the baseball and followed Kili. The wooden crate had all these different stamps and stickers on it from all the different custom checkpoints. Kili leaned up against Dwalin’s truck and took the weight off his leg.

"Want me to open it up?" Dwalin asked. He fetched the crowbar out of his cab and started prying it open. "You got any idea what it is?"

Kili shook his head. "Not really. I don’t have anything that big."

The top of the crate came off and Dwalin nodded his head at Fili. The two of them dug out a guitar case from the packing material. Kili made a chocked sound and took it from them, almost tripping over himself to get it.

“No way," he whispered, stroking the outside of the case. “I can’t believe he kept this thing. I thought he sold it ages ago."

Fili watched him, curious. “What is it?"

Dwalin rolled his eyes. “That’s a guitar, dumbass."

“No, really?" Fili said with a roll of his eyes.

Kili sat down on the concrete with a thump, cradling the case, before popping it open. Inside was a red guitar that was shined brightly. Kili made a tiny cooing noise, fingers gently brushing over the body of it.
“Kili?”

“Sorry, it’s. I told you that when I was a kid I was kind of a problem. They taught me to shoot but they also taught me to play. I forget where it was, really, but dad had this platoon guy, Sam Thatcher, who was amazing.” Kili smiled, fingers moving swiftly to tighten the strings. “Sam gave me the guitar when I was sixteen. He had it and it just. It’s a ’61 Gibson SD Standard. Gary Rossington of Lynyrd Skynyrd played the same one. He wrote so many songs on this one.”

Fili frowned. “I didn’t know you played.”

Kili shrugged. “Haven’t in years. I took it with me for a few years after I turned eighteen and it was a good companion during odd jobs. Then I hooked up with Dirk and Woods and I moved around so much I didn’t want to risk it. I sent it back to dad but eh, he cleans things out all the time. I never saw it after that when I went back but who knows.”

Kili strummed the strings and closed his eyes, humming along. “Beautiful.”

“What can you play?” Dwalin asked. He was hefting the crate back into the truck, probably to take it to the dump and get rid of it or use it in a different project.

“The classics,” Kili said. His fingers stilled and he paused for a second before he started to play.

It took a few moments before Fili recognized the song. It was “Free Bird” by Lynyrd Skynyrd, slow and halting before it gained more confidence. Fili had to strain to hear Kili singing the words, barely audible as it was.

“If I stay here with you girl,” Kili sang, “Things just couldn’t be the same. ‘Cause I’m free as a bird now and this bird you cannot change.”

“That’s really good,” Dwalin said.

Kili smiled, bangs falling over his head and almost into his eyes. The music changed into another song. This time Fili had no idea what it was. Dwalin chuckled and this time it was him who sang.

“And be a simple kind of man,” he sang, deep from his belly. "Oh, be something you love and understand, baby be a simple kind of man. Oh, won't you do this for me, son, if you can."

Kili stopped, tugging the guitar closer to his body, and clapping. “Nice!”

Dwalin took a bow. “You do requests?”

Kili shrugged. “If I know it.”

“Free Falling?” Dwalin asked.

“I have no idea about any of these songs,” Fili said. Both Kili and Dwalin stared at him. “What?”

“Dis has fallen down on the job,” Kili said. He looked thoughtful and started playing something else.

“Oh!” Fili said. “I know that one!”

Kili stopped playing and rolled his eyes. “You know Kansas because of Supernatural. That’s sad.”

Dwalin looked pained. “I have records.”
Kili looked up at him. “Vinyl?”

“Of course,” Dwalin said. He reached over and tugged Fili into the house. “We’re going to educate you.”
"We never formally did anything in the courts about Kina," Sharon said.

Fili froze in the act of sitting in his chair. "O-kay. Hi, Sharon, how're you?"

"We should do that," Sharon said. “I actually already have the paperwork all set, we just need to find a notary and have you sign.”

“What’s going on?” Fili asked, stomach clenching. He didn’t like this. This was something bad, and on top of Kili? Fili wasn’t sure he could deal with any more bad.

Sharon picked up her water glass and sipped it slowly. “I’m sick,” she said.

“How sick?” Fili asked, shoulders slumping as his heart sank into his stomach.

“Brain cancer,” Sharon said. “Malignant.”

Fili sat back in his chair. “Shit.”

Sharon folded her hands on the table. “I want to take care of things with Kina. As much as I love my mom and sister I do not want them raising my daughter. You’re her father and she adores you. She’s going to you, whether you like it or not.”

“Can you not talk about her like she’s some kind of object?” Fili asked. “Like she’s something you can bequeath?”

Sharon sighed and looked away. “I know things are hard for you right now,” she said. “With Kili and everything, but Kina is more important.”

“You think I don’t know that?” Fili asked. He was trying not to get angry but it was hard. He wanted to rage. He couldn’t rage at Kili or the unfairness of everything because that was his fault and he knew it. He wanted to rage now at the unfairness of Sharon dying and forcing him to be a full-time father. What the hell did he know about raising a kid? That’s why he and Sharon had come up with their arrangement in the first place.

“I don’t know how long I have,” Sharon said. “I could have year or I could have months. Kina knows I’m sick. We’re dealing with it. I’ve got her going to counseling with me, both of us trying to deal with this. I want you to come with us.”

“I’m going back to North Carolina,” Fili said.

“Let me rephrase this,” Sharon said. “You will come. I will give you dates and you will make time to come back here.”

Fili ran a hand through his hair. “Yeah, okay. Fuck.”

“Yeah,” Sharon said softly. “Fuck.”

“Okay,” Fili said. He picked up the menu and looked at the options. He felt queasy at the very thought of food. He set the menu back down. “I have enough space for Kina right now. I’m not near her school so we’d have to think about her switching.”

“She can take the T to school,” Sharon said. “We’ll deal with the rest of it as it goes. I want her to
go to Boston Latin once she’s old enough. She’d be commuting anyway.”

Fili winced. That school was not cheap. “Okay.”

They were quiet for a moment, only speaking when the waiter came to take their order, then falling silent once more.

“How is Kili?” Sharon asked finally.

“Bad,” Fili said. He tried to smile. “He’s not exactly happy with me right now. He’s got a pretty bad case of PTSD and his leg is still messed up.”

Sharon nodded slowly. “When you think it’s good you should take Kina to see him. She’s been worried.”

“She’s yelled at me about him,” Fili said with a tiny smile. “She’s rather attached.”

“I’d think so after four years,” Sharon said. “Longest boyfriend you’ve ever had.”

“What about you?” Fili asked. “Is it Brad or Samantha?”

“Neither,” Sharon said.

The awkward silence returned.

"How's North Carolina?" Sharon asked.


Sharon nodded and sipped her water again. The silence stretched out. "Good," she said finally.

"Yeah," Fili said absently, looking away. He didn't want to be here. He didn't want to be anywhere. His carefully perfected life was falling apart at the seems. The cracks had started two years ago with Kili and him being brothers and now it had shattered. "Good."

Sharon nodded, biting her lip. She looked like she wanted to cry but wouldn't. That wasn't the woman she was. "Good."
It was a bad night.

Granted, most nights were bad, but tonight was even worse. He usually had dreams—flashbacks—about what had happened with Allison and Jake but tonight had been different. This time he dreamed of those kids. The first ones.

It had been one of the first jobs he had had with Woods Security and he’d been so full of himself, so certain that he could take on anything and come out on top. Mutilated and half-burned bodies of children, innocent children, were not what he had expected. Some of them hadn’t been much younger than him.

He had been sick. Dirk had only looked grim and turned away. Then again, Dirk hadn’t had the easiest life before. When they had found their target—a wanna-be warlord—they’d taken him out with prejudice. Once home Kili had made a formal request to be taken off any mission with kids if it could be helped. He didn’t think he could deal with it.

Since then he’d taken on ten different missions with kids. Some being trafficked, some just murdered, some doing the actual murdering. It never got any easier.

He’d dreamed he was the one who had hurt them. That he’d shot them and sliced them and set them on fire. And he hadn’t been able to wake himself up.

Which was why he was sitting at the kitchen table with a bottle of whisky in front of him. He had a glass in front of him, some random one he’d found in the cabinet, and was drinking the harsh liquor like it was warm milk.

“Glenfiddich?” Fili asked, sitting down across from him with his own glass.

Kili glanced at him as Fili grabbed the bottle and poured himself a generous amount. Silence held firm as they both drank.

“This is the twelve year?” Fili asked, tilting the bottle toward the low light in the kitchen. “Not bad. Not my taste of stuff but it’s good.”

“Dwalin’s,” Kili said, his voice barely a croak. “He’s started to stock it for me.”

“Just for you?” Fili asked.

“I’d drink rotgut if I had to,” Kili said. He raised his glass and took a drink to prevent having to say any more.

Fili nodded, head bobbing up and down for a moment, not totally unlike a bobblehead. “Sharon’s dying,” he said after a moment. “Kind of fucks up my life, selfish to say. I’m going to have to raise Kina, take care of her full-time, whenever Sharon dies. Could be tomorrow, could be in five years. I don’t know what I’m going to do.”

Kili eyed him. He wanted to say to grow a pair but he noticed the dark circles under Fili’s eyes and sighed. He wasn’t that heartless. He drank more of his whisky, draining the glass, and poured himself more. He pursed his lips unhappily as he saw his ice was gone. He didn’t feel like getting up to get more.
“That’s why I’m up,” Fili said. “How about you?”

Kili looked away, hand going to his leg almost automatically, wishing he could make Fili disappear with sheer will. Why was he up? Because he hated himself. He hated himself with more feeling and depth than he had thought possible.

“She misses you,” Fili said. “Kina, I mean. She asked about you all the time when I was there.”

Kili didn't know what to say so he said nothing.

Fili looked into his glass and sighed. "Would it kill you to talk to me?"

"Don't know," Kili said, sipping his whisky. "Did it kill you not to talk to me for seven months? I mean, you look perfectly fine now." Fili sat back in his chair, closing his eyes. "You want me to talk to you? To feel sorry for you? To sympathize for you? Well, sorry, that's not going to happen." Kili was unaware that his voice had risen and that he had stood at some point, hands on the table for support. "Your life is upended and you come at me like woe is me? You even think about my life? My position? The calls sent to voicemail, the texts ignored?"

A light flicked on and Dwalin stood in the doorway, looking tired and unimpressed. Fili winced, rubbing at his eyes from the sudden light, turning to see who had turned them on. Kili's hand twitched for where his Glock would have been but settled for draining the rest of his whisky.

"Fuck you and your pity party," Kili said. "Go back to ignoring me. Go back to Boston. I don't want you here."

"Break it up, boys," Dwalin said, voice rough from sleep.

Kili grabbed the bottle and stalked--as much as he could--toward the door and past Dwalin. The other man didn't try and stop him. He heard Fili and Dwalin talking as he left the living room and found his bedroom, closing the door on a night turned even more sour than it had been two hours before.
Kili waited unhappily as the nurse undid the restraints they had strapped him into while he slept. After he'd gotten caught in his nightmare and gouged his leg back open the ambulance had taken him to the ER to get stitched. Then he'd been sent back to the rehab facility. It made sense that he'd go there since they knew how to deal with not just him but also PTSD.

He wasn't the only headcase the center had.

He sat up and rubbed his wrists, flexing them, and waited on the bed as the nurse pushed away the hospital gown he'd been dressed in. She pulled off the bandage on his leg and started to clean what was under it. The mess he had made of his leg was stitched together but the flesh around it still looked red and angry. Then again he'd shoved his fingers into it and used a kitchen knife. He was such an idiot.

"How long am I going to be here?" Kili asked.

"The locked ward?" the nurse asked, gently taping a clean bandage down. "Until we know you're not going to hurt yourself. Your therapist had filed a note saying you had minor flashbacks during the day and with that happened last night, well. You won't be going any place any time soon."

"Am I going to be allowed out of this room?" Kili asked.

The nurse gave him a smile and gathered the dirty bandages and left him in the room. Kili heard the door lock behind her and flopped back on the bed. Wasn't this wonderful. He was probably under psych eval for the next seventy-two hours and then who the hell knew.

He shifted about on the bed, pulling off the flimsy nightgown, and wrapped himself up in the blankets. He dozed, lightly, not having anything else to do. He slept on and off for the entirety of the time he was left alone. He spoke when they wheeled him into his doctor and dealt with the invasive questions. Kili closed his eyes and dealt with it all. His leg ached and his stomach hurt and he was so tired.

Finally he was released from psych hold into the general population of the hospital. Kili stayed in his room, grateful for pants and a shirt, but unwilling to deal with people.

"Hey, kid," Dwalin said the afternoon Kili was given back his freedom. "How's it going?"

Kili rubbed the back of his neck and avoided looking at Dwalin. He was ashamed, angry, embarrassed. He just wanted to go back to sleep. Wanted to close the door and hide from the world.

"Fili and Dis are fine," Dwalin said. "Fili had to fly to Boston yesterday, something about Sharon and Kina, but he'll be back to visit soon."

Kili wrapped his arms around himself.

Dwalin sighed. "We want you to come home."

Kili shook his head. "What if I flip out again? I could hurt you or Dis or." Kili shook his head again. "No."

Dwalin grabbed Kili's hand and squeezed. "We're here whenever you need us. If you can't right
now then, well. That's okay too. Kili stared at their hands. "Dis wanted to come but I told her not to. She'll be here tomorrow."

Kili rubbed his eyes with his free hand. He wasn't crying. He wasn't.

He said nothing as Dwalin stood and pulled him close, wrapping his arms around Kili as he gave in. He wasn't... he. He was.
Fili looked at his phone and set it back down, blowing out the air in his lungs. He was back in his apartment after the wonderful lunch with Sharon and all he wanted to do was call Kili. He wanted so bad to talk to him, to hear his voice, to be soothed from the atomic bomb just dropped on his life. He didn’t know how to figure this out.

He’d been just as bad when Sharon was pregnant. Back then he had relied heavily on his mom. He could probably do that now—actually, he would. He should do that the moment he got home.

…home.

Crap.

No, Boston was home, not Chapel Hill. He had no interest in moving to North Carolina. If Boston was hot and humid then North Carolina was worse. Just because his mom, Dwalin, and Kili were there did not make... Ugh.

Fili picked up his phone and shot off a quick text to his mom, letting her know that he needed to talk to her later. Shit was getting unfortunately real. Which meant he needed to start making changes.

He scrolled through his contact list, hesitating before calling Balin.

“Fili, my boy,” Balin greeted after a few rings. “How are you?”

Fili snorted out a noise that sounded like a sob and a laugh at the same time. He took a deep breath and sat down on his couch. “Not so good, to be honest. Yourself?”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Balin said with all the appropriate soothing noises. “I am well, myself. Work is hectic but productive. There’s been a large uptick in business. Boston Magazine published an article on us and now everyone wants to use us.”

Fili smiled, feeling his shoulders start to relax a little. “That’s wonderful!”

“It is,” Balin said. “It’s left us short staffed, though, and unable to take on all the cases we’d like.” There was a heavy hint in his voice. “We’re trying to find and hire the best for our firm. We’ve got some new lawyers on board and it would be wonderful to have someone with political experience as well.”

Fili smiled and he leaned back into the couch, letting it envelope him. “Are you attempting to make a formal offer?”

“Would you accept a formal offer?” Balin asked. “I thought you were rather dedicated to your non-profit work.”

“You do pro bono,” Fili said. “Let me handle a few every so often and I’ll feel better selling out to you.”

“Selling out,” Balin echoed with a chuckle. “If that’s how you want to look at it.”

“I have some family matters I need to take care of,” Fili said. “But I would like to see whatever offer you could put together.”
“I’ll have the HR folks reach out to you later this week. Unless that doesn’t work?”

“No, I should still be in town for the rest of the week,” Fili said. “I’ve been in North Carolina and will be heading back down.”

“That family matter you mentioned?” Balin asked.

Fili nodded and then said, “Yes,” when he realized Balin couldn’t see him. He licked his lips and closed his eyes. “I appreciate this. I hate asking for help but with what I just found out… Well, things need to change and probably pretty fast.”

"May I ask why?" Balin asked.

"Sharon's got cancer," Fili said. The words felt heavy, final, as if they had not been real until he had spoken them. He let out a shaky breath. "There's other issues I have to deal with but, right now, it's Sharon I've got going on. I'm going to take full custody of Kina."

"She's an adorable child and she adores you," Balin said. "You're a good father to her. The two of you will be fine."

Fili chuckled. "We'll see."

"Come see me before you leave," Balin said. "We'll grab some food and talk."

Fili nodded and smiled. "Yeah, I'll do that."

They said their good-byes, thanking and murmuring to each other before Fili hung up the phone.
Kili blinked at Fili as the older man tied a bandana around his mouth, fashioning a gag. Kili reached out to touch it and Fili knocked his hands away.

“You said you trusted me,” Fili said, getting off the bed. He pulled off the t-shirt Kili had been sleeping in, hands gentle, and then running gentle hands down Kili’s legs. “So trust me in this.”

Kili rolled his shoulders, relaxing into the submission he had mentioned last night, and let Fili undress him. Soft hands and soft touches, and Kili let himself stay as Fili moved him. His hair was unkempt and messy, slowly growing out, and getting everywhere in his eyes. Fili smiled and ran his fingers through it, pushing it out only to let it fall back down.

“You’ll tell me if it’s too much?” Fili asked, looking Kili in the eyes. “If it starts to hurt or your leg cramps. You’ll let me know?”

Kili quirked an eyebrow. That sounded more like a question than someone giving orders. And this kind of was what it was all about: he wanted Fili to dominate him. He wanted Fili to take the control Kili offered every now and then. He wanted to trust Fili more than he ever had before.

Kili let Fili pull him to his feet on the bed, both of them unsteady. Kili followed Fili’s hands and motions until he was kneeling on the bed, head tipped back just a bit, and ground his teeth against the cloth in his mouth.

“You’re gorgeous,” Fili murmured, hands tracing Kili’s cheek, shoulders, neck, chest. He was smiling. “Gorgeous, and mine, and so utterly wonderful.”

Kili rolled his eyes and attempted a smile as Fili kneeled down in front of him. Fili, unfairly, was still dressed. He was touching, now, light and gentle and exploring. Kili tipped his head curiously as Fili took his hands and pushed them back.

“Behind you back,” Fili said. “Keep them there.”

Kili did so and shuddered as Fili pinched his left nipple, rolling and tugging, feeling his cock start to jump to attention. It hadn’t gotten too involved yet but now it was definitely wanting some attention too.

Fili leaned in and kissed his cheek as he wrapped a hand around his cock. “Look at you, all eager for me,” he said, his dry hand holding Kili’s cock, fingers flexing. The hand didn’t move, just gripped him, warm pressure, and Kili was surprised how much he wanted.

Kili swallowed, thrusting his hips up, silent plea as he gripped his forearms behind his back. His blood was surging in his veins and his cock ached. Fili pulled back and grabbed lube, wiggling it at Kili.

“Think you could stay like this a little longer?” Fili asked.

Kili stretched up a little, flexing his leg, before settling down again and nodded.

Fili slicked his fingers, smiling at Kili, and pressed close, one hand wrapping around Kili’s hip with a hand as hot as a brand. Kili closed his eyes and let his head fall back as Fili ran slick fingers along his crack and down to circle and rub at Kili’s entrance. It felt good, letting go, feeling Fili pressed close, the way Fili’s fingers just barely pushed in. Kili couldn’t help the way his buttock flexed but
the way Fili responded—pushing a finger in just past the first knuckle—and moaned behind the
gag.

“You want more?” Fili asked, working the finger slowly in and out. “You want it? You want me to
slick you up, get you dripping, and fuck you? Push you down, keep you spread open, and make
you beg for you?”

Kili shuddered, stomach and chest heaving, thighs shaking with how much he wanted to move. His
cock ached but it was pressed against his stomach and the rough Polo shirt Fili had put on at some
point that morning. It worked, though, as Kili arched against him, rubbing his aching and slowly
leaking cock against the clean(ish) shirt.

Fili pulled away, both hands moving off Kili’s body, and he watched. Fili was sliding off the bed
and yanking the Polo shirt off—grabbing the back of the shirt by the neck and pulling it up and off
—and getting out of his jeans. Kili watched, feeling almost detached from his body, as Fili peeled
the denim off and then shoved his briefs down.

Fili’s cock was hard and redden and curved so nicely up to his stomach and Kili wanted to swallow
it down or push Fili down and ride it or or or… Kili’s mind kept him fixated on Fili’s cock. It was
perfect, fitting Fili nicely, settled in a thatch of darker gold, with balls that hung at just the right
height and had the perfect shape to fit in Kili’s mouth and the heft was always good when Fili felt
like letting loose and fucking him so hard he couldn’t walk and those balls would smack his ass
with those thrusts.

“Whatever you’re thinking about,” Fili said, inches from Kili. “stop.”

Kili hadn’t realized he’d closed his eyes until Fili cupped his face and tilted it back. He could feel
his cock throbbing and he had to shift, not used to having to do this, with having to wait. But Fili
moved the gag slowly out of Kili’s mouth and down over his lips, thumb stroking, before leaning
in and kissing him.

Kili groaned, gripping his arms tight enough to leave marks from his nails, and kissed Fili back.
Fili tasted incredible, like coffee and fruit and the bastard had had breakfast without him, but Kili
couldn’t argue when it had Fili doing this. All of this. And Fili’s tongue was just...

In some of his more fanciful moments Kili felt like they had been made for each other. Fili had
come first but he had a left behind a mold and Kili was shaped from it. Taller, more muscular, but
they fell together so completely and perfectly that nothing the world threw at them mattered.

“Kili,” Fili said, pulling out of the kiss. Kili watched him, wanting, needing, aching, and Fili
merely leaned in to kiss him again. “You good right now?”

Kili nodded. He licked his lips since the gag had not gone back in yet and let out a shaky breath.
“I’m good,” he said. His voice sounded so rough, hoarse, and unused but it made Fili’s breath
quicken.

Fili nodded, licking his own lips, before easing the gag back into place. “You look too good like
this,” he said. “If I knew any of that Japanese rope bondage I’d be all over that because the mental
image of you all tied up like art…” Fili shuddered. “Rope to hold you open for me, could keep you
like that all day—tied up and only come to you when I wanted—and I could tie your arms back so
you’re nothing but.” Fili leaned in and nibbled along Kili’s jaw. “We’re gonna have to try that at
some point.”

Kili, amused, nodded Shibari was fun, not that he was about to tell Fili that. He’d save that for
when jealousy would work in his favor.

Fili picked up the lube and wet his fingers again. He had this look of intent that spend Kili’s pulse and made him thrust shallowly into the air. Fili pressed close, slotting into place with Kili, straddling one of Kili’s thighs with his knee pushing Kili’s balls high against the base of his cock.

“I’m going to fuck you,” Fili said conversationally. “First, though, I’m going to use my fingers on you. I’m going to bring you to the brink and then let you stay there until you start to come down, and then I’m going to just my dick.”

Kili let out a groan and a huff of air, closing his eyes. He opened them with a strangled, and muffled, whine as Fili pressed two fingers into him. He flex his hips and wiggled a little, raising up onto his knees just a bit more, to give Fili more room. Fili dropped kisses and nibbles along Kili’s chin and neck and shoulders as he did just as he said.

He used his fingers, two at first, and his knowledge of who Kili was to bring him so close to sobbing for release. Three fingers had him humping up against Fili’s thigh and uselessly wanting to just grab at Fili, throw him down, and ride him like a prized stallion.

But that wasn’t how this worked.

Kili breathed, chest heaving, stomach slick with sweat and precome, and watched Fili with intent. He wanted. He wanted so, so much and so, so bad and Fili understood. He smiled and those fingers became four.

Fuck, had he told Fili about fisting? Maybe. Maybe not? Oh, but four fingers made it burn so nice and the way Fili was spreading him so wide...

“Please,” Kili said, voice garbled and drooling slightly around the gag. “Fili, please, please, please.”

Fili’s fingers slipped from him and Fili tugged the gag free. It fell, slightly sodden, to Kili’s neck. “How can we do this?” he asked. Fili’s own chest was heaving and Kili whined softly. “C’mon, Kili, I. Fuck, I need to fuck you, to get inside you. How? I don’t. Please? How?”

Kili tried to think, the arousal making it so hard, and let his head fall back. He finally moved his arms, shaking them out slightly, and nudged Fili back. His brother moved out of the way, hand going down to grab his cock, and Kili chuckled slightly. He laid face down on the bed, legs spread and hips raised, clasping his hands behind his head, and waited.

Fili knelt between his legs, stroking his still injured thigh, and trailed a hand lightly along the small of Kili’s back. He grabbed the lube and poured it at the top of Kili’s crack and used his cock to spread it. Kili would have giggled like an idiot except that was when Fili pushed into him. Kili groaned, long and low, into the bedding under him, and waited while they both got used to the feeling. Kili’s ass throbbed, more with want than pain or anything else, and he pushed his hips back in a demand.

Fili gave a strangle noised and Kili smiled, doing it again. Fili grabbed at Kili’s ankles, his calves, holding onto him as Kili used his elbows and hips and thighs and fucked himself back on Fili’s cock.

It had been a while and it wasn’t as smooth as he’d done before, but it still felt amazing. He could hear Fili gasping curses and sounding like Kili was the best thing in the world. Kili paused for a moment, just feeling, before he braced his knees and used his position to thrust back harder onto
“Fuck, no, stop,” Fili said, lunging forward and pinning Kili down. “I’m the one in charge here.”

Kili hummed softly. “Next time,” he said. “Now, you gonna fuck me or let me do all the work?”

Fili pushed back and planted a hand in the middle of Kili’s back, pinning him down. Kili kept his face turned just enough not to suffocate in the bedding and his hands laced behind his neck, but it took real effort to keep his hands there as Fili pulled back and snapped his hips forward. The force punched the air out of Kili’s lungs with a long, low moan, and pushed him even more into the bedding.

“I want to hear you beg,” Fili said, setting a rhythm that had Kili wanting to move his hands to grab the blankets and hold on for dear life. Instead he kept his elbows braced and breathed in a mouthful of bedding every now and then. “C’mon, Kili, beg for me.”

“Just fuck me,” Kili said, his voice barely more than a whine. “Fuck, Fili, I just. Please. Give it to me, give me your dick. Paint me with your come, mark me, own me, just fucking fuck me!”

Fili’s hand became heavier in the middle of Kili’s back and the other man leaned in, dragging his teeth from his shoulder down as far as Fili could reach. “You need it that bad?” Fili asked. “You need me that bad? You want to come and then have me pull out, cover you in my come?”

Kili, who really hadn’t thought about it, felt his gut tighten. “Yes,” he hissed. “Fili, please.”

The other man bit down at the base of Kili’s neck, right under where his hands were clasped, and bit a kiss and hickey into his flesh. Fili’s hips started moving, more concerned with force and angle than anything else, and Kili gave himself over to the sensations.

Fili’s cock was perfect. His did more for Kili than anyone else’s had. He loved being fucked with it, kissing it, sucking it, hold it, doing whatever he could with it. Having Fili balls deep in his ass with that cock thrilled him.

All thoughts were driven from his head as Fili shifted to the right angle and nailed Kili’s prostate. He closed his eyes, to feel it all that much better, and couldn’t stop shouting out mindless encouragements. He was making noise, so much noise, letting go of any restrictions he might have had on himself, and just feeling.

“C’mon, baby, you can do it,” Fili was saying. His hand had moved and he was braced over Kili, hands on either side, using the position to snap his hips harder. Kili moved with each thrust, the bed providing enough friction and Fili thrusting and fucking and fuck. “C’mon, I can feel it, feel you. Kili, fuck, Do it. Let me hear you.”

Kili screwed his eyes shut tighter and gave in. He shouted, loud and unhindered and only half muffled by the sheets, as he came. He is mind blanked and he was wordless as he kept shouting, gasping, and just utterly spent. Fili praised him, encouraged him, and moments later Kili felt Fili pull out.

He kept his hands still clasped behind his head, not yet having been released, and breathed. He didn’t try to take control back, didn’t try to move or do anything like that. He breathed and felt and listened as Fili jacked off. He closed his eyes and hummed with a tiny smile as he felt Fili’s come splatter on his back and ass.

Not too long after Fili collapsed next to him, panting. Kili blinked lazily at him in the morning light, still admiring. Fili’s cock, softening now, still looked heavy and like it would fit perfectly in
Kili’s mouth if he would only lean down and take it.

Fili reached out and took one of Kili’s hands. “What was it? Unbound? No more submission? I free you?”

Kili chuckled, squeezing Fili’s hand before shaking him off and stretching his arms out. He rolled onto his back, smearing Fili’s come and not caring, and stretched himself out. Fili’s hand went to his thigh, massaging the scar, and Kili kissed him.

“Thank you,” he said.

Fili smiled and rested his forehead against Kili’s. “No,” he murmured. “Thank you, for trusting me.”

“There’s other kinks,” Kili said. “Not just honor bondage but others.”

“You’ll tell me and we’ll work it out,” Fili said. “In the meantime, I got breakfast while you were sleeping. It’ll keep, though, for a little longer if you’d rather lay here with me.”

“Always,” Kili said. He scooted closer, tangling their legs together, and wiggled against Fili as his ass throbbed.

Perfect.
Kina was sitting on their bed, pouting as Kili packed a suitcase. Fili was sitting on the bed as well, leaning against the headboard, working on his laptop. Kili, meanwhile, was trying very hard not to look at either of them. He was folding clothes and tossing them in, slightly limping about the room as he collected items, studious in his avoidance.

“How long will you be gone for?” Fili asked. He looked up from the press release he was polishing.

Kili paused, leaning against the long wooden dresser they had shoved under one of the windows. “Uhm. Legolas billed it as only two weeks with possible follow ups later on. So, probably not more than that?”

“Less?” Kina asked, perking up a little.

Kili chuckled and walked over to ruffle her hair with both hands. He leaned over and kissed the top of her head and his hands slid to cup her head in his hands. “Maybe less, but I don’t think so.”

Kina huffed out a sigh. “All right.”

Kili twitched a smile at Fili over Kina’s head and let go. He went into the bathroom and grabbed the stuff he usually took to the gym for rehab. He had his razor, soap, deodorant, all the normal stuff.

“You sure it’s nothing more than showing people how to shoot?” Fili asked.

Kili rolled his eyes at him. “Fili,” he said, voice a little sharper than he would have liked. It had been almost eighteen months since Syria, his leg, all the bullshit that had come from it, and the promise Fili had wrangled from him: no going out in the field until he was fully healed, and until Dirk was fully healed to watch his back. Since Dirk was still in the wheelchair it was going to take some time.

This, however, was not the field. This was going down to where Thranduil and the other head honchos were. This was going to teach idiot children to shoot a gun because they were sniper
wannabes. This was his job.

He was going to have so much fun.

“Right,” Fili said with a sigh. “Got it.”

Kili finished putting things in his suitcase and zipped it before dumping it onto the floor. “Okay, enough with the sad faces, guys. I’m here for tonight and half the morning. Kina’s here for the week. We should start getting some serious kid time in now, right?”

Kina scooted up to the headboard near Fili, closing her dad’s laptop, and crossed her arms. She was giving him the Durn pout. Fili had it, Dis had it, it was only right that Kina would have it too. Nurture? Nature? Whatever.

“I wanna watch My Little Pony,” Kina said, voice stern.

Fili winced. “Kina…”

“No! We’re going to watch My Little Pony!” Kina said, voice loud.

“I’m chill with that,” Kili interrupted. He joined them on the bed, sandwiching Kina between the two of them. Fili shot Kili an odd look over Kina’s head. Kili ignored it, grabbing the Roku remote off the nightstand and handing it to Kina. “My lady.”

Kina took his, looking at him somewhat suspiciously, before pulling up Netflix and queueing up some episode of the cartoon. He wrapped an arm around her shoulders and tugged her close, stretching his legs out to rest them on top of Fili’s shorter ones. He would miss this, actually, this closeness. But then again he had a home now—sort of—so it made it worth it. He would go away but he would always come back home (sort of).

They really needed to get that damned house Fili had talked about.
Fili finished off his ice cream cone and flopped back on the grass of the Commons as he watched Kina chase the drips down her fingers. She was giggling and smiling and Fili's heart ached with how happy she looked. Even with all the bad news she had had she still smiled.

God he loved her so much.

"Daaaaad," Kina said, looking at him. "You're staring at me!"

"Yep," Fili said. "Because I've got an amazing daughter and I love staring at her. Also, you're going to be a heartbreaker. I'm looking forward to boyfriends or girlfriends or whatevers and being the menacing father."

"Nah," Kina said, sitting down next to him. She slurped at her melting ice cream and gave up before just chomping down on it. She squeaked and squirmed at the inevitable brain-freeze. Fili laughed and handed her more napkins. "Anyway," she continued with an eye roll. "Uncle Kili is more threatening and menacing than you could ever be, dad."

Fili smiled, trying not to be sad around his daughter, and nodded. "He definitely is."

"Plus, he has guns."

Fili stared at her. "What?"

"Yeah," Kina said. "He has a gun safe in the closet, didn't you know? I saw it once when he was coming back from something."

Fili felt like his eyebrows were going to vanish.

"Whatever," Kina said. She finished his cone and wiggled her fingers at Fili. "I'm all sticky! I'm gonna go rinse them off in the water fountain."

Fili nodded. "Go for it."

Kili had a gun safe at his place? Well. It kind of made sense, he guessed. Kili worked around guns all the time. He was a sniper. But he hadn't expected Kili to keep them in the house. Had he known about it before? Maybe he had...

Ugh.

He tugged at the man-bun he'd thrown his hair into (a really pathetic man-bun if he wanted to be honest) and redid it. He kept an eye on his daughter as she cleaned her hands and then she spun back to him and skipped. Fili couldn't stop the smile and he tugged her down to his side and hugged her close. She squirmed, laughing, and sat close but separate.

"I spoke to your mom," he said. Kina's smile slipped. "She told me what's going on."

Kina huffed out a gusty sigh and picked at the laces of her sneakers. "Yeah. Mom's really sick. We're talking about it. Everyone's kind of sucking lately. Mom, Uncle Kili, I got a friend in school who's got Lupus. Life kind of sucks."

Fili nodded, reaching out to tug on the sleeve of her Captain America tank top. "Hey, turtle. C'mon. Things are gonna be okay."
"You and Uncle Kili aren't gonna be a thing anymore, are they?" Kina asked. "He won't see us anymore, will he?"

"Lies," Fili said, falling back and tugging her against his side. They laid in the grass, silent for a moment, and he turned his head to press a kiss to her hair. "I'm not completely moving to North Carolina but I am definitely spending a lot more time there. Kili's pretty mad at me so I'm working on making him not mad."

Kina nodded. "Can I see him?"

"Kili?"

Kina nodded again. "I miss him."

Fili kissed her head again. "Yeah, I'm gonna ask him. You can see grandma and Dwalin again. But it's up to Kili. He's the one who's hurt."

"Can I call him?" Kina asked, pulling away a little to peer up at him.

"Yeah, of course," Fili said.

"Okay," Kina said. "I'll call him later." She smiled and leaned in closer to Fili. "So, can we go to the farmer's market in Copley for lunch?"

Fili nodded and stroked her hair. "Yeah, of course. But, Kina, turtle. We gotta talk about your mom."

"What about her?" Kina asked. She plays with her tank top, straightening it, pulling it down, tugging at the hem.

"We did the whole official custody thing," Fili said. "So that way everything goes smoothly."

"Smoothly," Kina said with an angry huff. "Yeah, smoothly. With mom dying and all."

"None of this is going to be smooth, or painless, or easy," Fili said, grabbing Kina's hand and squeezing it. "But we're trying."

Kina shrugs, tugging her hand back, and stands up. "C'mon, let's go get lunch. I'm starving. That ice cream did nothing for me."

Fili sighed and watched her for a moment before nodding and getting to his own feet. "Yeah, okay. Lunch sounds amazing right now." He follows as Kina walks off at a fast pace and frowns. He hates to see his little girl in so much pain.
Kili sat on Dirk's bed and picked at the plastic wristband around his left wrist. Dirk was laying in it, watching TV, and ignoring Kili. Not used to being ignored by Dirk of all people, Kili scooted up so he was spooning up behind Dirk, head on his shoulder, working the remote out of Dirk's hand and holding it.

"They don't know if I'm going to walk again," Dirk said, voice flat and emotionless. "The way I took that last hit, then the pneumonia? Too much pressure on my spine."

Kili aimed a kick at Dirk's shin and the leg jumped. "You look fine to me," he said.

"Go to hell," Dirk said, turning as well as he could and pushing Kili away.

Kili didn't go far before he wiggled his way closer, wrapping his arms around Dirk, and holding him tight. Dirk fought him and Kili held on, eyes closed. When did they become such a mess? What had Syria done to them? Jake and Allison were dead, Kili was tripping out of his mind so bad he was stabbing himself in the middle of the night, Dirk was hurt so bad he may never walk, Brent was home with no issues anyone knew of, and Michelle was in a different rehab facility to help her with her arm.

He reached up and tapped at Dirk's cheek until the man turned his face toward him, a glare and scowl set on his face. Kili leaned in and kissed him, eyes closed. Dirk made to pull away but Kili buried his fingers into Dirk's hair. The kiss turned, become less chaste and more desperate. Hands pulled at each other, Dirk's tears mixed with Kili's, blankets ended up kicked away. This wasn't about sex, Kili knew, as he straddled Dirk's hips, the two of them still kissing. This wasn't about anything that having someone there, someone you could reach out and touch.

This was them, also, and they needed each other. Even if Kili had Fili and Dirk had something going on with a librarian in Boston there was still Them. There was always going to be a Them.

"Haegan," Dirk said.

Kili bit Dirk's bottom lip, sucking it into his mouth before letting it go with a nip. "Love you," he said. He pulled back so he could look Dirk in the eye. "No matter what, you idiot. I love you." He reached out and took Dirk's hand again. "We're a mess, the two of us, but we're in this together. You got my back, I got yours."

Dirk nodded, squeezing his hand and pushing Kili off his hips. Kili went, easily enough, and curled up against Dirk where he landed. His thigh still ached but it wasn't anything he cared about. Dirk didn't know why Kili was back, after all, and why should he say anything when things were so out of control?

"Can you, I just."

Kili helped Dirk ease his hospital pants down and wrapped an arm around Dirk's chest, nose buried in his neck, as Dirk wrapped a hand around his erection. Kili brushed his lips against Dirk’s jaw, chin, and neck. He watched Dirk’s hand work his cock, fisting it tight and fast. This was more about just getting off than enjoying it and fuck if Dirk, if any of them, didn’t need a little enjoyment.

Kili pressed closer and kissed Dirk's cheek, squeezing, wanting to help but holding himself back.
Bastard didn't deserve Kili holding back. And yet... And yet he did. There was Fili and their mess of a life and. And he couldn’t do what he wanted, he couldn’t slide down and take Dirk in his mouth or climb back up on his lap and jerk them both off. But Kili could kiss him and talk to him. And he did that, reaching up with one hand to trace along Dirk’s cleanly shaved face, over his sharp cheek to the curve of his eye.

“Remember that time in Rio?” Kili murmured. “How we got stuck in the worst place possible for that drug dealer?” Dirk panted against him, nodding, and Kili went on. “We were all nasty after that rainstorm and we called back to say we needed five to get human again. Who was it,” Kili hummed, thinking. “I think it was Jake, actually. He was so annoyed with us for that whole time. But he knew what we were gonna do.”

“Course he did,” Dirk said, turning his head to kiss Kili. “We were insatiable.”

Kili ran a hand over Dirk’s chest, keeping his hand calming instead of suggestive, and kissed Dirk slowly. He could feel the way Dirk’s hand was speeding up and Kili knew it wouldn’t be too long. Dirk knew how to get himself off fast if he needed to.

“We found that river,” Kili said. “We kept trying to drown each other and acted like complete idiots. But we found a pretty nice spot with rocks to warm ourselves, remember?” Dirk groaned, low and hungry. Kili felt his gut clench and his cock harden in response. But he wasn’t going to. He was going to... “I pushed you down and blew you. You could barely speak by the time I was done with you.”

“Kili,” Dirk gasped.

Kili closed his eyes, kissing Dirk’s cheek and nuzzling his ear and nibbling along his jaw. “Wish I could blow you now,” he said.

Dirk came, jaw clenching, hand moving faster as he pumped himself empty. Kili watched from his spot near Dirk’s neck. He rubbed at Dirk’s stomach, soothing and needy in his own way, and didn’t realize he was spreading Dirk’s mess until he was. Dirk took his hand and licked his fingers clean.

“Wish you could too, kitten,” Dirk said, the old nickname painful.

Kili kissed Dirk’s forehead and eased out of the bed, looking for a towel, and went to help clean Dirk up. He got rid of the towel and helped Dirk get his pants back up. They lay together, quiet, thinking, touching absently in the way old lovers do and they waited for the next shoe to drop.
Fili wrapped shaking hands around the cold glass of Sam Adams and waited. Sigrid was late. It was probably nothing, just traffic or the T being the little shit it generally was or maybe a family thing, but it still made his stomach roil uneasily. She would never stand him up.

He picked up the beer and downed it in two gulps. He set the glass down on the coaster with a thump. He ran his hands, one wet from the condensation, through his hair. He growled softly and yanked at his pony tail and roughly shook his hair out.

"You should cut your hair if you're taking your aggravation out of it," Sigrid said. She dropped her bag on the top of the bar and sat in the chair, twirling idly. "What's up, kid? You look horrible."

"Sig..." Fili whispered, looking at her. She stopped spinning and stared at him. "I don't know what to do next. There's too much going on, too much going wrong."

Sigrid sighed and she leaned forward, half-falling off her stool, and hugged him tight. Fili drew in a shuddering breath and gave up, hugging her back and trying not to cry. He screwed his eyes closed tight and felt the burn but he forced it back. Sigrid hummed softly, nuzzling into his hair and giving him little kisses.

When he pulled away she let him and he sighed. "I have a plan, for the most part, but everything else is just bursting at the seams."

"Sounds like it," Sigrid said. She ordered them both a pitcher of Sam and a bar pizza to split. "First things first—is Kili really worth all this?"

"Yes," Fili said without hesitation.

Sigrid nodded. "All right then. Balin’s helping out with the job thing, you can focus on finding a better apartment and things like that later. You’ve seen Kina, you’ve done the court stuff. It sounds like things are, more or less, in order."

"They are," Fili said. He drank his beer, waiting while Sigrid thought. She was twirling a bit of hair and gnawing on her lip. Fili glanced at one of the TVs set above the bar. It was playing the Red Sox and he gave it his partial attention while Sigrid did her thing. Gal was smart and she had fantastic intuition—something that was key in her line of work as a psychologist with the court system.

"It really comes down to what you’re going to do about that boyfriend of yours," she said finally. "Are you going to partially move down there and work things out with him? Go back and forth from here and Chapel Hill?"

"I was thinking of staying in Chapel Hill as much as possible," Fili said. He moved his beer as the pizza was set in front of them. He turned away from the game and gave her a tiny smile, more a twitching of his lips than anything else. "Getting Kina to come down there for a little bit when she can, coming back up here to see her and Sharon and when I need to be present for work. Things like that."

"And if things don’t get better with Kili?" Sigrid asked, picking up a slice of pizza. "What then?"

Fili picked up his own slice and bit into it roughly, chewing unhappily. Things going bad with Kili? Being more rejected than he had already been? All of it had been his fault in the first place.
for running. He needed to show he wouldn’t run again. “I’ll make sure they don’t.”

Sigrid sighed. “You are such an idiot,” she said. I’d love to see him again. Maybe I can see for myself what is really going on with him, spare you the wasted time and heart break.”

“You sound so sure this is going to end badly,” Fili said. “Why?”

Sigrid reached out and wiped a bit of sauce off his cheek. “Just a hunch,” she said. She continued to eat her pizza and look thoughtful.

“You think it’ll end up that bad?”

“Either really bad, the blow-up-in-your-face bad, or things will be better than ever between you two,” Sigrid said. “I doubt the second, to be honest, mostly because of the troubles you guys were having before he went off to Syria. But what do I know? You two are the weirdest couple I have ever met.”

Fili chuckled, tapping his pizza crust to her’s in an odd toast. “I’ll take that as a compliment.”

Sigrid snorted, rolling her eyes, but smiled. “Weirdo.”
"I love you," Fili said, smiling. His hands were holding Kili’s, fingers tangled together. They were in his apartment, on his bed, and he had Kili with him. Close. Whole. Tangled up with him with his hair growing out in ridiculous tufts.

"Mmph," Kili murmured, half-asleep.

"I'm never leaving you," Fili said.

Kili stretched and made himself more comfortable, sprawling a little more on top of Fili.

"We should buy a house," Fili said, squeezing Kili's fingers and kissing the top of his head. "Together. All of us. A house to make a home."

Kili wiggled about, tugging his fingers away and peering at Fili suspiciously. "Did you just say 'buy a house'?"

Fili smiled at him.

Kili narrowed his eyes, lips twisting to the side, and grabbed the closest pillow to whack Fili with. "You want to buy a house and make a home and you try springing that on me while I'm almost asleep?"

Fili laughed, arms coming up to try and protect his head. "I thought it'd be easier to talk about with you all, you know."

Kili rolled his eyes and smacked the pillow into Fili's stomach. Fili gave a laughing "oof!" and reached up, tugging Kili down against him, pillow trapped between them.

"The apartment is a little small," Fili said. "And with Sharon getting so much worse... Kina will need a better room."

"Well, yeah," Kili said. "I thought that was a given."

"Wanna start looking?" Fili asked. Kili made a face and tucked his face back against Fili’s neck. He
laughed and tugged Kili closer. "Okay, got it. What do you want in a house?"

"Rooms? A roof? Floors?" Kili said against Fili's neck, confused.

"One floor? Two floors? How many rooms?"

Kili pulled away and oh, Fili couldn't help but laugh at that expression. Kili looked so confused. "Uh?"

Fili ran his hands through Kili's hair. "We need at least two bedrooms," he said. "For us and Kina. Do you want another for anyone who comes to stay with us?"

Kili hesitated and then nodded. "That might be nice if dad or Dis visit."

"I need an office," Fili said. "Balin's gonna keep me busy."

Kili nodded, hand trailing over Fili's chest. "Okay. So, what, three bedrooms and an office?"

"Two bathrooms," Fili said. "Teenaged girls are probably scary. And..." Kili looked like a deer in the headlights. "Okay, why don't I look and then show you?"

Kili rolled his eyes and leans in to kiss him. "Go for it. Moron." He pushed and tugged at Fili until he was perfectly comfortable. "Love you. Now let me bask."

Fili chuckled and nuzzled his hair. "Love you too."
Kili stared at Fili.

Fili stared at Kili.

Impasse.

Kili looked away first.

"So," Fili said, drawing out the vowel. "What happened?"

Kili rolled his eyes. "I stabbed myself in the leg, what do you think happened?"

"I've been reading up on PTSD," Fili said as he scratched at his cheek. He ignored the glare Kili turned on him. "And can you..." Fili took a deep breath. "Why was I the only who knocked you out of that nightmare? Tell me what's in your head, please?"

Kili shook his head, slumping in his chair, and crossing his arms.

"Please?" Fili asked, trying not to beg but boarding on it. He wasn't above begging.

"No," Kili said. He shoved his chair back and got to his feet, wincing and leaning heavily on the table. "Fuck. Shit. Such a fucking headcase I..."

Fili couldn't hear what else Kili was saying as the other man was making his unsteady way to the garden door. Fili sighed and followed, hands in his pockets, keeping Kili in sight. It was a nice facility that Woods Security had stuck Kili and Dirk in but that didn't really change what it was--a hospital.

Kili went down, grabbing his leg and cursing, and Fili ran over to catch him. He made just as Kili was about to meet grass but he grabbed the other's arms and eased Kili onto his lap. Kili fought him, swearing, but it was more of a protest than an actual fight. There were spots of blood seeping through the leg of Kili's pants.

"I should get the nurse," Fili said, taking the time to hold Kili close and nuzzle his hair. "Do you need me to?"

Kili slumped against him, the fight leaving him with a long sigh, head turned away from his leg. "Fine."

Fili hesitated. He liked the way Kili was leaning against him, giving him his full weight--of which Kili had very much lost some and that was worrying--but also the way he was so limp and trusting and tired. And he had let Fili take care of him.

Maybe, just maybe, there was hope?

Instead of leaving he waved down an orderly. Kili muttered in a language that Fili wasn't aware of, turning his face into Fili's shoulder. Ten minutes later had Kili loaded in a wheelchair with a nurse berating him as they went back into the hospital. The nurse helped Kili onto his bed and helped get his pants down.

"I'm thinking we need to get you some snap closure pants," the nurse said. "You make me check this wound far too often, cutie."
Kili wrinkled his nose. "You think I like doing this?"

"I think you like the attention," the nurse said.

Fili chuckled as Kili swore at her but then the amusement fled as he saw. They argued as the nurse cleaned the blood away to show that some of the stitches had pulled through. Fili felt his stomach churn as he stared at the mess of Kili's leg. Flesh stitched together with thick black thread; skin red and angry and pinking slightly at the edges and beginning to pucker.

He'd seen the scars before, sure, but they had been healed and this was the first time he was seeing the progress from serious wound to scar. It wasn't something Fili had been prepared to see. He noticed Kili looking at him, a resigned and judging look on his face, his lips thin and white from pain and the anger, and Fili looked away.

They sat in silence as the nurse left to grab the brace Kili had decided he didn't want to wear. They stayed equally silent as the nurse strapped Kili's leg into the brace. The nurse lifted Kili's shirt, inspecting the stitches on his stomach, and let it drop with a satisfied nod. She ruffled Kili's hair with a smile and left.

Silence.

"You have this habit of running away from me and hurting yourself," Fili said. "Can we come to an agreement that you'll stop?"

Kili wrinkled his nose. "Do I have to?"

Fili felt his heart stutter but mentally squared his shoulders. He had come here with a purpose. That purpose was to make Kili, at the very least, talk to him.

"This is kind of one step forward, five steps back," Fili said.

Kili shrugged. "Nothing’s keeping you here."

"That’s not true," Fili said. "You’re keeping me here." Kili glared at him and Fili cleared his throat. "You know what I mean. I’m not leaving you this time, Kili."

"This time," Kili said, voice bitter. "What about next time? Or the time after that?"

Fili said nothing, only shifted uncomfortably in his chair.

"I’m tired," Kili said. "I’m tired of fighting with you. We fought for two years and then we found out we’re brothers and shit blew up. And I’m so damned tired of being off-balance around you."

Kili carefully swung his leg up on the bed, stretching out and laying down. "I don’t want to spend the next four years of my life like I spent the last four. This isn’t something I can do anymore."

"Kili," Fili said, taking a deep breath. He was going to talk to him, tell him everything.

"No," Kili said, folding his hands over his chest and staring at the ceiling. "I’m not doing it. You need to leave. Go back to Sharon and Kina, be with them, and leave me alone."

"I can’t do that," Fili said, voice soft.

"Then you’re an asshole," Kili said. "Do you not understand? Don’t you get this? This, us, it isn’t healthy!"

"I quit my job with CityYear," Fili said. "I’m joining a public firm who doesn’t need me to be in
Boston as often."

“Good for you,” Kili said, turning his head away.

“Sharon and I already worked things out with Kina,” Fili said. “She’s going to come stay with me for a week down here, if you don’t mind having her around, and see how that goes. And if it works out then Kina can fly back and forth, or spend the summer down here. I’ll have to go back to Boston every now and then for meetings I have to attend in person but largely I’ll be staying here.”

“Not with me you aren’t.”

“Mom already said I could.”

Kili started laughing, a quiet laugh that turned into a choke, and Fili was horrified to see Kili crying.

“Kil—"

“Get out,” Kili managed to say, his voice thick and quiet. Fili stood and walked over to the bed. Kili sat up—impressive, with the wounds he had—and flung his pillow in Fili’s face. “GET OUT!!"

Fili flinched and took a step back, hands coming up to hold the pillow. Kili’s face with red and blotchy and twisted into an angry snarl. Fili stared but then nodded and handed Kili his pillow back.

“I’ll be back,” he said.

“Don’t,” Kili said, taking the pillow and shoving it under his head as he flopped. “Just get out and stay out.”

“Ki—"

“GET OUT!!"

Fili fled.
Fili looked down into his glass of whisky and sighed, leaning back into his chair and looking at Dwalin. "That went well."

"He's been lashing out at everyone lately," Dwalin said. He took a seat and stretched his legs out under the table. "The shrink we talked to said it's normal. He's tripping all over the PTSD spectrum. Being angry is his default right now."

Fili nodded. He picked the whisky up, looked at it, and set it back down. "I don't know what to do anymore. Everything's going to shit. Sharon's dying, Kina's going to be mine in full soon, and I need a better job to deal with this. Balin said he'd hire me, thankfully, but that's really treading on family ties and you know I hate to do that. But I still have to think about Kina and this..." He picked the glass up and downed it in one gulp, relishing the way it burned.

"What's going on with Sharon?" Dwalin asked. "Didn't really hear a lot."

Fili wrinkled his nose. "We got any more booze?"

Dwalin got to his feet and fetched a bottle from under the sink. Fili chuckled softly as Dwalin wiggled the bottle at him. "Kili can't get down that low just yet," he said. He fetched another glass and poured them both a couple of fingers of scotch. "He wasn't too much of a drinker before, was he?"

Fili smiled, sipping the scotch. Damn. This was good stuff. "No, he wasn't. He drank every now and then but he didn't border on alcoholism. He mostly stuck to beer too."

"He's a bit of a mess," Dwalin said again. "But you're a mess too, aren't you?"

Fili snickered into his scotch. "Oh, yeah. Mess might be putting it lightly."

"Tell me," Dwalin said. So Fili did. Dwalin sipped his scotch in silence for a moment before nodding. "Your friend Sigrid is right."

“She usually is,” Fili said.

“I don’t know if any of really know the extent of Kili’s issues,” Dwalin said. “Eventually something is going to trip him and he’ll blow up but who knows what that’ll be or when.”

Fili gave him a tiny smile. “Hopefully it’ll be sooner rather than later, right?”

Dwalin made a noncommittal noise and nudged Fili’s glass. “Drink up, Fili, and then get to bed. You’ve got a long day of dealing with your brother ahead of you.”
Kili huffed, grumpy, and crossed his arms. Fili had an arm wrapped around his shoulders and they were watching Game of Thrones on HBO in his room. On his bed. Because Kili’s leg needed to be stretched out and... It was a little funny how the hospital gave him HBO but then again it was one of the fancy ones.

"Stop huffing at me," Fili said.

Kili shoved his elbow into Fili’s side, relishing the oof, and turned back to the TV. He didn't know why he'd given in to Fili’s cajoling into the bed to watch TV or why he'd let Fili curl an arm around him but he had. But he had. He plead insanity.

Then again, it was nice, having someone pressed against his side, arm around him. It felt nice that it was Fili and smelled like him and that smell brought so many memories to the forefront of Kili’s mind. And now Kili just wanted to punch a pillow.

"Do you want to watch something else?" Fili asked.

"No," Kili said.

"Do you want to make out?" Fili asked.

Kili rolled his eyes and slammed his elbow into Fili’s side again.

"Jeez," Fili said, shifting aside. Kili refused to look away from Cersi being bitchy. "I don't remember your elbows being that pointy before."

“I’ve lost weight,” Kili said.

"That's not a good thing," Fili said, low and soft. Kili wrinkled his nose; way to state the obvious. "Are they working on that in here? I mean, they're not just focusing on your...leg and rehab, right?"

Kili rolled his eyes. "My leg? Really? Why the pause? What were you gonna say?"

Fili tugged and Kili went, surprised, as Fili wrapped him in a tight hug. He pressed his face into Kili’s hair and just held him for a moment. "Wound. Are they focusing on your wound or everything?"

Kili struggled for a moment, trying to pull away. "Why the hell do you care about my leg?"

"It looks bad," Fili admitted. "I've always seen them when they're already healed. That--that's not a healed wound. It looks really, really bad."

Kili frowned. "Seriously?" he asked in disbelief. "You're freaked out about my leg."

"I repeat," Fili said, chest rumbling, "it looks really bad."

Kili frowned. "Seriously?" he asked in disbelief. "You're freaked out about my leg."

"I repeat," Fili said, chest rumbling, "it looks really bad."

"Wimp," Kili muttered.

"Extremely," Fili said.

Kili struggled about, employing his elbows, until he was twisted about and relatively comfortable to watch the TV. He let Fili keep his arms around him, slightly annoyed by the firmness of Fili's
hold, and sighed.

Maybe this wasn't the worst thing.
Kili was sitting on the bench, panting and sweaty from the practices, and drinking his water. He was pushing himself but it also made him feel good. He loved the feeling of his body, the way he felt like he used to feel, and he closed his eyes.  

"Well you look like crap," someone said.  

Kili opened his eyes and gave Nori a lazy smile. "At least I'm prettier than you."  

Nori stumbled back, clutching his heart, grinning. He straightened and flopped next to Kili on the bench, poking at his arm. "Hey you," he said, low and soft. "How you doing?"  

Kili shrugged, leaning into him a little, and closed his eyes again. "Tired. Could be better. Healing."  

"Well," Nori said, ruffling Kili's sweat-damp hair. "Maybe this'll help."  

"What will?"  

"Me and Tauriel, we're here to take you and Dirk to see Jake and Allison."  

Kili sat up straight, pulling away from Nori and staring at him. "N-no, Nori, I can't. You don't--"  

Nori poked Kili's cheek, a small smile on his face. "You gotta, hotshot."  

"No, no, I really don't," Kili stammered. He hefted himself to his feet and walked away, glad his leg was steady enough to support him. He glanced at the clock and let out a soft, relieved breath and makes his way out of the facility and toward the curb.  

Fili was sitting in the driver's seat, on the phone, eyebrow arched as Kili came storming (as close as he could get to it) out. Nori was right behind him, trying to catch his attention, before just grabbing his elbow.  

"For crying out loud, Haegan," Nori said, turning Kili around by force. "You need this. Dirk needs this. They need this!"  

"They're dead!" Kili shouted. "Th-they don't need anything. They don't need to see their murderer!"  

A door slammed behind Kili and he heard Fili's voice. He closed his eyes and shook his head. He heard Nori's and Fili's voices but he couldn't make out the words. He didn't realize he's had his ears covered until he feels someone tugging on his arm. He lowered them, slowly, looking down at Dirk's grim face. Tauriel was there too, between Nori and Fili and trying to calm everyone, but Kili just looked at Dirk.  

"We gotta do this," Dirk said. "We've never not said goodbye to someone."  

"I killed them," Kili said. "I can't go see them."  

"You did a good thing for them," Dirk said. "If IS had gotten their hands on them it would have been so much worse."  

Kili shook his head again. "Dirk."  

"I'm going," Dirk said. "I'd really like for you to be there."
Kili flinched and shook his head. He got in the car and slammed the door shut, head in his hands as he waited for Fili to get in as well. Minutes felt like months as Kili waited, trying to keep his breathing even, bent over so his head was almost between his legs.

Kili looked up as Fili got in, slamming his own door shut, muttering as he got his seat belt on, and driving away a little faster than was probably safe. Kili slowly straightened, sitting back in the chair and fiddling with his seat belt, and looking out the window.

"That was bullshit," Fili said, biting out the words. "Did you know they were coming?"

Kili hesitated and then dug out his phone. "Yeah, Nori texted me." Kili pulled it up, staring at it.

/gonna b in nc soon. c u then?/
/get something 2 ask u/

"Didn't say anything about this," Kili said. He let his phone drop and looked out the window. "Where are we going?"

"I was thinking, we've been here a couple months now and I've never seen the basketball museum."

"The basketball museum?" Kili asked.

Fili nodded. "Yeah, basketball. It'd be fun, right? Something else to think about."

Kili slouched in his seat and stayed quiet as Fili drove. He didn't know what to do. Could he really see Jake and Allison? Did he even have the right to go and see them? The others had only seen him a couple of times but none of them had mentioned their missing friends.

He reached down and rubbed his thigh, wincing a little, and sighed. This was such bullshit. Everything was such bullshit.

"Want to explain that?" Fili asked.

Kili looked up at him, curious. "What?"

"You were speaking out loud," Fili said. "The fact that everything was bullshit."

Kili sighed, squirming about and turned to Fili, resting the back of his head against the window. He watched Fili drive, eyes on the road except when they darted over to look at him. His thigh had a tiny twitch from the position and he chewed on his cheek.

"Well, as you said, Nori. Tauriel. That wasn't cool," Kili said. "Not totally surprised, mind you, but." He huffed out a sigh. He wished his hair was long enough to twirl around a finger but he had just gotten it cut again. "They mean well but I can't do it. I can't believe they even asked. The fact they asked, that they believe that. I can't. I just, I can't."

"They shouldn't have asked," Fili said, the leather of the wheel making a soft rrrrrr noise as Fili tightened his hands on it. "You're not..."

Kili arched an eyebrow, smiling a little. "I'm not?"

"Not healed," Fili said.

Kili looked out the window. "Yeah, no, I'm not. In any sense of the word." He felt tired, his body heavy--like someone had tied little five pound weights to every muscle group in his body--and he
just wanted to find a bed to pull the covers over his head.

"What do you want to do?" Fili asked a couple minutes later. "Do you want to go see the graves?"

Kili chewed on his cheek some more. "It's...it's not even them. We couldn't. They."

Fili nodded, reaching out and grabbing Kili's hand.

Kili let him.

"It might be a good idea, in a way," Fili said slowly, as if he were thinking as he spoke. "Closure. Or, at least, that's what Sigrid would say."

Kili wrinkled his nose. After everything he'd been through this past year he was full up on psychologists and psychotherapy. "There's no such thing as closure," he said.

"You sure about that?" Fili asked. "Dirk's going, isn't he?"

"I don't follow him everywhere!" Kili snapped, suddenly angry. "It's not like he's you, all right?"

The car swerved for a moment and Fili grabbed the wheel with both hands, flushing. Kili clutched at the seat belt and the oh-shit handle. His heart was racing and he mentally backtracked over his words...and promptly started cursing.

"Not me?"

"Shut up!" Kili said. He rubbed his hands over his cheeks, feeling the heat in them. He hadn't meant to say that. He didn't want to forgive Fili. He didn't. He wasn't going to.

He was such a liar.

"You know," Fili said. "Maybe the museum is overrated. Want to get lunch instead?"

"Go to hell," Kili muttered, looking away and hunching his shoulders.

Fili was smiling. "Love you too."

"I hate your guts," Kili said.

Fili drove them to a diner, a cute place, and they bickered their way through lunch. Fili wouldn't stop smiling and Kili didn't know if he wanted to punch Fili or kiss him. When they went home there was no mention of Nori or Tauriel to Dis and Dwalin. Fili told him it was his choice and Kili was too emotionally tired for the drama Dis and Dwalin would bring to the whole thing.

Could he go see their graves? Was it something he could do without breaking down? He still saw them--Jake and Allison--still dreamed about seeing them grabbed, trapped, and unable to get to the extraction point. He'd blown their brains out, killed them, ended their lives in an instant.

He'd killed people before, plenty of them, but none of them had been friends. Sure, friendly fire existed but he hadn't been involved in those--well. He'd been grazed by a ricochet bullet Michelle had fired, but that didn't count--and besides, Jake and Allison had been deliberate. He'd seen it through the scope, hadn't even thought about it, and taken his shots.

He barely paid attention to dinner or the made-for-TV-movie the others were watching. Showering was rote and he ended up on his bed, sitting there, staring at the clock for who knew how long. When he finally pulled himself out of his mind the clock read 9:32pm.
Kili stood, scratching at the back of his neck and staring at his door in hesitation. He cracked his neck and squared his shoulders before striding out of the room. He went up to Fili’s and knocked on it, trying to ignore his rabbit-like heartbeat.

He could do this.

Fili opened it, a frown on his face that cleared when he saw it was Kili, and stepped out of the way.

Kili shook his head. "No, I just." He coughed and then cleared his throat. "I think I should go," he said finally. "But you're coming with me."

Fili nodded. "Okay."

Kili blinked, thrown, and he lost some of the bravado he'd faked to get himself down the hall. "Okay," he repeated. He hesitated for a moment, tempted--so tempted--to reach out and kiss Fili that he turned and fled back to his room.
Kili hesitated before knocking on Fili's door.

They had been in Houston for two days now and had been to the funeral services earlier that day. Contrary to popular opinion--generally, his own opinion, at this point--he was not doing well. Sadly, this was not going to be a surprise to anyone.

There was shuffling and then the door opened. Fili looked damp, like he had just gotten out of the shower, and Kili didn't want to think about that. He didn't want to think about anything.

"Kili?" Fili asked, brow furrowing in the start of a frown.

Kili closed his eyes and stepped forward, wrapping himself around Fili. He would deny it to his grave that he was clinging--though he very much was. Fili was thankfully silent as he hugged Kili back. They stood like that, quiet, holding each other, until Kili's leg began to shake. Fili felt the shaking with his hand on Kili's hip and eased back to help Kili into the room and over to the bed.

"Are you okay?" Fili asked, squatting down to look up at Kili.

Kili shook his head. His eyes ached. He fished his hotel key out of his back pocket and handed it to Fili. He didn't say anything, just let himself slump back onto the bed, draping an arm over his eyes and breathed. He felt the key card being lifted from his fingers and the sound of the door opening and closing. He didn't care. He let himself drift on the pain--physical and emotional--and tried not to drown in it.

Fuck.

He wasn't paying attention to what was going on around him and was startled when the bed dipped suddenly. He tried to sit up but Fili set a hand in the middle of his chest and pushed him down.

"Relax," Fili said. "I've got the pills and the gel. Which do you want first?"

"Pills," Kili said. He pushed at Fili's hand and sat up a little. Fili nodded and moved away, going to fill a glass of water in the bathroom, and then returned with it and the pills. Kili took them and
drained the glass of water. "Thanks."

"What I'm here for," Fili said. "Now, I'm going to take your pants off, okay?"

Kili lay back on the bed and relaxed as Fili went for his buckle. He was barefoot and it didn't take a lot of work to get the jeans off. He lay there as Fili worked the cool gel into his scar. It went from cold to warm as it soaked into his flesh.

"How you holding up?" Fili asked, fingers still working.

Kili snorted, tossing his arm over his eyes again. "Oh, just wonderful. It's perfect. Lovely. I want to stay here forever."

Fili chuckled softly. "So, in other words, you're about to fall to pieces?"

"That might be putting it mildly," Kili said. "Just a little."


Kili sat up and looked at Fili, really looked.

Fili had dark circles under his eyes like he hadn't been sleeping; Kili was familiar with that because his weren't much better. His hair was longer and looked a little frazzled at the ends, his beard also not as neat as he usually had it made Kili itch to trim it. He was rumpled and in the kind of clothes Kili only saw him in when he was sick or just not in the mood to deal with anything. The way Fili held himself looked like he was waiting for another blow, like he'd been beaten down and was only standing by sheer willpower.

I did that, Kili thought to himself. He wasn't happy with the thought. He wasn't happy with anything at all, lately. Could he, maybe, try...fixing things? Maybe that would stop the anger and the hurt and the, well, everything. And, even if it didn't stop it, maybe it would make it a little better. Easier.

Kili nodded and scooted back up the bed. "C'mon," he said with a tilt of his head.

Fili looked suspicious and wary but he sat down on the bed next to Kili. He toed his sneakers off and laid down, hands folded on his stomach, head turned to watch Kili. There was almost enough space between them to fit Kina. And wasn't that a painful thought? They stared at each other in silence for minutes, neither saying anything, just looking and letting their hearts beat.

Kili sighed and scooted closer. "Like this, idiot," he said, poking and jostling Fili until the other man wrapped his arms around him. Fili was stiff and uneasy when they finally settled down, Kili with his arm around Fili's waist and with Fili's arms around him, letting his head be pillowed by Fili's chest. He could feel the moment when Fili started to relax, to let the tension go, to let the touches grow into actually holding each other.

"Kili?"

Kili was silent for a moment, counting the breaths Fili took, before closed his eyes. "I didn't want to go to Syria," he said slowly. Haltingly. His words, these words, were going to hurt and he knew it. But maybe it would make things better? That shrink sure as shit wasn't doing anything worthwhile, maybe Fili would do better. "I didn't want to but Dirk was going. I don't know why he went, you'd have to ask him, but I couldn't let someone else go out with him. If it was this bad with me then how much worse would it have been without me? Would I be burying everyone I knew instead." His voice froze and he felt like he was choking.
He struggled away and sat up, rubbing at his throat. Fili stayed where he was.

"I couldn't do that, you know? I couldn't just leave them all to die without trying to make sure they came back with me. I knew it, really, that people were going to die on this. That I might die, or that Dirk would, but I didn't think I'd be the one having to kill them. And all I kept thinking over there was coming back home, seeing you and Kina and just having a life again. It became a mantra, you know? Home, home, home. Fili and his stupid anime and sleeping in and Sunday brunches with that horrible crap you call bacon. I just wanted to go home."

"And then I fucked it all up," Fili said softly.

Kili let out a strangled laugh, trying so hard to choke it back. He pulled his legs to his chest and buried his face in his knees. Fili sat up and tugged Kili back against him. Kili turned and grabbed onto him. He couldn't stop the tears from falling and he didn't want to. He was angry and hurt and he still wanted what he had always wanted--Fili and home.

"I panicked," Fili said. "I'm not proud of it but I did. I panicked and got scared and I pushed you away. It was selfish and I've been regretting it since it happened. Granted, it did take me, what, seven months to gather the balls to come see you."

"I wanted to shoot you," Kili mumbled.

Fili sighed, his chest moving under Kili's head, and nuzzled into his hair. "I should probably let you."

"No," Kili said. "It hurts like a bitch from hell."

"Well that's a picture," Fili said, laughing softly.

Kili relaxed into Fili, closing his eyes. "Don't leave me again, please," he whispered. He knew he was begging but he couldn't help it, wouldn't help it, not if it got him Fili back. "I'm so tired of being angry."

Fili nodded. He kissed Kili's cheek and got up. He took off his pants and nudged Kili up toward the top of the bed so he could pull the covers down. Kili slipped under them and let Fili turn off the lights and hold him close.

"I'm here," he said. He nuzzled Kili's hair again and huffed. "I really hate you with short hair."

Kili smiled and closed his eyes. "Guess I'll have to grow it out then."

"Guess so."
Fili hesitated in the doorway of Kili’s room. It had been a week, so far, that Kili had been kept in the rehabilitation center and there was talk of him staying for another week or two. Mostly, they said, they wanted to keep an eye on his leg. Fili knew that it was more likely that the PTSD flashbacks had them concerned.

He remembered the way Kili had flinched away from the news before Dis had changed the channel in a hurry. He remembered the kitchen and the blood and the screams. Keeping him safe might be a good thing. Between the three of them they obviously could not do that at home.

"You're staring," Kili snapped. He was sitting on the bed, arms crossed over his chest, looking furious with his leg stretched out in his brace.

"Yeah, I am," Fili said, voice soft. He was leaning against the wall, hands in his pockets. "I need to ask something but I’m not sure how to."

"You put one word in front of the other and sometimes add punctuation," Kili said. He looked away, out the window, at the rain pouring down.

"Do..." Fili shook his head and started again. "Would it be easier for you for me to leave? Like, leave-leave. Completely. Because all I can think is that you were fine and then I came back and you have that flashback and now you're here and you, you're so angry all the time."

Kili had gone still. Fili wasn't even sure he saw his chest moving. "You want to leave?"

"No!" Fili shouted loudly, not realizing how loud he actually was until he heard himself. He winced, took a deep breath, and tried again. "No. I don’t want to leave. I want to stay and fix things and move forward with you. It’s...I can’t see my life without you in it and I feel like it’s selfish of me to be here and not focus on what you want. What you need."

“I don’t know what I need,” Kili said.

“What do you want?”
Kili looked at him, a tiny frown tugging at the edges of his mouth, and then sighed. “I don’t know.”

Fili nodded slowly. “Will you tell me when you know?” Kili’s hands twitched in the air and he made a frustrated noise before letting them fall down to his lap. Fili inched further into the room until he sat on the edge of the arm chair near the bed. “Okay, too much to ask. How about another huge thing to ask?”

Kili rolled his eyes. “Why the fuck not.”

“Can we start over?” Fili asked. “Not completely, I know that’s impossible, but maybe a little? Can you try and forget that I lost my shit for a while?”

Kili stared at him, mouth slightly open in shock.

“I want to be there for you,” Fili said. “I want to try and be the support you need, the one I used to be. Can, I mean, would you let me? Is that something you want?”

Kili looked down in his lap. Fili saw his hands curl and uncurl and then there was a loud, gusty sigh. “It all comes back to what I want, hunh?”

Fili tried to smile and nodded. “Yeah, it kind of does.”

“Everyone wants to know what I want and I just, I have, it’s.” Kili growled, low, frustrated. “Yes, fine. I want you here. But not right now. Get out.”

Fili blinked. “I—?”

Kili reached up, shoving his hands violently into his hair, tugging at the short strands. “Just, get out. I can’t. I don’t fucking know what I want.” His fist lashed out, slamming into the headboard of the bed. “Just, fuck. Get out, now, or I swear to fucking god I’m going to start throwing shit at you.”

Fili nodded, slowly getting up, keeping an eye on Kili. “Do you want… Dirk or a nurse or?”

“Get out!” Kili yelled.

Fili did, nodding, swallowing around the thickness in his throat. He closed the door behind him and flinched as he heard things being thrown around the room and the sound of Kili shouting curses at nothing but his own demons.
Kili sat in a chair on the porch and stared at Kina. The girl had spouted a couple inches in the last year and change and she was growing up. She was losing some of the baby fat and there were hints of the beauty she was going to be. Kili would enjoy threatening her boy or girlfriends. But, right now, having her stare him down, made him feel about five inches tall.

She huffed, rolled her eyes, and threw herself at him. Kili rocked back into the chair, his arms coming up to hold her automatically, and chuckled.

"Hiya, kiddo," Kili said.

"I missed you," Kina said, a slight whine in her voice. "You left and then you got hurt and, and." She punched him in the shoulder. "You almost died! You suck!"

Kili tugged her closer and stroked her hair as she hit him in the chest over and over and cried on him. He hooked his chin over her shoulder. Fili was standing in the porch door, watching, but not interfering.

Kina pulled back and wiped at her eyes. "I got you something," she said. She slid off his lap and dug in her back pocket. She pulled out a bracelet and handed it to him. "It's called a lokai."

Kili turned it over in his hands. The beads, except for two, were perfectly clear. One bead was black and the other was an opaque white.

"The black beads has mud from the Dead Sea," Kina said, hands stuffed in the front pockets of her jeans. "It's meant to represent the lowest point in your life. The white one has water from Mount Everest to represent the highest point in your life. It's to remind you that there is balance in life."

Kili stared at her. He looked at the bracelet again and slipped it on. "Thanks," he said.

Kina rocked back and forth on her feet before leaning in and kissing his cheek. "Don't mention it. I'm gonna go help gramma with lunch."

She turned and brushed past Fili into the house and Kili looked at the bracelet on his wrist. Hunh. He looked up as Fili sat next to him.

"She's a good kid," he said, running his fingers over the cool beads.

Fili smiled, "She really is."
Fili watched as Kili strummed the guitar, humming softly, head tilted to the neck of it. He could catch a word here and there and each time he smiled when he did.

"You should sing more," Fili said. "I like listening."

"'Cause this is too much for me to hold, this is too much for me to hold," Kili sang softly. He caught Fili's eye and smiled, restarting the song. "They say home is where the heart is, I guess I haven't found my home. And we keep driving round in circles, afraid to call this place our home."

Fili smiled.

"And are we there yet? Are we there yet, are we there yet? Home, home, home, home..."

"What song is that?"

"Ingrid Michaelson," Kili said, fingers still playing the song. "I really like the album it's from. We can't always play classic rock, now can we?" This last was directed toward Gunny who, as usual, was flopped at Kili's feet and purring while twisted into some random shape.

"How do you cat?" Fili asked, squatting down next to them. "What album?"

"Everybody," Kili said. His fingers drifted around the frets until he picked out a Lifehouse song that Fili actually knew. "It's a good one. Lots of guitar."

"Not something I really thought you listened for."

"I love music," Kili said. "I love dancing to it, singing to it, laughing to it, moving to it. Remember way back when when I made you dance in the grocery store?"

Fili nodded. It was a good memory. He had been mortified and horrified all at the same time but had gone along with it because, back then and even now, being around Kili made him feel as if he were the bravest person in the world. He knew that, without a doubt, he was not the bravest or strongest in the world but Kili still made him feel that way. And wasn't that all that mattered?
"Well, that's me," Kili said. "I live to music."

Fili reached out to take his hand. "I know. I love you that way."

Kili smiled and nodded, squeezing Fili's hand with his own. "I love you too."
“So,” Fili said, drawing it out. “I talked to Dirk before we left.”

Kili shifted in the passenger seat to see Fili better. “Oh?”

They’d been driving for four hours now, only needing to stop once because Kili’s leg cramped, but it had been in relative comfort and silence. They spoke when they wanted and Kili would sing softly under his breath sometimes. For the most part, though, Fili drove and Kili watched the scenery roll by.

Fili nodded, tapping his fingers on the steering wheel. “Yep. I think we’re good now.”

“Good as in…?” Kili asked. He was frowning, when Fili glanced at him, but also looked thoughtful.

“I think we’ve finally figured each other out, which is great. He told me a lot about you two.”

“Like what?” Kili asked. Fili couldn’t help but smile at the tenseness in Kili’s voice and body.

“Well, I already knew you were a kinky bastard, but I had no idea how kinky. You guys got up to a lot,” Fili said. “I didn’t know you ended going to the ER for some of them.”

Kili groaned. “Fuck, fuck, fuck. I’m gonna kill him.”

“Nah, it’s good,” Fili said with a laugh. “I mean, doesn’t everyone experiment with dildos sometimes? I mean, it could be worse. You could have tried using anything else, like a cucumber or something, but I mean. A normal dildo? A girl’s dildo?”

Kili slumped in his seat. “I’m gonna kill Dirk.”

Fili reached over to snag Kili’s hand, grinning. “Aw, c’mon. It’s cute.”

“I was fucking eighteen, all right? I might have had sex before but I’d never had a sex toy. How the hell was I supposed to know there was a difference?”

“It’s cute!” Fili said, tugging Kili’s hand up to kiss. “God, I wonder if dad has any pictures of you back then. Probably all cocky and scruffy.”

“I could barely grow a goatee, though I did try,” Kili said. “It was tragic. I was such a hot mess.”

“Still, probably smoking.”

Kili tugged his hand away and was quiet for a moment. “I learned pretty fast. You know, about getting off with the right stuff, especially for an audience.”

Fili couldn’t help the jerk of his hands and the way the car swerved. Kili cackled softly and looked around. He licked his lips and sprawled a little in his seat, legs spread as he kneaded his crotch, head tipped back against the headrest.

“Fuck,” Fili said. He tried to fix his eyes on the road, to not look, and his licked his lips.

“I have a horrible exhibitionist streak,” Kili said. “I’d love for you to pull this car over and fuck me. Or just watch me get off like this. Keep driving, let me.” Kili bit his lip and moaned. “Fuck.
Fili. I want you."

Fili kept driving, eyes trying to find the best place to pull over, and breathed through his mouth. He could smell Kili and fuck, oh fuck, that was the sound of a zipper and he couldn’t help looking over at Kili. His brother had hand down his pants, stroking himself slowly through his underwear, throat moving and mouth open.

Fili found a rest stop and pulled over, throwing the car into park and turning it off, turning and staring at Kili. The other man had reached down and pushed his seat back as far as it would go. His bad leg was stretched out and the other thrown wide as he tugged his underwear down. The elastic dragged over the fleshy base of his cock and then it was free.

“Kili,” Fili said. He reached out and set a hand on Kili’s thigh, rubbing along the inseam of his jeans.

Kili had a hand wrapped around his cock, grip tight like he liked it, and was jacking off fast. His thumb flicked out every now and then and rubbed at the head of his cock. Kili moaned, head tossing a little, and there was a whine and an arch of his back and then he was coming.

Fili reached out and grabbed Kili’s hand, pulling it to his mouth and licking his come. Kili stared at him, listless and sleepy, eyes wide in tired hunger.

“You suck,” Kili said. There was such a whine in his voice. Fili slipped his fingers into his mouth and sucked them clean, tongue rubbing and twining around them. Kili tugged his hand away and fixed his jeans, shoving his soft cock back in his underwear. “How much longer are we driving today?”

“Another three hours,” Fili said. He licked his lips, still tasting Kili.

“Fuck that,” Kili said. “Find us a hotel now. I want your cock in me right now.”

Fili cleared his throat and reached down to adjust himself. “Yeah, we can do that. Keep an eye on the exit signs, yeah?”

Kili smirked at him and squirmed in his seat. “Drive.”
Kili snapped his gum and stared down the scope of his paintball gun. Woods Security used paintball guns for training all the time and one was made up in the model Kili was accustomed too. Granted, it wasn't his exact gun with his exact modifications, but it would do. Dirk squatted down next to him, his own rifle in one hand and a handheld telescope in the other, murmuring directions to him.

Kili sighted down his scope and fired each time his sight followed Dirk's guidance. The others from their unit and other volunteers--including Fili, which, what? how....??--shouted and cursed and laughed as they each got nailed in bright, fluorescent, orange paint. Kili hummed softly and Dirk picked it up.

"But a shot in the dark," Kili sang softly. They didn't want to get found out, after all.

"One step away from you," Dirk chuckled. He reached down and tapped Kili's shoulder twice--left--and they shifted. Creeping quietly.

"Just a shot in the dark," someone else shouted up.

Kili cackled. "Always creeping up on you, Bryce!"

"Just a shot in the dark!"

Kili swung his gun around and fired the moment he saw him. "Down you go, lover boy. Nothing you can do!"

Fili was laughing as he went down, holding onto the leg he had shot, and lay there. Kili rolled his eyes and shot the floor just that tiny bit close to him that Fili was splattered in paint.

"Jeez, Haegan," Dirk said. "Wanted to make sure you'd have to help scrub that paint off him?"

"I'll shoot you if you don't watch it," Kili said.

"We've got...five left," Dirk said.
"Just a shot through the heart and you're to blame!" Fili said, singing. Well, it wasn't that bad of a voice, but Kili knew that already. It wasn't so bad. It wasn't fantastic but it wasn't horrible.

Kili was about to answer back when Dirk triple tapped his shoulder. They had been spotted. Kili nodded and they slunk down low off the crate they had been hiding on. Paint splattered above their heads and Kili whooshed out a breath. That was close.

Kili drew out the paintball pistol he had and used it to look for the shooter.

Movement.

Dirk fired three times, nailing two of his colleagues, and leaned into Dirk. "Now where?"

Dirk hummed softly, using the telescope to find the next best spot. Kili tapped the glass and pointed toward a nice corner with some good netting to nest in. Dirk held up a finger, then two, then three. Ugh. It sucked that everyone they worked with knew them so well. Dirk snagged Kili's hand and handed over the telescope. Kili nodded--good point.

Dirk took up his rifle and Kili worked on finding the rest of their friends. Only four left. He signaled Dirk and two went down. Kili searched for the other two and groaned, feeling something press against his head.

"Too slow," Tauriel said. Legolas was next to her and also pointing a pistol at Dirk.

Kili rolled his eyes and, in the space of blink of an eye, had his pistol up at shot Tauriel in the chest, just as she fired at him. Dirk and Legolas had both rolled their eyes and thrown their hands up in the chronic language of fed-up friends and partners everywhere.

"We still won," Kili said.

"LIES!" someone shouted.

"Double murder suicide?" Kili offered.

"Nope," Tauriel said.

"You give love a bad name," Fili belted out from wherever he lay on the ground.

"Ohmigod," Kili groaned, flopping back into Dirk. "Please, just kill me."

Dirk pointed to the red paint on his chest where Tauriel had shot him. "You are dead, kiddo."

"No, for real. Because He's singing Bon Jovi and I can't possibly love an idiot who sings Bon Jovi. And who is pretending to air guitar. He's air guitaring, isn't he?"

"Oh yeah," Tauriel said, looking over her shoulder. "It's adorable." Kili groaned while the others laughed.
Fili pulled his shirt off and used it to wipe at his forehead. It kind of sucked how Boston was hot and humid whereas North Carolina was just hot. The humidity reminded Fili of breathing through a wet blanket and it sucked. Kili wasn’t doing much better, sprawled over the couch, sweaty and panting.

“I forgot there wasn’t an elevator,” he said. “This is gonna suck.”

“You’ve got a number for the Spaulding clinic up here, right?” Fili asked.

Kili waved a hand at him. “Shut up. Stairs are gonna kick my ass, I don’t need to pay a sadist to do it for me.”

Fili startled at the sound of several angry meows and the ratting of the cage from the kitchen. “Shit. Gunny.”

Kili made a defeated noise and rolled off the couch. He got to his feet, unsteady, and Fili could see his leg shaking. He knew better than, at this point, to offer help. But he followed Kili, reaching into the fridge and grabbing water bottles for them. He kept an eye on Kili as the other man kneeled with a pained grunt to release the kitten.

Gunny darted out of the cage and dived under the couch. Kili looked at him unhappily and then up at Fili. Fili only smiled and handed him water. Kili groaned and sat down on the floor, stretching out his legs. Fili sat down next to him, drinking his too cold water, and slipped an arm around Kili’s waist.

“Happy to be home?” Fili asked.

Kili turned into Fili, his lips cold from the water pressing against Fili’s shoulder, and hummed softly. “Yeah, I am.”

“Good,” Fili said. He set his water bottle down and wrapped his other arm around Kili so he was holding him. Kili scooted closer and they sat like that for who knew how long, breathing, wrapped in each other. Fili’s heart felt like it was going to explode from the joy and relief and happiness he
felt right then.

Everything was perfect. It damned well better stay that way.
“You sure you want to drive the whole way?” Fili asked as he finished packing one of the duffles.

Kili was sitting on the bed, watching him as he tormented Gunny with a feather, playing keep away with it except to tap the kitten’s nose with it. “Can’t take the cat on the plane without issues I don’t want to deal with,” he said. “It’ll be easier on my leg if I need to stretch.”

“First class?”

“That shit is too expensive to even consider,” Kili said. “Look, if you don’t want to drive then you can meet me there.”

“No, I’m down with driving,” Fili said. “Just, you know, making sure you are too. It’s eleven hours, that’s all.”

“Doesn’t sound too bad,” Kili said.

“You say that now,” Fili laughed. He zipped up the bag and tossed it at a wall. “We’re almost packed up. We can leave whenever.”

“Dis and Dwalin are out already so we probably need to stay long enough to arrange someone to come in and clean up the place before hitting the road,” Kili said. He managed to flip Gunny onto his back and was busy giving it belly rubs. “End of the week sound about right?”

Fili nodded and sat on the bed. “Break it into two days, I figure. Sneak Gunny into a hotel room somewhere in Maryland.”

Kili nodded. “Yeah, that’s good.”

Fili stretched and got under the covers. “Okay, now that we’ve figured that out, think we could figure out some sleep time?”

Kili looked at the alarm clock and sighed. “Sorry, insomnia streak.”

Fili lay on his side, arm crooked under his head. “Want me to try and relax you? Some making out?”

Kili leaned over and kissed Fili. “Nope. I’m just gonna ride it out. Sure you don’t want me to go somewhere else?”

Fili reached up and stroked Kili’s cheek. “You’re good. Netflix isn’t the worst distraction ever.”

Kili straightened and turned out the light. Gunny, knowing the routine, trotted up the the little valley between Fili’s pillow and Kili’s. It didn’t take long for Kili to set up his iPad and queue up some random documentary while Fili closed his eyes.
Kili stared at the little ball of fluff Dirk handed him. “What’s this?”

“This is a kitten,” Dirk said. “Janie, my therapist, said that they’re handy. I’ve got one too.”

Kili looked down at the fluff—all orange and white with eyes almost as blue as Fili’s—and reluctantly took it. “So it’s a therapy kitten?”

“Yes,” Dirk said. He relaxed back into his chair and looked entirely too smug for Kili’s tastes. “Mine’s that one’s brother. Fitting, yeah?”

Kili turned the kitten this way and that, ignoring it’s tiny mews and the way it tried to sink it’s tiny claws into his hand. “What did you name yours?”

“Chinook,” Dirk said.

Kili rolled his eyes. “Seriously? After a helo?”

“Oh, like you could do better?”

“Luger?” Kili suggested, lifting the kitten to stare into his eyes. It yawned in his face.

“That’s worse than me,” Dirk said. “At least I went after a helo. A sniper naming a cat after a gun?”

“Well, it—”

“He.”

“He,” Kili said with another roll of his eyes, “could be Apache. You know, stick to the helo naming. Or, even better, Ma Duece.”

Dirk shook his head. “Haegan.”

Kili looked at the cat again, trying not to smile as it purred in an odd sort of contentment, and sighed. “Gunny. He’s gonna boss my butt around, I can already tell.”

Dirk snickered. “Sounds about right.”

Kili sighed. “Hope no one at home is allergic to cats.”
Fili knocked on the door to Dirk’s room at the rehab center. The man looked up with a tiny frown but shrugged at Fili.

“You can come in,” he said. “It’s not like I’m gonna bite your head off.”

“No, but you hardly like me,” Fili said, sticking his hands in the front pockets of his jeans.

“And here I was thinking it was the other way around,” Dirk said. He wheeled himself toward Fili, who got out of the way, and then out the door. “C’mon, you. Let’s go outside. It’s pretty nice out.”

Fili hesitated a moment but followed the other man out of the long hallways and out into the bright sunlight and green gardens. Dirk stopped under a tree, near a white marble bench, and slumped slightly in the chair. Fili took a seat on the bench, not sure what to expect from Dirk but willing to see where it would go.

“I can’t fucking wait to be out of this thing,” Dirk said. “Kili got off easy with the leg wound, if you ask me. He had maybe a week of a chair and then a brace and then out he went. Asshole.”

“How much longer do you have?” Fili asked.

“The swelling has gone down a lot,” Dirk said. “Docs think another two week, month at the most. Then comes the funness of PT. Anything is better than this.”

“Kili’s not much of a fan of PT,” Fili said. He cursed at himself mentally. Of course Dirk knew how much Kili hated PT, the man lived at the center and saw Kili as often as Fili did. Not to mention the years of friendship between them.

“He was never much of a fan of being bossed about,” Dirk said. “Would have made an amazingly shitty soldier. Ended up in the brig enough times to be drummed out for insubordination.”

Fili couldn’t help the snort and chuckle at that. “Oh yeah, that sounds like him.”

“Mom calls him trouble,” Fili said.

“Same thing, all in all,” Dirk said, shrugging. “Now, you didn’t come to see little ole me to talk about what a troublemaker Haegan is. What’s up?”

“We’re heading back to Boston soon,” Fili said. “Dwalin got offered a good job down south and mom is following him. And, well, Kili’s itching to get out of here.”

“Fourteen months in one place is a miracle for him,” Dirk said. “He only dealt well with Boston because you distracted him and he always had tiny jobs to keep him occupied.”

Fili nodded. Kili had admitted as much when they’d talked about the option of going back home. “I wanted to tell you, rather than Kili, for a couple of reasons.”

“You want to keep us away from each other?” Dirk guessed. “Like I said, you’ve never been my biggest fan.”

“You mean I’ve acted like a jealous bastard?” Fili asked. “Yeah, I was. Am. Whatever.” He ran a hand through his hair and made a mental note to get a haircut. “I figured it was time to get over myself.”


“At least try to be,” Fili said. “If that ship has sailed then, I don’t know, allies in combat.”

“Combat?”

“Isn’t dealing with Kili akin to dealing with combat?”

“I’m gonna tell him you said that,” Dirk said, a wicked grin on his face.

“Aren’t we a little old for the ‘oooh-I’m-gonna-tell’ stuff?” Fili asked. “I have a twelve-year-old and even she’s too old for that shit.”

“Eh,” Dirk shrugged. “Maybe, maybe not, but it’ll make him laugh,” Dirk said. “He’ll make like he’s going to kick your ass but he’ll be laughing on the inside.”

Fili sighed. “See, this is what I need…what I want you for. I want to be your friend because I’ve got no intention on leaving, not again, and you’ve got an angle on Kili I’m never going to have.”

Dirk raised an eyebrow. “Not like you can really get rid of your brother.”

As Dirk talked Fili listened with rapt attention. The other man was talking about things Fili hadn’t even thought to ask about and it was fascinating. He could tell, though, just from listening and watching what Dirk was still pretty heavily in love with Kili and always would be. He wouldn’t act on it, had too much respect for Kili, but he loved him. They were best friends, brothers in a way Fili would never be with Kili, and they were strongest together as a unit.

Best friends were like that.
Fili handed Kili a sandwich as they sat on the lawn across the street from their brand new house. It was kind of nice, Kili thought, having a house. A home. Somewhere to hang his hat and kick off his shoes, all of those cliche phrases. Whatever.

"You don't look so happy," Fili said.

Kili quirked a tiny smile. "I wish I was in there," he said. "Couldn't do it, though, not yet. Another three months and probably, but not now."

“What, demo makes you hot?”

Kili grinned and took a big bite of his sandwich. He loved demolition, whether with a house or a bomb somewhere. It was fun and it was a fantastic way to blow off some steam. Sledgehammers made him happy.

Fili shook his head and drank from his Yoo-Hoo bottle. “You know, I'm okay with leaving the upstairs unfinished for the moment. We can punch out those walls and fix up the bathroom ourselves later, if you want.”

Kili leaned over and kissed him, accidentally smearing mayo on Fili’s cheek. He grinned and wiped it away with his thumb. “I’d love that. Get Dirk and Sigrid to help too. But, man, I’d love to do that. Make it all awesome for us.”

Fili nodded. “Sure. Sig would probably be all over that sledgehammer.”

“She’d have to fight me for it,” Kili said. He chomped down on the rest of his sandwich, polishing it off before scooting closer to Fili and laying his head on his shoulder. “We can move in soon, right?”

“Yeah,” Fili said. “Two more weeks.”

“Yay,” Kili murmured, closing his eyes and breathing in Fili’s scent. “I’m working til six tonight. Stupid meeting.”

“Desk jockey,” Fili teased.

Kili whined. “I want my sniper’s nest. I want my missions and my work and my stuff. Haegans were not made for desks.”

Fili kissed his ear, laughing at Kili’s squirm and protest, and wrapped an arm around him. “Soon, baby. Soon.”
Fili had, somehow, wheedled Kili into starting to spend the night with him. Nothing sexual, not yet, but just sleeping together. Dis smiled at them, soft and wistful, and Dwalin only gave a short grunt of approval over the newspaper. Kili was too tired to care about the opinions of the others. He took comfort in Fili being there with him. Sometimes he kept the nightmares away.

Sometimes, though, he made them worse.

Kili could feel a body up against him, limp, holding onto him, and he tensed. Part of him knew it was Fili but the lizard part of his brain panicked. He remembered the way that explosion had felt. He had been far enough away but Dirk had been caught in it. Kili had quickly dropped to the ground. Dirk had been unlucky enough to be thrown forward and he’d landed on Kili, pinning them both.

They were so close to the chopper, so close. Kili panicked, grabbing onto Dirk’s arm, turning him and panicking. He saw blood on Dirk’s face (Fili? Was it Fili or was it Dirk?) and swore, trying to keep the hysteria under control. Dirk (Fili?) reached up to touch Kili but he scrambled back and promptly fell off the bed. He hit his head and he shouted, loud and hoarse, suddenly seeing nothing but men in ratty and dusty black clothes, faces masked, and angry. So angry. And there were guns. He patted his leg down, his shoulder, and found no weapons. In fact he felt nothing but bare skin.

“No, no, no, no,” Kili chanted, breaths coming fast and shallow.

A light flashed on and Kili threw his arms up to shield his eyes. What was happening? Had he been captured? Was he going to be tortured now? What had happened to Dirk? Was he okay? Okay fuck, what would he tell his kids?

“Kili?” someone said, reaching out to touch his face gently.

Kili blinked, trying to focus on what was actually in front of him.

It was Fili; Fili with his blond hair snarled and tangled all over like it normally was and a worried expression. He was kneeling in front of him, a hand stretched out carefully, frowning. Kili reached out with a shaking hand and grabbed at Fili’s hand. He was frantic, suddenly, lunging forward, hands patting at him and touching him and bowling him over until they fell back on the floor. Kili couldn’t help the desperate noises he was making or the relieved moan as he buried his face in Fili’s neck.

“It’s okay,” Fili murmured, wrapping his arms around Kili. “It’s okay, love. I’m here. It’s okay.”

Kili closed his eyes and let the tears flow. It wasn’t okay. He wasn’t okay. He didn’t think he’d ever be okay.
"I see you've received the kitten," Evie said.

Kili rolled his eyes and tried not to smile as the kitten pranced about the room. "Gunny," he said.

"Gunny? Is that his name?"

Kili nodded. "Figured it would be pretty decent name," he said. "Gunnery Sargent. It'll probably try bossing me around."

"Cats are very good at that," Evie said. She pointed to the bike. "Start with a warm up."

Kili sighed and climbed on the bike. He set it for the least resistance and churned away. Evie walked by a moment later and upped the resistance, ignoring Kili's glare. He gave up and continued to pedal as Gunny walked over and watched him, head tilted. It raised a tiny paw and licked it before cleaning his ears and face. Kili stopped after five minutes and leaned back in the seat, trying to look like he wasn't breathing hard, and scratched at the back of his neck.

"I'd love to get you to ten minutes," Evie said. "Or even fifteen."

Kili wrinkled his nose. "I could do so much more before."

"I have your physical records," she said as she picked Gunny up and tucked him into the crook of her arm. Gunny grumbled a little but settled into her arm, tail curled around her elbow, tiny claws sunk into Evie's flesh.

You go, kitty, Kili thought.

"I'm not going to be able to get you exactly back to where you were," Evie said. "You already know that. It is going to take lots of time and lots of work."

Kili got off the bike and, with a tiny wince, walked over to the setup of an angled trampoline and a medicine ball. He picked up one of the medium weight balls and braced himself before throwing the ball and catching it.

"Kili," Evie said softly. "You need to relax or you're going to injure yourself."

Kili caught the ball and kneaded it with stiff fingers. "Evie... I can't. You." He growled softly and chucked the ball at the wall. It fell with a thud. "I don't know what I'm doing. I can't stand this. I can't do anything like I am. How the hell am I supposed to work or live my life?"

"It's not like you've lost a limb," Evie said. "You are so very better off than a lot of the vets coming back. Some of mine are missing arms or legs. Yes, you were badly injured but you still have four working limbs." Kili looked away and Evie handed him Gunny. "Go deal with your cat," she ordered, pointing at one of the long, flat beds. "That's it for PT today."

Kili took Gunny and held him close, listening as he began to purr like an engine and nuzzled against his chest. He moved over to one of the tables, clenching and unclenching his jaw as he sat. Gunny continued to purr and Kili sighed, slumping a little, and buried his face in the tiny body's warm fur. Fuck.
Kili sat on the table of his doctor’s and glared at the wall. Swimming. Of course it had to be fucking swimming. And the goddamned uneven mud and sand and just. Fuck.

Fili looked uncomfortable and ashamed.

Dr Marks walked in and immediately set her fists on her hips. “Mr Haegan.”

“Yo,” Kili greeted tiredly. “I fucked up.”

“What happened?” she asked, sitting on the round spinny doctor’s seat that Kili always loved stealing.

“We were going to go swimming at the lake but my leg gave out,” Kili said. “I went down pretty hard.”

“Do you need help getting your pants off?” she asked.

Kili sighed and pointed to Fili and then crooked a finger. “I have a minion.”

Dr Marks nodded, turning to her computer and waiting, entering notes into his chart.

Fili stepped up and helped Kili balance and he pulled the jeans off. Most of his left side was one big bruise. There were a few cuts from the rocks he had landed on but nothing major. The problem was the rip he had felt inside his leg. The scar tissue looked fine but every time he tried to touch it it hurt like the devil.

Dr Marks stood and used the hand sanitizer attached to the wall before touching his leg with warm hands. Kili hissed, trying not to jerk away. Fili reached out and squeezed his shoulders. Dr Marks moved his leg this way and that, ignoring the low whine and hiss and groan Kili gave every now and then. She hummed and gave him a smile.

“It doesn’t look there there is significant damage done,” she said. “Be care with your PT and I’d recommend getting a deep tissue massage. It can only help.”

Fili released whatever breath he’d been holding. “He’s okay?”

Dr Marks nodded. She walked over to her desk and started typing again. “The facility you go to has some very talented massage therapists. I’m sending them a script for you and I’ll update Evie about your injury. She’ll go easy on you for a little.”

Kili snorted. “She’s a vicious harpy, hellspawned by the devil himself, no way she’ll ever go easy on me.”

Dr Marks smirked at him—it was definitely a smirk. “But she is helping you, isn’t she?”

Kili rolled his eyes. “We good?”

Dr Marks nodded. “You’re good to go.”

Kili looked over at Fili. “Help me with my jeans?” Fili nodded and helped him slide them up, letting Kili grip his shoulder as he lifted his hips to get them on.
“So,” Fili said softly. “What to go get lunch at Dairy Queen? Something greasy and then have ice cream?”

Kili looked at him, at the guilt etched into his brow, and nodded. He wanted to get rid of that guilt but he didn’t know how. “Yeah, sounds good.” He used Fili’s shoulder to slide off the examination table and they made their slow, unsteady way out to the car. “I want mozzarella sticks.”

“I think we can do that,” Fili said.

“Good,” Kili said. Maybe the afternoon would be okay after all.
It had been a bad night. A really, really bad night.

Kili lay in the grass in the backyard, staring up at the stars, and tried to calm himself down.

He’d attacked Fili. He’s half-woken from sleep and slammed his elbow into Fili’s stomach and then… Well. Then he’d gotten his hands around Fili’s throat. Fili had kneed him and Kili had fully woken and. Here he was, outside, breathing, staring up at the stars.

He’d warned Fili, had told him he could be hurt, but he hadn’t believed he would actually hurt the other man. Of course he should have known. He’d stabbed himself during a nightmare. Nightmare. Flashback. It all meant the same thing in the end, didn’t it? He was dangerous. He couldn’t be trusted.

Kili started, sitting up and staring at Fili as the other man flopped next to him. He had put on jeans, though, and brought out sweatshirts for them both. Fili hummed softly, looking at the stars as well, and offered the sweatshirt to Kili. He took it, slowly, unsure of what was happening.

“I used to want to be an astronaut,” Fili said. “I was obsessed with astronomy and NASA and space camp. Mom used to hate taking me anywhere DC because I’d demand to go to the Air & Space museum. She ended up taking a job in Baltimore during high school for me and I spent weekends wandering the capital.”

Kili slowly pulled on the sweatshirt before laying back down. He didn’t know what to say, if he could even say anything. How did you explain away almost choking someone to death?

“Anyway, I couldn’t do it,” Fili said. “I sucked at physics and engineering was just a painful disaster. Ended up getting my degree in marketing and public relations. Still tried to apply to NASA. Didn’t work out so well.”

Kili kept his mouth shut, not knowing what to say.

“What did you dream of being when you were little?” Fili asked.
Kili blew out a breath of air and smiled a little. “Demolitions,” he said. “I thought it was the coolest thing ever. And then Mythbusters started and I wanted to do that. Special effects and everything. But college wasn’t something I wanted to do and then I got into the private sector and it worked. For…” Kili choked back a hysterical giggle. “It worked. After all, I mean, I got my friends killed and I almost killed you so obviously my life worked out perfectly.”

Fili rolled over and grabbed at Kili. “Stop it,” he said. “I’m here. I’m alive. You’re alive.”

“Are you so sure?” Kili whispered.

Fili leaned in and kissed Kili, cupping his face, lips soft and gentle against Kili’s own. Kili closed his eyes and scooted closer, kissing back. This wasn’t going to, kissing wasn’t, of course it wouldn’t fix everything. It wouldn’t even fix the past hour. But, well, maybe, just maybe.
Kili let Fili slide his hands under his shirt and hummed. Fingers skated over his ribs, finally filling out more, and then up, up, up. Kili let his shirt be tossed aside and closed his eyes, arching into Fili’s hands. This was still new, still something enjoyable and new and novel, and having hands on his skin finally made all the difference in the world.

“Can I?” Fili asked, dragging his lips down over Kili’s neck.

Kili snickered and turned his head, kissing Fili’s forehead. “Can you what?”


Kili stretched, arching into Fili’s touch, and smiled. It was a point of pride, in a way, that he could reduce Fili to babbling. “Yeah?” Kili asked. “And what’ll you do if I say yes? You just wanna slam on in and rut away? Or you gonna make it good?”

“Don’t I always make it good?” Fili demanded, pulling back.

Kili sat up and shimmied out of his boxers. “Yeah, you do.”

Fili smiled and shucked his own clothes before covering Kili’s body with his own. They touched and kissed and Kili moaned. He wanted love. And Fili was giving it, offering it, and he couldn’t help but take it. This was what he had fought for in the first place.

Love. Home.

Fili.

He gripped Fili tight, arching and moaning and gasping as the other man moved inside him. He reached up to grab the headboard and bit his lip to keep quiet. It felt so good, like a supernova going off in every blood cell in his body, as Fili made him come. Kili shouted out loud, unable to keep quiet and hide his joy, and fell limp. Fili continued thrusting until he groaned his own orgasm.

Kili squirmed slightly, feeling used and wet and squishy. Fili rolled them onto their sides and
kissed him lazily.

“Love you,” Fili said, touching Kili’s short hair.

“Love you too,” Kili said. He closed his eyes and basked in the warmth of Fili.
"I've been told you can play guitar," Kina said.

Kili looked up from where he was stealing cookies from the cooling racks Dis had set out. She caught him and smacked his hand with the spatula she was using to remove the cookies from the baking sheets with a stern look. He gave her a guilt look and slouched back in his chair with a grin.

"Yeah, I play," he said, once he finish swallowing the cookie had had already jammed in his mouth. "Why?"

"I want you to play for me," she said. "Mom keeps going on and on how she loves my hands and how I should play an instrument. And dad mentioned you play. So. Can you?"

"Yeah," Kili said, sliding off the stool and brushing his hands on the butt of his jeans. "Mind if we do it outside? It's nice out."

"I'll go get it!" Kina said and ran off.

"This is nice of you," Dis said. She was smiling at him and then looked down at her cookies. "She's going through a tough time."

Kili hummed softly and leaned against the kitchen island. "I know. Music is pretty awesome, though, and can help. There's a lot of music and art therapies out there." He grinned at her expression. "Dad hates my job. I think he'd rather me be a bum musician playing in parks and subways then doing what I do."

"After all this? I think I'm right there with him. Maybe it's time for a change?"

Kili sighed. "The problem is that I'm loyal. Too loyal, probably. I can't just leave my guys and gals alone with no one to watch their backs. If I don't do it, yeah, someone else could. Someone else is, let's be honest. But I hate it. I hear they're on an op and I make them text me constantly. They're mine, you know? They've got my back as much as I've got theirs. They're my family, just as much as dad, and like you and Fili and Dwalin and Kina. I can't just let them go into something with the potential to get messy without me being up there in a copter or a snipers nest and waiting to keep
them safe."

"I get it," Dis said. "I did the military wife gig. I got out."

Kili shrugged. "I probably have a choice coming to me but I'm not sure what it is or what I'll do. But it's...well. It is."

"Got it!" Kina said, sliding into the kitchen. She was holding his case carefully and Kili felt a tiny swell of relief at that one bit. He loved that guitar far too much. "Outside?"

Kili nodded. "Yep, outside." He took the case and slung an arm around Kina as they walked out. There was a comfy chair he could sit in and play and that's where he headed. It was nice, settling in while Kina grabbed another chair and pulled it closer. He knew she was going to be watching his fingers and listening so he choose songs she probably knew. And if she didn't know them then he was going to rip Fili a new one. Ye gods.

He started strumming, eyes closed as he curled around his favorite lady and hummed for a moment.

"Today is gonna be the day that they're gonna throw it back to you," he sang. "By now you should've somehow realized what you gotta do, I don't believe that anybody feels the way I do about you now."

"I know this one," she said, pleased.

"Back beat, the word is on the street that the fire in your heart is out," Kili sang, smiling and wobbling on the chords. "I'm sure you've heard it all before, but you never really had a doubt."

"I don't believe that anybody feels the way I do about you now," Kina chimed in, singing.

"Because maybe," Kili smiled.

"Maybe," Kina echoed.

"You're gonna be the one that saves me, and after all, you're my wonderwall," they finished.

"Bravo," Fili said, clapping. Both Kina and Kili looked over to see Fili and Dwalin standing by the porch with a wide smile.

"Mom wanted me to learn to play something," Kina said. "Thought this would be a good idea."

"Good song choice," Dwalin told Kili. "What else do you know how to play?"

"A bunch," Kili said. He started strumming Incubus's "Drive" and let it melt into Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car".

"What's that last one?" Fili asked.

Kili stared at him. "Oh god, no. Get away from me."

Kina looked equally as stunned. "No. Dad, I can't. Who are you?"

"Sheltered, apparently."

Kili rolled his eyes and started playing the chorus. "You got a fast car, is it fast enough so we can
fly away? We gotta make a decision, leave tonight or live and die this way. So remember when we
were driving, driving in your car, speed so fast I felt like I was drunk, city lights lay out before us
and your arm felt nice wrapped 'round my shoulder. And I had a feeling that I belonged, I had a
feeling I could be someone, be someone, be someone."

Fili had his phone out and Kili scowled, seeing him probably recording him. "You're very
passionate," Fili said.

"The song demands it."

"Dad, you are so weird," Kina said. "You need a music education."

"I've tried," Kili said. "But you'll probably get through to him better."

"Oy!" Fili protested but he was smiling.

Kina stood and grabbed his hand. "C'mon, I've got my computer. We're going to start showing you
some good stuff."

Kili waved as Kina dragged Fili off but he was smiling so widely... well. As rightly he should.
Music was a wonderful thing to bond over and both father and daughter needed it.
"I'm going to kill him," Kili said as he slammed into Dirk's apartment. He felt a little bad at the way the door bounced off the wall and the dent there but not bad enough to stop his anger in its tracks. "Do you have any idea what. I just. UGH!"

"Well, hello," Dirk said from the couch as he drank from a bottle of beer. "Gotta say, the return of the thirteen-year-old girl version of you is fantastic."

"Fuck off," Kili snapped. He kicked the door shut and flopped on the couch next to Dirk, stealing the man's beer and draining it in one go. "Control freak! Did you know he's a complete control freak?"

"Nope," Dirk said. "Only, you know, you may have mentioned it once or fifty times."

"It’s the worst!" Kili said, waving the beer bottle around. “Yeah, okay, I’m not exactly up to snuff yet but he can’t tell me what to do! Everyone keeps telling me what to do! For fuck’s sake, who knows my body best? Me or some assholes the company pays or my dickass boyfriend."


“Just, ugh!” Kili said through gritted teeth.

“May I just…?” Dirk started. At Kili’s nod he continued. “He loves you. That’s pretty good, all in all. He cares and he doesn’t want you accidentally opening your wounds again."

“They’re all scars now,” Kili pointed out.

“Man probably only remembers them as being open and raw,” Dirk said. “I’m pretty sure you’re not the only one suffering from PTSD in your relationship."

Kili rolled his eyes.

“No, seriously, hear me out. It was so traumatic he ran. Then he came back and he kept seeing you hurt. Yeah, you got better but that shit sticks with a guy. Especially when he’s not used to it. Remember how we were the first times we go hurt? Kept calling each other out on bullshit that didn’t really matter."

Kili stared at him. “I came here for sympathy and beer."

“Then go find a bartender,” Dirk said. “All I got is truth."

Kili slumped down and crossed his arms. Motherfucker.
"How have I never driven with you before?" Fili asked, staring at Kili who, until a few moments ago, had been butt dancing in the driver's seat to Beyonce's "Diva".

Kili shrugged and smiled at him. He probably should be a lot more annoyed about Fili's staring and shock than he is but it mostly just amuses him. That and the music is calming. "Dunno. City? We don't really roadtrip. We should, though, I think it'd be fun."

"Puerto Rico," Fili said, pointing at him.

"Other people drove us," Kili said. He tried not to smile. "Maybe drive out of Boston and go to Maine, or New Hampshire. Vermont has some killer ski slopes."

"Not a chance in hell," Fili said with a shudder.

Kili smiled and hummed, fingers tapping the steering wheel, trying not to laugh. Fili's hate of snow was legendary. It didn't take long before he was singing softly again and Fili settled into his seat, smiling. It was nice driving with Fili, even with a slightly drugged cat in the back and his leg aching every now and then.

"Hmm, turn this up," Kili said. Fili did so. "Is this Lifehouse?"

"New one, yeah," Fili said. He settled back in his seat and smiled, eyes closed. "I like it. It sounds like a song you'd play."

"I suck at composing," Kili said. "I'm much better at making someone else's songs sound good. Also, me and piano? Don't mix."

Fili opened his mouth but shut it. He was probably going to make some corny joke about how Kili always made the songs sound better. Silly dope. Good thing he was fond of him. He sung under his breath, the lyrics to the song, and let the blue, blue sky and open road stretch out in front of him.
"Okay, so. New house," Fili said. He watched Kina and Kili both poke around corners and rooms, examining the inside of the house. "What do you think?"

"Gut it," Kili said.

"No," Kina said. "I like a lot of it but yeah, not all of it. The flow feels all wrong."

Fili grinned. "You watch too much HGTV."

Kili shrugged. "It's good bonding between us. HGTV is fun and mindless."

Fili shook his head and leaned against one of the walls. "I think we need to fix the bathrooms and kitchen. Paint, so on and so forth."

"Can we hire the Property Brothers?" Kina asked. She smiled at them, all thirteen-year-old glee. "They're cutest as sin."

"Oh lordy," Kili said on a sigh under his breath. "Your daughter, definitely." Fili rolled his eyes and ignored him. "Paint, definitely," Kili continued. "She's right about flow. It'd be good to see as much of the house as possible from all points."

Fili watched the way Kili's hand tapped a nervous rhythm over the scar on his left thigh. He hadn't thought about that but it made sense. Kili was nervous about closed in spaces.

"Yeah, we can do that," Fili said. "Knock out the extra walls."

Kina twirled about, listing off this or that and rattling off a wish list Fili hadn't considered. Kili ended up laughing at her and yanking her up into a piggyback as he jogged up the wide grand staircase with a twirled and tooled banister.

The house was modern, green, and had some serious personality. The ceilings were old and needed work, and the color of the rooms were a little painful to look at for too long, but it was the perfect house. Perfect for them, with a big backyard for Gunny to stalk the grass and Kili to flop in, for Kina to plant a garden like she had been making noises about wanting to do, and for him to have a good grill. They could have people over--Kili's people and his friends (not as many as Kili's two teams)--and have parties and it would be.

It would be perfect.

Fili smiled, eyes closed, listening to Kili and Kina and let himself relax.
Kili slid onto his back on the water and closed his eyes as he floated. He felt weightless. Fearless. Like he was invincible and ready to take on the world.

And also so very vulnerable.

He had finished his laps and now he was thinking. He had the pool to himself for at least the next hour—or was it half hour?—and he couldn’t help but maybe think through a couple things first. They—him and Fili and Gunny—had been back in Boston for about four months now. Fili was looking for a house for them.

A house to make a home.

Kili took a breath and let himself sink into the water. He sank down and down and down until his butt lightly touched the bottom of the pool. He sat there, thinking, eyes just barely open to the chlorine of the pool.

A home. A family. Could he really do this? Yes, of course, he and Fili had been together for so long that it was like they were already a family but this, buying a house together, it seemed more… more. A more he didn’t know if he could handle. He was so used to...

No, he wasn’t any more, was he?

How long had it been since he could just live out of a duffle bag?

He could do it but there were things he would dither over. His dad had sent over boxes of his stuff—boxes he hadn’t been sure were still around but was so thankful they were—and he had unpacked them. His things were tangled up with Fili’s and it scared him how normal everything had become.

Did he deserve--

Nope. Bad thought.

He rolled in the water and kicked up off the bottom. He broke through the water with a gasp and
pushed his growing hair out of his eyes. He tread water as he licked the water off his lips. A home. A family. Stability. He had things he had never thought he wanted and now suddenly craved with every cell in his body.

It still scared the crap out of him.

It was probably going to scare the crap out of him for a while.

He rolled around the water, enjoying how the water didn’t hurt his leg, and slid into doing more laps.

He needed to trust himself, to trust Fili, and while it would be hard at first he really hoped it would get easier. Love was easy. Trust was hard. Stability and family even harder, if that made sense. It probably didn’t. He would…he would try. This was a Yoda moment, most likely—do or do not, there is no try—but he…well.

“Ready to come out?” Fili asked as Kili stopped to turn around. He was holding a towel and was smiling. Kili felt his heart thud and then his face stretch into a smile.

“Yeah,” he said, grabbing onto the edge of the pool and hefting himself onto the rough concrete. “Out is good.”

“Cool,” Fili said. “Kina’s done with her gymnastics in about fifteen minutes. I figured pizza next and then home?” Kili nodded. This sounded like a solid plan. “Awesome. Want me to help wash the pool off you?”

Ah, there was that sly look.

“Sure,” Kili said with a sly look of his own. “I could be up for you…helping me.”

Thinking and over-thinking could wait until later. He let Fili help him to his feet and held onto the other’s warm hand. He would learn to adapt to this new development, just like he had let Fili pull him into everything else.

Including the shower stall.
Kili twirled around in his spinny chair, balancing a pen on his upper lip. His leg ached but it always did now when it rained. It seriously sucked. He also really, really hated paperwork—of which he had a pile of on his desk.

For a company that talked about going paperless and keeping everything electronic it had a nasty habit of printing everything out physically to file. He’d much rather keep his iPad and ballistic proof laptop. Paper cuts were the worst things in the world. He’d rather be shot again then deal with paper cuts. His desktop wasn’t so bad, he guessed, since it had Spider solitaire on it. He kicked ass in that game. But that was really the only perk to being desked.

“Boo,” Tauriel said. She was holding a thin, red folder and looked hassled.

Kili tilted his head, hair sliding into his eyes. He crossed his eyes, looking at the hair, and trying to blow it out of his eyes. Tauriel sighed loudly so Kili straightened, pushing his hair back with his hands.

“What’s up?” he asked.

“We have a situation. And you’re such a reliable resource we want your opinion. I’ve got Dirk coming in too.”

Kili went still. The hairs on the back of his neck were standing up and he could feel the icy fingers of dread clawing into his stomach and then his chest. Oh no...

“Who’s pinned?” he asked softly.

Tauriel handed Kili the folder. He opened it up and saw the aerial map with red grease pencil markings. He swallowed thickly and closed his burning eyes. Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck fuck.

“We’re helping the attacks?” he asked.

“France just hired us,” Tauriel said. She perched on the corner of his desk. “Two teams went in to yank out a couple of their operatives who got in too deep. One team is pinned. Not IS, just normal rebels.”

“Is there such a thing?” Kili asked.

Tauriel shrugged. “At least they’re not IS.”

“Nope, instead its the Kurdish,” Kili said. “Awesome. Okay. Where do you want me?”

Tauriel smiled a little and brought him to a large conference room paneled with monitors and displays with the occasional dark wood panel. It was intimidating, but he also knew what was on all those displays. He abandoned Tauriel to stand before screen split into three different images. He saw who was out there and wanted to scream and curse.

He did neither.

He turned and there was Thranduil behind him.

“Can you get them out?” he asked in the eerily calm voice he always had.
Kili looked back at the monitor and then at another that had a real-time aerial on another. “Yes, sir.”

“Good,” he said. “It was a mistake involving our company in this. A waste of life. Bring our men home, Mr Haegan.”

Kili nodded, snagged a headset, and grabbed a chair.

“Nori, you complete idiot,” he said into the mic. “When you get home you are going to owe me a year’s worth of imported beer.”

“Fuck,” Nori breathed. “I’ll buy you beer, cigarettes, and as much porn as you like.”

“Quit smoking and why look at porn when I can tell Fili to strip? So much easier. How many you got with you? I’m counting six.”

“Six,” Nori confirmed. “Gimli says hi.”

“Moronic cousin,” Kili said. “I’ll kick his ass later.”

“Love you too,” Gimli said, voice rough.

“Actually, yeah. Everyone get on the same frequency, in case you get split. I’m about to be the God-like voice in your ear. Worship me and my many drones.”

“I’ll worship you when you get us home,” Gimli said.

“Yeah, well, that’s what I’m about to do.”

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When Kili got home that night he was exhausted. Everyone was safe and on a transport back to Turkey and then from there to France and back to Texas. Kili was going to smash Gimli’s face into something the next time he saw him. He wondered if Fili knew about Gimli, Gloin, Oin. That whole branch of the family. Probably not, to be honest. Which was for the best.

The door opened before he could fit his key in the lock and he blinked dumbly at Fili.

Fili, who looked angry and awkward and hurt, and was holding the door wide open but blocking the way in. Kili deflated and let his hand drop to his side, key jingling gently.

“Where have you been?” he asked.

“Work,” Kili said.

“Liar,” Fili hissed.

Kili took a step back. “What?”

“Like hell you were working this late. It’s one in the morning and I doubt very much you’ve been doing paperwork until now,” Fili said.

Kili stared at him. Wait, what?

“Ylu said you wouldn’t take a job until we talked it over,” Fili said. “And we haven’t. So why the hell—”
“One of our teams got pinned by the Khurdish,” Kili said. “My cousin, Gimli, and Nori were there. They were pulling out French operatives.”

“What?” Fili asked, brow furrowing as he frowned.

“I was talking them through their escape,” Kili said. “The comm units were still working so I got to play Voice of God. We used aerial maps.”

“So you weren’t…”

“Fuck you,” Kili said. He pushed his way past Fili and went up the stairs. He grabbed the pillow he liked and stalked into the guest room. It was late and he’d be damned if he dealt with Fili and his hate right now. You’d think that after two and a half years he’d get over it but no, it seemed like it just got worse as time passed.

Kili stripped and got in bed and pulled the covers up over himself. He could feel Fili in the doorway but he kept his back turned and eventually he turned away and left.
Track 170 - Love Someone
“So,” Fili drawled. “You’re going on a job.”

“In state,” Kili said. He had one of his old duffle bags on the bed and was stuffing it full of clothes and other bits of his kit as he went. A hairbrush went in and then his shaving kit—an shaving kit with old fashioned cream and a razor blade—and then a pair of jeans followed by a pair of shoes. It went on like this, with no rhyme or reason…but that was Kili, wasn’t it?

“You think in state matters?”

“It’s better than saying in country,” Kili said. He was barely paying attention and Fili wanted to punch him for it.

“I already have a traumatized kid,” Fili said. “Her mom just died. My friend just died. If you even think of taking another dangerous job and—”

“Being a sniper is hardly dangerous.”

“Really? You want to got here?”

Kili made a frustrated noise and went into the closet—a nice, big walk-in they had renovated—and Fili could hear him opening the gun vault. “I have a job, Fili. A job I am good at and that I enjoy. You have one you are just as good at and enjoy just as much. Don’t you dare try to make this about anything other than what it is.”

“Which is?”

“You want me to quit,” Kili said. His hands were full of the various bits of his rifle. He nudged open the carrying case that lay open on the bed and slotted the pieces carefully into their foam homes. “You’re trying to play the ‘it’s me or the job’ game and I’m not doing it.”

“I’m not—”

“Sigrid is doing the same to Dirk right now, hands down,” Kili said. He snapped two clips of high caliber bullets into the carrying case and snapped it closed, pressing his thumb to the print reader to
lock the case. Fili had to admit that Woods Security really did have the best toys. “Get over it.”

“I’ve been getting over it,” Fili said.

“Lies,” Kili said. He sighed, looking tired. “I love you, you moron. Now stop trying to get rid of me because you hate my job. It’s not even dangerous, you realize this, right?”

“You’re taking live ammo,” Fili said.

“I take live ammo to the grocery store,” Kili said with a roll of his eyes. “It’s called being prepared, having a permit to carry concealed, and a healthy sense of paranoia. Knock it off.”

“Fine,” Fili said. He got off the bed and shoved his hands into the pockets of his sweat pants. “Go for it. You will anyway.”

Kili’s head tipped back and he made a frustrated noise. “You are impossible!”

“Well, yeah,” Fili said.

Kili turned toward him and, in two big steps, grabbed him but the neck of his shirt and hauled him in for a kiss. It wasn’t the most romantic of kisses, or even the best, but Fili got Kili’s point. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Love. Got it. Shouldn’t love be enough to keep Kili at home?

Guess not.
Kili helped Kina hang up the last of her clothes in her room. He watched her, hesitantly, and offered a hug when it looked like she was inches from crying. It hadn’t been easy on her, these past few weeks. Sharon dying just weeks from Christmas after wasting away for a year was hard on everyone. Fili was still shaky from it.

“Thanks,” she whispered, clinging to him as she cried. She was a quiet crier, her shoulders shaking with big, fat tears rolling down her face.

“No problem, sweetie,” Kili said. He brushed her hair—oof, it looked a lot like his—out of her eyes. The wet strands stuck a little and he smiled a little as he pushed those back over her head. “Anything you need me to do?”

She shook her head. Then hesitated. Then nodded. “Could you check on dad for me?”

Kili snorted. “Oh, kid, the apple did not fall far from the tree.”

“What?” Kina asked, nose wrinkling in confusion.

“He’s the one who had me hovering over you until you put me to work,” he said.

Kina rolled her eyes. “Yeah, that sounds like dad.”

“He’s doing okay,” Kili said. “Promise. He’s handling it in his own way.”

“Hopefully not another drunk and disorderly,” Kina said, voice prim.

Kili snickered. “No, that won’t happen again. He was mad at me and the idiot at the bar mouthed off about vets. That’s enough to get anyone’s fur up.”

“But you guys are okay, right?” Kina asked. He had grabbed Kili’s hand and was squeezing it harder than she probably meant to.

“Yeah,” Kili said. He nudged her back until she was sitting on her bed. “We’re good.” He knelt down so he was looking up at her instead. “Compromising is working for us. We just get used to neither of us getting our own way all the time. It happens. There’s probably going to be a lot of compromising between the three of us too.”

“I’m easy,” Kina said.

“Said the same thing about myself,” Kili said. “Turns out—not so much.”

Kina rolled her eyes, using her arm to scrub away the stickiness of tears. “You are not easy,” she said. “I remember you and dad fighting. The two of you were horrible to each other.”

“And yet,” Kili said.

“And yet,” Kina said with a gusty sigh. “Compromises?”

“Yep,” Kili said. “All about the compromises.”

“I’ll keep that in mind when dealing with dad,” she said.
“Oh, yeah, no, that’s you guys,” Kili said, holding his hands up. “I’m going to be the cool uncle, spoil you rotten and leave your dad to clean up the mess.”

Kina smiled. “Oh yeah? And how are you going to spoil me?”

“Right now? I think ice cream would do it. I think we have the makings for some truly epic sundaes.”

“Wanna see who can make the better one?” Kina asked, holding out her hand, palm down.

“Hell yeah,” Kili said, hitting hers hand with his in a high five. He used it to tug her off the bed as he got to his feet. “We’ll make your dad judge.”

“What does the winner get?” Kina asked as they headed down stairs.

“Uhm, how about no clean up duty for a week?” Kili said, thinking. “No dishes to do or trash duty.”

“Ugh, chores.”

“Yep, chores. I got ‘em too,” he said. “We all do. We should get a chart made up, Fili would love that.”

“Okay, so no chores for a week, got it,” she said. “I think that works.”

“Good,” he said as they reached the kitchen. “Now. Waffle bowls or normal bowls?”

“Both,” Kina declared with a nod of her head. “Both is good.”
Kili could feel the shock, and almost hate, in the way Fili stared at him. It hurt but Kili knew why. The news was playing in the background, showing reports of the Paris attacks, and he hadn't thought before he'd spoken. Granted, it had been circling around in his mind, but he hadn't meant to voice these thoughts.

He hadn't.

They weren't ones he was entertaining, anyway, not seriously. Dirk wouldn't go back and Kili wouldn't abandon him like that. Woods Security had pulled a lot of their men after what had happened to Kili and his team but there were still splinter cells in the area. Turkey, mostly. Some had been captured and killed already.

He wanted to go back. He wanted to go back to Syria and fight IS and do his level best to erase them from the map. So many dead in Paris and so many people uprooted from their homes and driven off into the uncaring arms of Europe and the US. It made him shudder. Those were places he had been, where he had grown up, and cultures he loved. And now, looking at it, it was under attack.

He wanted to help.

"You are not going back there," Fili said. His words dropped like bombs in the silence between them.

"Fili..."

"You are not," Fili said again, stressing each word. He then got up from the couch and left the room.

Kili sighed and, curling up on the couch, watched the news as more devastation and death was reported. He wasn't going to go. Fili had to know that.

He didn't even know why he said he wanted to go back there. He didn't, not really, but he almost felt like he owed something to Jake and Allison. To their--

He bolted for the bathroom, barely making it before he started throwing up. He shook as bile came up. He hadn't had much that day aside from coffee and his stomach hurt more from the force of his stomach muscles contracting than anything else. He clutched the rim of the toilet, heaving, eyes closed. A few minutes passed and then he threw up again. He waited until his stomach settled and then flushed. He rolled back on his heels and scooted back to lean against the wall.

Sometimes it was all he could do to not dream about them. Their bodies. They were already dead but sometimes...well. Sometimes he dreamed of being made to watch their bodies—slow decomposing in the sun. Kili felt his stomach lurch and he scrambled for the toilet again, only he didn’t end up vomiting again.

He rubbed his eyes and scooted back to the wall again. He breathed slowly, in and out, eyes closed again. They burned. He didn’t want to cry. He hated crying.

“Here,” Fili said from the doorway, holding out the phone. Kili looked up at it and Fili wiggled it at him. “Take it."
Kili hesitated and took it gingerly. Fili closed the bathroom door on him and Kili sat there, staring at the phone in his hand, trying to understand why it had been handed to him.

“Hello? Kili?” a tinny voice said from the phone.

He started, sniffing, and brought it to his ear. “Hi?”

“Hi,” Sigrid said, voice warm. “Fili called. You okay?”

Kili snorted and it turned into a laugh which ended in a choked off sob. Was he okay? Yeah, sure, he was great. Fine. Wonderful, even. “Sure.”

“The attacks are pretty messed up, hunh?”

Kili snorted again, this time it was simply a snort. It made his throat hurt. “Messed up is a way to put it.”

“Dirk turned the TV off,” Sigrid said. “He was pretty pissed. Spiked his phone. We’ve already gotten them insurance company to overnight a new one.”

Kili stretched his legs out in front of him. “That’s nice.”

Sigrid was quiet for a moment. “Do you want to come over? Or have Dirk go over?”

“And do what?” Kili asked. “We’re stuck here. Even if we wanted to go over there, what the hell would we do? We’d fucking stand there and get killed. Just like Jake. Just like Allison. Just like all those hundreds of people. We could work with the refugees, yeah, but would that help? No. It wouldn’t. We’d stand there, again with the goddamned standing, and hold our guns on those poor people to make sure they don’t try and breech the boarders. Or, even worse!” He knew he was being hysterical. “I could go find a major city to protect.”

“Boston is a major city…”

“I could enlist,” Kili said softly. “I’m legacy. I’d ace boot camp. They might even waive it. They’d love having another sniper with a good kill list.”

Silence.

He didn’t realize he had been crying.

“I’m thinking a cook out,” Sigird said. “Tomorrow or something. My sibs, Dirk and his kids, Kina and Fili. It’d be fun. We could probably get some of the rest of you guys down. Michelle or Brent, Jackson or…”?

Kili’s eyes rolled up and he shook his head as he stared at the ceiling. He didn’t want that.

Sigrid sighed. “Kili, you’re not the only one. Dirk’s on the phone with someone, I don’t know who it is, but I think a get together with you guys would be a good thing.”


“Let me take care of him for you,” she said. “You and the boys just let us take care of you.”

Kili shook his head again, his nose tickling and hurting as the tears began to slide down his cheeks. “Yeah, okay,” he said, voice hoarse. “Sounds good.”
Kili arched up off the floor, legs splayed wide, come splattered on his stomach and thighs. Fili licked his lips, breathing hard, and fuck if Kili wasn’t making him want more already. Marathon sex was something they were working on.

The whole weekend.

It was special, in a way, because it was their house they were having sex in. They were both on the deed, the mortgage, the insurance. This was theirs and they were having sex in as many rooms as possible.

“Okay,” Kili said, breathless. “Shower is gonna be a thing, but first.” He moved, the effort clear in the way he moved, but he managed to crawl into Fili’s lap, kissing him and running his hands through Fili’s hair. “Know how Dirk said I was a kinky shit? Well, I want. I trust you enough to practically beg for you to do some of them.”

Fili reached down to grab Kili’s ass, hands kneading the firm muscle there. Fuck but he wanted to plow and rut and take Kili until he couldn’t be taken any more. Of course his cock was still limp from having already come not ten minutes before. “Okay, talk to me.”

Kili nuzzled his hair. “I like pain. I like… I like odd things.”

“Like?”

Kili grinned, leaning back and his hips rolling a little, almost unconsciously. “Pull my hair, spank me, slap me. Choke me.”

Fili stared at him. “Choke…?”

“Breath play,” he said. “You fuck me while controlling how much air I have. It feels…amazing. When you come it’s like your body shatters into a thousand million tiny pieces and it’s…it’s so good.”

Fili nodded slowly. “Okay, I could do that.” Maybe.
“Dominate me,” Kili said, squirming. “I love it.”

“What, like…whips and paddles and chains and stuff?” Fili asked.

Kili flushed. “Yeeeeaaah, maybe exactly kind of like that?”

Fili laughed. “Okay. Well. Let’s see what we can find.” He nudged Kili off his lap and got up, going into the living room for his computer. Kili followed, curious, scratching at his cum stained stomach. Fili logged in and hesitated, not knowing where to go for these things. Kili stole it for a second, typing in a site from memory, and leaned against Fili as they looked.

A lot of it was intimidating.

“Okay,” Kili said, pointing out a paddle he liked. “This is pretty good.”

“That…has studs,” Fili said, shifting. The idea of spanking Kili with a studded paddle gave him the heebie jeebies.

Kili shrugged. “Okay, not a biggie. I like paddles, though. Especially when you put your weight behind it.” He leaned in and nuzzled Fili’s ear, nibbling along the outer edge. “Marking me up, making sure I feel your mark on me for days. If you shove a plug inside me and paddle me it’s like you’re inside me for ages. There’s something that just—"

Fili kissed him, grabbing his face, and god. Domination? He could do that.


“Domination?” Fili asked. He shoved the laptop away and oh, he might not have his cock obeying him just yet but he had fingers and a mouth. And he had no problem shoving Kili toward the end of the couch and tugging his hips up. “I can do that.”

Kili gasped and then there was nothing moans and demands for more as Fili shoved two fingers inside him and worked him open wide. He had plans for that ass and it was only fair to make sure Kili could take whatever he would give him.
Kili went down onto the bed with a delighted look on his face. He reached out and grabbed at Fili only to get smacked away. No, this was Fili’s show. Kili wanted to be dominated and Fili would do that.

He reached down and kneaded Kili through his jeans, feeling the firmness of Kili’s penis, and smirked down at him. “You ready for this?” he asked.

“Give it to me,” Kili said, breathless.

Fili licked his lips and got up off the bed. “Strip,” he ordered, voice firm.

He watched as Kili rushed through it, wanting to be naked and so hungry for it. His cock got caught in his underwear and it was flushed and red with blood. Fili turned away, grabbing the toy from the box he’d set them in. Them, plural. Oh the fun he was going to have. Kili flopped back on the bed, legs splayed as wide as he could go, hand gripping the shaft of his dick. Fili grabbed the lube and climbed on the bed, hands full.

“You said you like pain,” he said. “Think you could take this toy without any prep?”

Kili reached up, taking the toy and then handing it back, nodding. “Yeah, I can take that.”

Fili slicked the toy and grabbed Kili’s hip, tugging and pushing until he had one of Kili’s legs thrown over his shoulder, pushing the head of the toy in and then letting it slide in as Kili’s ass pulled it further in. Kili gasped and squirmed which only made the toy rub more insistently against his prostate.

That was what it did, after all. And now, Fili smirked, he turned the vibrator portion on. And he turned it on high.

Kili’s back arched and he thrust down hard on the toy, a strangle shout escaping him. “Yes,” he gasped. “Oh fuck, I. Fili!”

Fili let go, watching Kili squirm and his hip undulate almost frantically, but no. He didn’t want this
to be a one and done. He’d researched, after all, and he reached down to turn the vibration off. Kili whined, stilling and panting, staring at him. Fili grinned and leaned down, breathing over Kili’s nipples, watching him, before leaning down to bite—not a nice bite, but a real bite—one of his nipples. They were hard points, pebbled, and Fili used his teeth in a way he never thought he would.

Kili reached up and grabbed his head, keeping Fili’s mouth there. Fili bit and sucked and slid his mouth over to the other. He wasn’t nice. Kili didn’t want nice. He reached down to fist Kili’s cock, hand squeezing tight. Kili’s chest heaved under him as he panted, eyes half closed and face slack with desire.

Fili pulled his hand away, licking his lip, reaching up to hold his hand over Kili’s mouth. Kili shifted his head and managed to suck two of Fili’s fingers into his mouth, dragging teeth over one and twirling his tongue around the other. It was wet and slick and Fili felt his cock pulse with need.

Fili pulled his hand back and slapped Kili.

Kili stared up at him, tiny bit of shock, eyes wide. Fili grabbed his chin and leaned down, kissing him. It was not a nice kiss. Teeth clacked and Fili tasted blood.

“I’m the one running the show, not you,” Fili said. He pulled away, thumb rubbing gently over Kili’s lip.

“Sir, yes, sir,” Kili said, a sly smile creeping over his face. He was liking this far too much. Actually, both of them were enjoying this too much. Fili hadn’t thought he’d enjoy dominating Kili this much but apparently he did.

Who knew?

He slid down Kili’s body and licked a path from his navel down to the thatch of pubes. He ignored the hot cock and nuzzled in the hair there, breathing in the thick scent of Kili, as his hand slid down to turn the vibrator back on. Kili’s back arched, a loud moan ripped from his throat, his cock leaking precome next to Fili’s face.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck,” Kili whined. “Close!”

Oh, well, they couldn’t have that, now could they?

Fili turned the toy off and very gently eased it out. Kili fell back against the bed, panting, staring at Fili in need. Yeah, Fili could admit he liked this, controlling how and when Kili got off. He didn’t think he could do the pain—they hurt each other enough by accident, no need to do it on purpose—but this he could do. He knew he also was probably not drawing this out the way that Kili wanted but it was too tempting.

He’d get better at this.

Right now, well. Fili leaned down to kiss Kili and snagged the bottle of lube. He popped the cap, unable to keep the hungry smirk off his lips as Kili’s eyes fixated on it, and dribbled it on his cock. He worked the lube onto his cock.

“Is that for me?” Kili asked.

“Yeah, it’s for you,” Fili said. He shuffled forward and nudged Kili’s legs wide. “Want me to give it to you?”
Kili lifted his hips, licking his lips, “Yeah. I want it."

Fili rubbed the head of his cock against Kili’s entrance, teasing him. “I don’t think you do. Not enough."

Kili’s eyes narrowed. In moments Fili was on his back and Kili was lowering himself onto Fili’s cock. Fili swore, hands coming up to grab Kili’s hips, eyes rolling back in his head as he was engulfed in Kili’s body.


Kili was panting, hands on Fili’s pecs, hips shifting just the tiniest bit. “Told you I want it."

Fili laughed, sliding his hands up Kili’s sides, tugging him in for a kiss. “Maniac."

“Fuck me, Fili,” Kili said. He rolled his hips and groaned, head tipping back, eyes closed. “C’mon, don’t make me do all the work here."

Fili spread his knees, the better to balance Kili, and thrust up. Kili groaned again and together set a punishing pace. Fili wasn’t sure what it was that made him want to just taketaketake but it seemed to have caught Kili in it’s trap again. Their hands found each other, fingers linking, but they were both chasing their own pleasure, neither giving, and there was something even more arousing about that then Fili had ever thought.

“Fili,” Kili whined, hand gripping his tighter.

“Do it,” Fili said, squeezing both Kili’s hip and his hand. “Wanna see."

Kili reached down and grabbed his bouncing cock, gripping it tight and jacking off almost as frantically as he was moving. Fili stilled, letting Kili set his pace, gritting his teeth to keep his instincts at bay. He wanted to see, to watch, to let Kili fall to pieces first.

Then it would be his turn.

He would never get sick of this, of watching Kili come apart at the seams, seeing the tiny cracks in his armor until it lay shattered around them. Kili’s eyes squeezed closed and his back arched as he came, splattering Fili’s chest in come. Fili watched him as Kili’s face lost the tension and, and, and… There was just something about the blissed out look that made Fili fall in love with him all over again.

It didn’t necessarily stop him from flipping them over, pushing one of Kili’s legs over his shoulder, and driving into him.

Kili reached back and grabbed the headboard, laughing breathlessly. “Yes,” he gasped.

And that was all it took for Fili to follow on Kili’s heels, his world exploding around the only man that mattered.

They lay together, afterward, cleaned, and lethargic. Kili had wrapped himself around Fili in a valiant attempt at becoming a cephalopod. Fili, in repose, had flattened and sprawled himself, enjoying the feeling of sweat cooling on his skin.

“We need to do that again,” Kili said.

Fili snickered. “I have more toys."
Kili groaned, low in his throat, and bit at Fili’s shoulder. “You will show me these toys later.”

“Maybe, maybe not,” Fili said. “Gotta keep you on your toes, mm?”

Kili smiled into Fili’s shoulder and let it go.
Dirk handed Kili a cold beer and the two of them stood in solidarity against Fili, Kina, Sigrid, Tilda, and Bran. The others would be arriving but so far it was just them. Dirk's kids would get to his new house later that week. He'd worked it out with his various girls that he'd take custody if they wanted to, or to split it with them. So far only his eldest, Jennifer, had decided she wanted to spend the time with her dad. She was only two or three years younger than Kina. Kili had a feeling it was going to bite them in the ass if the two became friends.

“So,” Kili said. “You and Sigrid, hunh?”

Dirk smiled into his beer. “Yeah. Your boy is a goddamned pain in the ass.”

Kili snickered. “He is a wonderful pain in my ass. I love his pain in my ass.”

Dirk, who had just taken a swig of beer, promptly choked and spit out a mouthful of foam. Kili laughed and ignored the gleeful looks Fili and Sigrid exchanged. Dirk narrowed his eyes and slid his thumb over the mouth of his bottle and shook. Kili’s eyes widened and he moved, but not fast enough, as Dirk sprayed Kili in beer.

“Dirk!” someone scolded loudly. Kili didn't know if it was Fili or Sigrid, but he heard the high giggles of Tilda and Kina. Kili was laughing, arms raised up to shield his face, crying out loud insults and swears.

“Take it, Haegan, take it and suffer!” Dirk yelled, still shaking his beer over him.

“You absolute ass!” Kili said.

“Hot damn,” Michelle said. She was dressed in a flowery sundress and there was a puppy bouncing around her feet. “You two haven’t changed a bit.”

“Run!” Kili said, laughing and darting towards her. She rolled her eyes and dodged him. “He’s gonna get you too!”

“All right, now, knock it off,” Fili said. He grabbed one of Kili’s shoulders and twirled him about, pointing him toward the house. “Get cleaned up and get back here.”

Kili rolled his eyes, sticking his tongue out, but trotted inside and up the stairs to their bedroom. He tossed his shirt in the hamper and pulled on a new one, a random V-neck, and jogged back down the stairs. He saw Jackson and, being the little shit Fili always accused him of being, jumped on Jackson’s back. The man almost dumped him but held onto his thighs, swearing at him.

“You crazy monkey!” Jackson said.

“Pew pew,” Kili said, miming shooting a gun over Jackson’s shoulder.

Jackson hoisted him up a little firmer and walked them over to the others. Everyone else had shown up already, and Kili smiled, liking having everyone in easy sight lines.

“Hey, who wants burgers?” Fili asked. Cheers went up all around. Food and beer ran free and eventually the younger members of their little dinner party vanished off. Kina had gotten Tilda to help her with her math--Tilda was in college for it and Kina was a smart girl to take advantage of her--and Bran had his own graduate work to do.
"Seen the news lately?" Brent asked, slouching in his seat.

Kili hesitated and then nodded. Dirk hunched over his beer, eyes down, one hand absently rubbing at his still tender spine. Michelle grabbed her beer and drained it while Jackson started digging in his jacket for his cigarettes.

"Wow," Fili said.

"I would have a blast with you lot," Sigrid said. "You shut down but broadcast your unease."

"Sig?" Dirk said, glancing at her. "Shut up."

Sigrid rolled her eyes. She got up and went inside before coming back out with a case of beer that everyone lunged for at once. Fili and Sigrid had wine.

Kili stole a cigarette off Jackson and Dirk drained half a beer in one gulp. Michele drank and peeled her label. Brent sighed.

"We're a hot mess," Kili said.

"Captain Obvious strikes again," Jackson said, lips still wrapped around his cigarette.

"I almost want to go back," Kili admitted.

"I would," Brent said. "But I think... I wouldn't be able to handle it."

Kili kept his mouth shut, even though the hate Fili had looked at him with disturbed and hurt him.

“Going back…” Michelle said with a sigh. She looked uncomfortable. “I feel like we owe those people, like we owe Jake and Allison, but I don't want to. I'm scared."

There were murmurs of agreement.

Brent sighed. "Kind of sucks. Everything is just going to get worse, even if we go back. Everything is escalating so quickly."

Kili shuddered. They all knew what could happen, what probably would happen. The news was already showing what the world was doing in reaction to Paris. It was just going to get worse, like Brent said. So much worse.

"To Jake," Dirk said, after a moment, holding up his beer. "And Allison."

Kili turned his face away but held up his beer silently. One by one the others murmur their names and hold their beers up. It hurt, it really did, that their deaths would be in vain.
Dis hummed softly, sipping her tea, as she looked at the cocktail napkin Kili had written the quote on. "And you want this as a tattoo?"

Kili nodded. "It’s…well. It’s accurate. And kind of personal. It speaks to me. Isn’t that what tattoos are actually supposed to do? Have meaning?"

"Mine I all got when I was young, dumb, and drunk," DIIs said. She was smiling. "Don’t you have one?"

"Yeah, but someone else had to write it for me in their writing," Kili said. "I could do that again but I figured if I’m going in for this then it should mean something all over, right?"

Dis tilted her head in curiosity. Hunh. That’s where he got it.

"Well. You’re my mom,” Kili said, feeling himself flush and he had the sudden urge to squirm like a little kid. “So that’s important there. And music is a big part of me because I swear I breathe a beat sometimes."

"Not a huge surprise," Dis said. "Frerin, who you should spend more time with, always teased me about it. Kirin had these headphones, large and pretty decent sound, and he’d jokingly hold them up when I was pregnant with you. You probably got a lot of my rock and roll there."

Kili blinked and then snickered. “Anyway. Love looking for words is a good way to look at the world, right?"

Dis nodded. "It is." She took another sip of her tea and held out her hand. Kili stared at it. Sge snapped her fingers. "Well? Go get me paper and a pen."

“Oh!” Kili said with a smile. Yay. That went better than he thought it would.

He got her what she wanted and he worked with her, having her write the phrase over and over until they both settled on a script of hers they both liked. Once they’d settled on it it seemed only the next logical step was to find a tattoo parlor and go.

Together.

A mother-son event.

Kili looked around the shop, thinking it was a decent place. It was clean, well lit, and sterile. He had plans, maybe, to tattoo the scar on his leg with Jake’s and Allison’s name, but nothing he was settled on just yet. He still had to decide.

Getting the actual tattoo wasn’t as painful as he thought it would be, even with it being along his spine. Getting shot and PT after the fact definitely trumped tattoo guns. Dis sat with him, chatting with both of them, and Kili smiled. She held his hand through the whole process.

He was going to be sore, that much he knew, but the pain was…pleasant. It was like when Fili tied him up, choked him, slapped him. It made him feel buzzed. He tried so hard to will away the erection he could feel coming upon him. He turned to DIIs and smiled and yeah, that did it.

“We should get you home,” she said. “Dwalin made chili so we can stuff you full of that."
Kili groaned and licked his lips. “Yes, yes, this is a good thing.” Dwalin made the best chili Kili had had outside of Texas. It was thick and spicy and made his lips burn. They drove home, Kili trying not to let his spine touch the seat, but enjoying it all the same.

Fili was there when they got to Dis’s and Dwalin’s new condo. Kina was with Dwalin, the two of them with their heads together, doing something that involved wood and knives. Fili didn’t know about the tattoo, or Kili’s plan to get one, but there were narrowed eyes and Fili grabbing his hand.

“Shirt off,” he said.

Kili wrinkled his nose and slowly pulled his loose shirt up and over his head. He didn’t want to pull the skin more than he had to. Fili looked and when he saw the writing, he froze.

“Hunh?” he said.

“Hunh?” Kili echoed.

“It’s very you,” Fili said. He sighed. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

Kili shrugged. “I thought you might try to talk me out of it. Or, you know, tell me it was dumb.”

“Music is only love looking for words,” Fili said, finger sliding down Kili’s flank. “It’s perfect. Did mom write this?”

Kili nodded, smiling to himself shyly, Fili still standing behind him. He felt his face heat and sighed softly. “Yeah, I. Well. These things need to mean something. And the quote means something to me, and then having Dis’s writing tattooed on to my skin? It seemed right, somehow.”

“You don’t have to explain it to me,” Fili said. He circled around Kili and drew him into a gentle kiss.

Kili’s head swam and his body buzzed even more. His cock twitched. He ached and throbbed and everything just felt too much and not enough at the same time.

“So easy,” Fili teased, pressed close enough to feel Kili’s reaction.

“Shut up and kiss me,” Kili said with a smile. Maybe later, when they weren’t in their parents’s house with a kid not too far away, they’d take advantage of Kili’s reactions. The tattoo would be healing for quite some time and it would take careful work to make sure it didn’t get infected. But having Fili’s fingers on him—in him—tongue tracing and fingers dancing over the stark, black words made him tingle more. As Fili leaned in to kiss him, hands on Kili’s hips, he felt like flying.

This was what he wanted, what he needed. Connection. Freedom.

Perfection.
Kili laughed as Fili slammed him back into the wall of the hallway. They’d been shouting and arguing for the past two hours over paint and trimmings and crown moulding and something had just snapped inside them. Fili’s eyes had narrowed and there was this smirk that made Kili’s knees weak.

“You are such a goddamned pain in my ass,” Fili said, leaning in and just barely brushing his lips over Kili’s. “I could put my hands around your neck and just squeeze.”

Kili couldn’t help the gasp and groan and the shudder and he ignored Fili’s knowing look.

“Shut up,” Fili said. He pinned Kili to the wall and kissed him. Kili kissed back, a tiny hum of approval in the back of his throat, hands reaching back to slid into Fili’s back pockets. “You’re infuriating.”

“You love it,” Kili said, tilting his head to slide their lips together again.

“I love you, you madman,” Fili said. “Shut up. I’m going to kiss you again.”

Kili rolled his eyes and let Fili kiss him, trying not to smile. He also tried to pretend his knees weren’t about to give out because, dammit, he was a guy. Guys don’t swoon.

“Don’t think that just because—!”

Fili shut him up again.

“This,” Kili said, around kisses and now very insistent hands, “does not mean.” Mmm, yes, his pants were coming off now. Okay, yes, he could be behind Fili and his ideas on the… “No! You can’t win this easy!”

“Foiled,” Fili said. “Shut up and kiss me. You know you like it when you lose. When you win. But especially when I win.”

Kili groaned and went down to the floor—the very one they were arguing over—and let Fili settle between his legs. Yeah, he could trade a blow job for his temporary silence. He gasped and arched
his hips, hand flying out to grab at the wall. Oh yessssss…
Kili turned the radio down low as he watched Fili sleep. Gunny even stopped his tiny, pitiful meows of annoyance. They’d have to stop soon, but not just yet.

Fili was sleeping.

He was curled in against his door, his head propped up on his hand and smooshed against the window, snuffling in his sleep every now and then. He looked so unkempt, scraggly and shaggy, and it made Kili bite his lip in delight. He loved Fili at his messiest.

Asshole. How did this even happen? How did these past four years happen?

Oh, yeah. Kili smiled and watched the road, being careful to avoid the worst bits of road. It wouldn’t do to hit a pothole and have Fili wake up, not when Kili was enjoying this as much as he was. He loved watching Fili sleep, even if that did make him a bit of a creeper.

There was something about seeing Fili at his most unguarded, when he wasn’t in Go Mode, when he wasn’t trying to manage everyone, that made Kili’s heart hurt.

Stupid asshole.

Look how much he made Kili love him.

Kili smiled and avoided another pothole, changing lanes, and humming to the radio. Next stop was home.

Finally.
Kili sat down in the living room with a coffee in a large mug that Kina had gotten him for his birthday—My Superpower is Sarcasm, What’s Yours?—and sipped at it. Fili was in another overstuffed armchair while Kina was on the ground, sorting through the pile of presents under the tree.

“Gimme,” Fili said, reaching out to snag Kili’s cup.

“Get your own,” Kili said, pulling his cup away. “This is mine.”

Fili got up and kissed him. “These are mine.”

“Gross,” Kina said. She was smiling, though, and that was really all that mattered. “Okay, who wants the first present?”

Fili raised a hand. “I’ll start it off.”

Kina grinned widely and handed her dad a box that had to have clothes in it. She then chucked one at Kili—which he barely caught before it hit his face—and looked expectantly at them. They both eyed her, knowing her too well to buy that innocent look, but Fili began unwrapping the box.

It did indeed have clothes. It held a black t-shirt with white looping writing: “Just a Boy Who Fell In Love With A Knight In Shining Kevlar.”

Fili was staring at it while Kili blinked.

“Open yours!” Kina ordered Kili with a sly smile.

Kili did as he was ordered and opened his. When he saw it he had to laugh.

“Knight In Shining Kevlar” was written on his in the same handwriting and the same black t-shirt. Oh that was excellent.

“So, did I do good?” Kina asked, a smug smirk on her face.

“This is hysterical,” Kili said. He put his coffee down and grabbed his phone instead, making Fili hold up both shirts so he could text it to his squad. “Where did you get these?”

“Mom found them online,” she said. There was the tiniest of dampening of her smile but Kina refused to be sad. “We figured they were perfect. They kind of go in different sets but they’re too perfect to care about boy and girl.”

“These are pretty awesome, kiddo,” Fili said. He reached out and snagged her in for a messy kiss on the cheek. She squealed and struggled but it was in jest as she was laughing the whole time. “You gotta open something next.”
Kili got up, ignoring the way his phone started exploding with text replies, and picked one out. He handed it to Kina with a smile. “Since we’re going for clothes,” he said.

Fili looked at him curiously.

Kina ripped into the paper eagerly and started laughing the moment she pulled back the tissue paper in the box. “Self-rescuing Princess,” she read. “Aw man, Kili, that’s fantastic.”

Kili grinned at her. “It is so very fitting.”

“This mean you’ll take me to the shooting range?” she asked, looking over at him with a terrifyingly sly smile. “I mean, shouldn’t I know how to rescue myself and all?”

“Karate?” Fili suggested instead.


“Child has to go to the Dad first,” Fili said.

Kina sighed. “Aw man.”

“Maybe next year?” Kili asked Fili with a tilt of his head. It wasn’t a bad idea.

“Maybe.”

“I like maybe,” Kina said. She set the box with the shirt aside and got up to kiss Kili. “Maybe I can work with.”

“So your father’s daughter,” Kili laughed, kissing her back. “Gimme another present, imp.”
Kili stared down Sigrid. She kept her smile plastered on her face and continued to hold out the pie dish. It hadn’t been long since they’d been home. The last thing he’d expected that, home alone with Fili at work, Sigrid would show up to see him.

Kili smelt something fishy.

He took the pie with a sigh and gave a little hop back to let her in. He was doing better but his leg hated him right now. She swept into the room, skirts swishing, looking around and greeting Gunny.

“Still hurt?” she asked, watching him move.

“Gonna be hurt for a while now.”

“It’s been, what. Eighteen, nineteen months?”

“Twenty,” Kili corrected. He went into the kitchen and set the dish down. He poked it, looking under the foil. He had no idea what this thing was.


Kili had no idea who this Tilda was. He really needed to pay better attention, he guessed, to Fili’s friends. He vaguely knew faces (it had been a while) and who they were but he never really paid attention. They were background noise to him because he always ended up focused on Fili.

“Anyway, I came by to talk to you. Get to know you. Find out how you’re doing,” she said.

Kili tried to think and then narrowed his eyes. “You’re a shrink.”

“Clinical psychologist, yes,” she said. “I do know PTSD and have treated vets. I volunteer at the Center.”

Kili grit his teeth. “I don’t need your help.”

“You need someone’s help,” Sigrid said. “Fili’s told me a little of it—nightmares, flashbacks, mood swings. You’ve gotten better since being in Boston but he says you still jump at sirens and cars backfiring. Considering this town is almost nothing but hospitals and bad drivers you need to get over it.”

“It’s a thing,” Kili said, leaning against the kitchen counter and crossing his arms. “Why do you care?”

“Because I want to help,” she said. She reached down to pick up the mewing Gunny and gave him scratches. The traitorous feline purred and kneaded Sigrid's chest. “Fili’s my best friend. You’re going to be sticking around for the foreseeable future so it’s time we dealt with each other.”

“You don’t like me,” Kili said.

“I don’t think the two of you are necessarily healthy but he loves you.”

Kili snickered. “Lady, you have no idea how unhealthy our relationship is.”
“What does that mean?” Sigrid asked, looked alarmed.

“It means ask Fili that question. I’ve already had that talk it’s about time he had it himself,” Kili said. Speaking of, he needed to possibly tell Fili that Dirk knew about them. He watched Sigrid for a while before sighing. “You’re not going to go away until you get what you want, are you?”

“I have two younger siblings,” Sigrid said. “I have the patience of a saint.”

“No dad?” he asked.

Sigrid smiled a little, turning to sit in the living room. Kili followed and flopped on the couch. There was something psychological about their seating, probably. It made his head hurt thinking about it.

“My dad, Bard, he’s pretty kick ass but he works weird hours.”

“What’s he do?”

“He’s a musician, actually,” Sigrid said. “He plays jazz most nights so he’s only home for a short bit. He had odd jobs when I was a kid, doing a lot of fishing out near Winthrop—” Kili had no idea where that was aside from North— “and played nights. I helped raise Tilda and Bran.” Ah, and that’s who Tilda was.

“Cool?” Kili offered.

Sigrid raised a brow. “I thought you’d be more excited about the musician bit.”

Kili shook his head. “It’s not that big a deal? Jazz and me, I mean. I’m a little more rock and roll.”

“Fair enough,” she said. She let Gunny go and sank back into the armchair. “See, we’re talking, this is good.”

Kili rolled his eyes.

“Can I ask you about Syria?” Sigrid asked.

Kili flinched but grit his teeth. “What about it?”

“Why did you go?”

Kili groaned and huffed out a sigh. “Everyone asks that. I went because my team went and I’d be damned if I was going to let them go out there without me to cover them. Ask something more original.”

“Do you regret going?”

“Not for a moment,” Kili said instantly. He blinked. Wait, what?

“Sounds like you didn’t think you’d say that,” Sigrid said, crossing her legs and clasping her upraised knee in both hands.

“I had to kill two of my friends to keep them from being brutally murdered by IS,” Kili said. “That’s a pretty big regret for me.”

“But…?”
“But we did what we needed to, we got the information, and it led to some really good intel,” he said. “It saved four Americans and two Frenchmen.”

“Do those lives make Jake's or Allison’s deaths cheap?” Sigrid asked.

“Fucking asshole,” Kili said, gritting his teeth. “He had no right to tell you about them.”

Sigrid stared at him. “You’re…not very happy with him, are you?”

Kili looked at her, irritated, and he knew his face was pinched and twisted and probably not the look he should be giving her. She looked startled but then thoughtful. Was he happy with Fili? Most of the time, yes. When he apparently blabbed about what was happening with him? About his friends? That crossed the line. Fili had no right to talk about them, about him, to complete strangers.

“You’re still hurt by him,” Sigrid guessed. “For when he decided to be a complete coward.”

Kili grinned, licking his lips. “Yeah, coward is a good word for him.”

“I spent a lot of that time kicking his ass,” she said. “Let me share a secret with you.”

Kili tilted his head to the side, waiting.

“I like you. I really like how you make Fili happy. While I sometimes curse your name for the bullshit you put him through I know he’s not the easiest person to deal with. Sharon and him never got together permanently because they had the tendency to either inspire apathy or anger. Sometimes they managed happiness but they were so much better apart.”

“That’s why they split Kina,” Kili said. “I figured it was something like that.”

“Fili is not perfect. He can be loyal and strong-willed and protective and the most loving man but he can also be an asshole. The type that you stare at and go ‘how are we friends’ at.”

Kili snickered. “Oh yeah. I know that feeling. Right now I want him to walk in that door so I can punch that perfect face of his.”

Sigrid nodded. “I told him he didn’t have the right to tell me what he did but he was drunk and morose and pathetic. So I let him babble.”

“Last week, right?” Kili rolled his eyes. “He was being a jerk and I laid into him.”

“Yep, that would be the day,” she said. “So, you wanna give me your version of what happened over there?”

Kili eyed her. “If I talk to you does that mean I can stop dealing with the morons Woods has been going to?”

“Could be,” she said. “I’m certified for a lot.”

Kili scratched at his chin and the whiskers there. “Yeah, fine. How much time you got?”

“How much do you need?”

Kili smiled a little. “Why don’t we order some pizza? This is gonna take some time.”
Kili yawned and reached out, dragging his fingers through Fili’s sweaty hair. “Hmm, fever?” he asked.

“Still,” Fili muttered, turning away and pulling the covers up over his head.

Kili snuggled closer, hands fiddling with the fraying waistband of Fili’s boxers, hands flat against Fili’s furred tummy. He really needed a new pair. Fili had been sick for the past week, alternating between throwing up and sleeping and then holing up in the bathroom for other reasons. Kina had brought home a bug—she was just as sick but had gotten better quicker—from school and so far Kili was the only one who hadn’t suffered for it.

“Want something?” Kili asked. “Ice pop?”

Fili hesitated and let the covers be pulled from his face. “I like ice pops.”

“Maybe soup after? Think you could do soup?”

“Soup sounds like it’ll work,” Fili said.

Kili scratched lightly at Fili’s fur and rolled out of bed. “Think I could talk you into a shower later?”

“Think I could poke your eyes out?”

“So pleasant when we’re sick,” Kili said, rolling his eyes and smiling.

“Pot, kettle,” Fili muttered. He turned over and buried his head in his pillow.

Kili shook his head, smiling. Yeah, okay, Fili had a good point there. Maybe it ran in the family? Dad was just as horrible when he got injured or sick—big bear with a tiny torn in his paw. Kili scratched his own stomach and readjusted himself as he made his way to the kitchen.

He made tea, since he was there, and rummaged around the freezer. He was going to need to go shopping soon. They’d need tea and ice pops and a whole bunch of other stuff.

“Kili?”

Kili shook his head, removing the kettle from the stovetop. “You need to stay where I put you. In this case, in bed.”

The freezer opened and closed and the sound of the plastic wrapper being opened and pulled off. Kili finished the tea and handed Fili a cup as he turned around.

“Bed is too hot,” Fili said. He munched the ice pop down in seconds and then took the tea. Kili stared at the way Fili drank and shook his head. Weirdo. “Feels good out here.”

“You need to get back in bed,” Kili said. “Idiot. You need to feel better.”

“Need, need, need,” Fili said, yawning into the tea. “I want to stay out here.”

Kili sighed and nudged Fili toward the living room. “Couch. Blankets. TV. Drink your tea.”
Fili smiled, kissing Kili’s cheek, and did as he was told.
Kili’s head tilted toward his phone, pausing as he listened to the song it was playing. He wiped his hands off and set the pan to simmer instead of cooking on the higher heat he had it on, and restarted the song.

“Hey, what’s for—”

“Shh,” Kili said, interrupting Fili. He reached out, setting two fingers on his lips to shush him. Once again he restarted the song.

Fili was frowning but Kili leaned into him instead, holding the phone between them. They were both quiet, listening to the words, but Kili felt them. It was almost like a brush of silk against his mind, and he closed his eyes, letting the words sink in. Fili teased him about how he claimed music spoke to him but this was a song that Fili couldn’t fight against.

It was plaintive and begging and hopeful and it felt like Kili had been punched in the heart. He almost wanted to cry but instead it settled something in him. It was the tiny bit of him that felt like a caged bird, beating desperately at the bars, the part that wanted to be free of everything and do whatever he wanted. That wasn’t who he was any more but sometimes that bird began to beat wildly and his skin and feet itched.

“Kili—” Lips moved against his fingers

“Shh,” he whispered again, tapping Fili’s lips.

Fili stayed quiet until the end of the song and when it shifted into something else, a song they both knew and was a little raunchier, Kili turned the music off.

“What was that?” Fili asked.

Kili leaned in and kissed him. “Dinner is chicken something or other. I threw things in a pain. It’ll be tasty. That was music.”

Fili frowned, watching him closely, but Kili leaned in and kissed him once more. “I don’t
understand."

Kili felt a little bit of himself falter but he ignored it. “That’s okay,” he said. “Do you want to listen again?”

At Fili’s nod Kili turned the song back on and went back to cooking. He could hear the song as Fili held his phone and he closed his eyes, letting the melody wash over him again. He mouthed the words and knew, without a doubt, he could play the song if he picked up his guitar. But that wasn’t what he needed to think about now. He had dinner to cook and then an obtuse boyfriend to soothe.

It was okay, he decided, if Fili didn’t get music like he did. He tried. And maybe Kili could show him a different way to feel like music later.
Kili sat on the floor of the bathroom and pried up tiling. He wanted to get this nasty tile out and then get the nice tile in. It was pretty, a nice black and white marbled marble. The bathroom was the first real project he’d been allowed—annoying word, allowed—to do since they’d gotten home. Yes, he’d done little things in the kitchen—changed the backsplash, cleaned up the cabinets a little and changed their handles—but none of that compared to this.

He liked getting his nails dirty and having his hands covered in muck. It made him feel like a little kid again, playing in a big sandbox.

He wondered, idly, if he’d gone with his dad after the divorce or before it with Dis. He vaguely remembered playgrounds and running around screaming his head off. He remembered doing the kid thing like everyone else—vaguely and with fondness. He remembered his dad saying they’d split up when he was four, so. Well, maybe? Who knew.

He really needed to try to call her “mom”. She'd like that.

“You all good in there?” Fili asked.

“Mmmh,” Kili said, putting down the pull bar he was using to pry up the tiles. “You have lemonade for me. I feel like you’re trying to pull a Mrs Robinson. Hate to tell you but I don't think you have the legs to pull off stockings.”

“I will dump this on your head,” Fili said with a roll of his eyes. He squatted down next to Kili and handed him the glass. “It’s hot, lemonade fixes that. Also, wanted to tell you, the shower tiles came in.”

“Yay.” Kili said, sipping the tart liquid and leaning against Fili. He was all sweaty and he loved it. He also loved getting Fili all sweaty too. “You wanna help with that, or going to want to help?”

“Haven’t decided,” Fili said. He ran a hand—cool from the lemonade glass—through Kili’s sweaty hair. It was growing back out and was at an awkward length right then, but it was also just long enough to make the stub of a ponytail.
“You should decide quick.”

Fili kissed his forehead. “I think I’ll stick to snapping in the hardwood in the offices.”

“Yeah, okay, that works. Painting before it?”

“Already got the paints Kina decided for us,” Fili said. “There’s tons of it.”

“We should wait until she’s got a day or two with us,” Kili said. “Let her go crazy on it.”

“Sounds like a good plan,” Fili said. “Maybe we could help her with a paint fight. Us against her?”

“That's hardly fair,” Kili said. "Every man for himself sounds more fun."

Fili chuckled. "Maybe. And then we'll get the walls all done and the hardwood can go in. I've been sanding down the cabinets all day and getting the living room set up. How's the leg?"

"It's fine, Mother," Kili said with a chuckle and a roll of his eyes. "No twinges at all today."

Fili leaned in to kiss his forehead again but Kili tilted his face up for real kisses instead. It only lasted a brief moment but it stole his breath and left Fili looking dazed as well.

"So..." Kili asked, drawing it out. "Whatcha doing later tonight?"

"You, against the bathroom floor," Fili said, a tilt of his head. "The finished one."

Kili laughed and hummed the song as he went back to work. "Honey came in and she caught me red-handed, creeping with the girl next door. Picture this, we were both butt-naked, banging on the bathroom floor. How could I forget that I had given her an extra key. All this time she was standing there, she never took her eyes off me."
Fili twirled his pen idly in his right hand as he used his left to go through the papers on his desk. He had three proposals to go through from his team, two he needed to create himself, and one ongoing contract that needed his eye to make sure the spin they were creating didn't fall apart. He didn't need to do it all now, though, but he wanted to. He liked knowing everything that was going on with his accounts. Balin's firm was large and held many accounts throughout Boston. It was quite a change from his tiny

He wasn't in any rush to get home. It had turned into a cold war between him and Kili and he didn't know how to break it. Didn't know if he wanted to break it.

He hated Kili's job. He hated that it put him in danger. He wanted Kili to live, to be safe, but he also knew it wasn't going to happen. He had known it going into the relationship. He'd been fine with it for four years. He wasn't allowed to back out like he had before.

He needed to take himself in hand and man the fuck up.

"Hey, Durin, we're headed to the pub around the corner, wanna go?" Ted, one of his coworkers, asked.

Fili looked down at his paper laden desk and nodded. "Yeah, sure. I could use a drink."

Ted look surprised. "Cool. We're meeting in the lobby in 30."

Fili nodded. Just enough time to put away his proposals and lock up his desk. "That works."

"Cool," Ted echoed. He was still smiling as he left, whistling a random tune.

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Fili sat in the bar, trying to be part of the group, but his eyes and mind kept drifting to the news on the TVs. All it showed was Syrian headlines and politicians making speeches and footage of attacks. He kept seeing the soldiers there and thinking they were Kili. He kept hearing Kili's words--"I want to go back, fight those bastards, stop this from happening again"--and they kept going around and around in his head.

He almost asked them to change the channel.


Fili set his beer down carefully and turned to look at the man. "What did you say?"

"You heard me!" the man said, chest puffing out. He was big and thick, from South Boston, and definitely the type who got into bar fights. Fili didn't care. "Those idiots are going over there to get shot at. Might as well shoot them now and spare the country the cost of bringing the bodies back."

Fili didn't remember moving before pain exploded across his hand and the man landed on the sticky bar floor. There were whoops and whistles, a cheer here and there. The man got up and Fili gritted his teeth, eyes narrowing. No. He was not going to get involved in this.

"What, you some sort of uniform chaser?" the man asked.
"My dad is in the service," Fili said, raising his fist to crack the joints against his palm. Oh, ow, that hurt, but it looked pretty cool.

The man sneered and Fili punched him again. At that point the night got a little hazy but all he knew was that there was blood on his hands and it wasn't his.

Fili looked up at the cop came to his cell and unlocked the door. "C'mon, kid, your friend bailed you out."

Friend? What, Sigrid?

He got to his feet, slowly, aching and dizzy, He hurt, both from the beating he'd taken and the one he had given, and made his slow way behind the cop...only to stop from shock.

Kili was standing there, hands in the pockets of his fraying, green canvas jacket, looking tired and resigned and just...defeated. There was a slump to his shoulders Fili didn't like, but one that he also wanted to see.

Who was he? What the hell was he turning into? Who was he turning into?

"C'mon," Kili said, shaking a hand free of his jacket and holding it out to Fili. "Let's go home."

Fili stared at the hand--large and covered mostly in black fingerless gloves--and took it. Kili squeezed once before leading him through the station and to the car.

Kili's car wasn't really a car, more like a tank. It was a black Escalade, something the company paid for, and as much as Fili resented it, it was damned comfy. The ride home was quiet, Fili looking at his bruised hands and split knuckles, Kili driving with his mouth shut, radio off, and hands white on the wheel.

Fili had himself braced for an explosion of temper.

This silence was almost worse.

Kili parked the car in the driveway and turned the car off. He got out and, jiggling the keys in his hand, waited for Fili. Fili, frowning, followed him inside. Kili tossed his keys on the table and key dish they'd set up and shrugged off his jacket.

"Water?" Kili asked, a thumb pointing in the direction of the kitchen.

Fili startled. He nodded, slowly, and followed Kili into it. Again, more silence as Kili took out a glass, filled it with water, and handed it to him. Fili took it, not totally alarmed that Kili snagged one of his hands and examined it carefully. He'd be the most familiar with these type of injuries, wouldn't he?

"Well, doc?" Fili asked.

"You're going to have some fantastic bruising but I don't think anything’s broken. Still, have someone take an X-Ray. You don’t want your hands fucked up now because it’ll only get worse with age."

Fili nodded slowly. "Your hands?"

"A sniper’s hands are almost as important as their eyes,” Kili said, voice soft. “I take care of both.”
The silence returned.

“You wanna tell me why I had to bail you out of jail?” Kili asked.

“I never asked you—"

“Not what I asked,” Kili said. “Just, why?”

“I got into a fight, obviously,” Fili said.

“Yeah, but why?” Kili asked.

Fili drank his water.

Kili raised his hands and ran them through his hair, eyes closed, taking measured breaths. “Okay, someone said something about something that fired you up. Then there were more words and you punched him, he punched you, insert film montage of you getting your ass kicked and kicking someone’s ass. Good job, by the way, I saw the other guy."

Fili stayed silent. He didn’t want to have this conversation. He knew he didn’t want to have this conversation. Why did Kili insist on having it?

“So we’re going to just…skip over this whole event and we’re going to talk about something else, yeah?”

“Sure,” Fili muttered, drinking more water. He was suddenly ridiculously thirsty.

“You’re angry,” Kili said. "You’ve been angry. I don’t know if it’s at me, at dad, at the world, or… I don’t know."

“Dad?” Fili asked, frowning.

“You got a little bent out of shape when you found out he was being moved to one of the Turkish bases,” Kili said.

Oh. Right. The additional possibility of losing the father he was just starting to know again.

Kili turned and sat at the kitchen table, ruffling his growing hair in frustration. “Okay, angry Fili is a bad thing. Do you know why? Because it throws everything out of whack. So we’re going to try something, okay? We’re going to try this thing called a compromise. You’re familiar with them, right? You work in PR, you practically breathe compromises."

Fili narrowed his eyes, watching Kili carefully.

Where was the explosion? There was supposed to be an explosion of temper. This frustration and resignation was not what he wanted.

“I’m not quitting my job,” Kili said. “I have no marketable skills aside from being a hired gun and anyone else would send me to the frontline in a second flat.” A snap of the fingers, sound sharp and sudden. “Tauriel will work with me, let me try to do more and more logistic assignments, seeing through the drones and giving orders, than field assignments. Anything that needs me, me personally and not some random gun, will be in country. She's probably going to make me teach others how to actually shoot."

Fili set his water glass down, feeling his stomach churn. “What’s the catch?” There had to be a catch.
“You stop looking at me in horror,” Kili said softly. “Stop hating me. Stop using work as an excuse to stay out of the house and away from me. I need you to stay, Fili, or I can’t keep my promises. You came back to me and I said yes. We did this, together, so we’ve gotta stay that way,”

“Seems like I’m getting away lightly on this compromise,” Fili said.


“We’ll keep trying,” Fili said. “You also just need to give me time.”

Kili nodded. “Trying. Heh, now isn’t that suddenly the world of the night.”

"Kili..."

Kili leaned over and kisses Fili's forehead. "Get some sleep. We can talk more in the morning. Hammer out this compromise."

Fili snagged Kili's hand as the other walked by and tugged him in for an actual kiss. "Stay?"

"Always," Kili said. He was smiling. Something inside Fili eased at that. "Okay, how about another compromise?"

"Are you sure that's not the word of the evening?"

"How about, instead of sleep, I get the takeout menu and we get some excellent frozen yogurt and Satay delivered?"

"Oh?"

"And we catch up on TiVo," Kili said. "Kind of like a date night in."

Fili nodded. "I...like that. I'll get changed."

Kili stretched, back popping, and smiled. "I'll call in the yogurt."
Kili was covered in dust from the drywall. He glared at the wall, twirling the hammer around his hand like a baton, and tried to figure this out. He was hanging floating shelves and bookcases in the office and so far it wasn’t turning out too well.

Oh, the floating shelves were up. They were going to need to repaint the walls but the shelves were up.

It was the fucking bookshelves that were kicking his ass. He was trying so hard to get them to hang properly but they just wouldn’t hang. He used levels and he was using pencil marks and everything and it just. Nothing worked. He couldn’t do this.

“You okay in there?” Fili asked, sticking his head in the office.

“Nope,” Kili said, hands on his hips. “Not okay. Kind of want to kill these things.”

“What things?” Fili asked. He came into the office, head tilted at a curious angle.

“Bookcases,” Kili said. “We should have gotten them done properly before.”

“By the pros?” Fili asked. There was a smile lurking there. Kili didn’t like that smile. That was a “I told you so” smile.

“By someone else,” Kili said. “I mean, I could force it up there but then the walls…”

Fili wiped Kili’s cheek free of dust and kissed it. “C’mon, let’s eat some lunch and then take another look at it. If you want to murder it afterward then we can talk about it.”

Kili rolled his eyes and tossed the hammer on the desk he was using where it bounced a little before settling. Fili ruffled his hair, trying to brush as much dust and debris off him as possible before leading him to the bathroom.

“Shower,” he said. “You’ll feel better.”

“You could join me,” Kili offered.

A slow smile unfurled over Fili’s face and he nodded. “Yeah, okay. I guess we could, you know, conserve water. Shower together.”

“You could get my back,” Kili said. “I’m sure it’s very dirty.”

“Among other things,” Fili laughed.

Eh, maybe he hadn’t hung the shelves but there were plenty of other things looking up.
Fili watched Kili slam about the kitchen, wincing at how loud they smacked back into their frames. He was silent as he watched, worrying his lip between his teeth, knowing Kili would say what bothered him in time.

“Fucking bitch,” Kili said.

Fili stared, stunned. Kili didn’t usually call women bitches and not with such vehemency or fury.

“She dumped him,” he explained. He slammed a chicken breast onto the cutting board he had equally slammed down and began chopping it into cubes for some recipe. “Dirk. He’s still kind of hurt, you know, and she didn’t want to deal with it. I mean, c’mon, we know he’s up for some pretty amazing sex, athletic sex, and she dumps him because his back went out of him again. I mean, he just needs to work with PT more. But no. She bailed. And broke his heart on the way out.”

Fili nodded, like he understood, and continued to watch.

“Dirk needs someone stable, someone who will kick his ass but not in a bad way. You know, like Sigrid kicked my ass. Do the PT and keep him from being a depressed little shit,” Kili said.

Fili blinked. “Well, she is single.”

Kili froze and turned to look at him, knife still in hand. “What?”

“Sigrid,” Fili said. “She’s single. I mean, she might not be Dirk’s type, but.”

Kili blinked. “Hunh.”

“Want me to try and set them up?” Fili asked. “It probably wouldn’t take much. They’ve always gotten along before.”

Kili turned back to the chicken, thoughtful and his knife moving slower, and made tiny thinking noises—little hums and huffs. It was adorable. “Yeah, let’s…blind date them. See if that works.”

Fili nodded and came in closer, dropping a kiss on Kili’s cheek. “Better now?”

“I’ll be better when I know it works and he’s happy,” Kili said. “It kills me that I can’t help him.”

“Well, this will help,” Fili said. “And if Sigrid doesn’t work, maybe we can help him find someone else. We both know enough ladies.”

Kili nodded and set the knife down. “He’s more of a lady’s man than a man’s man so. Although he might… I have other ideas there.”

“Oh?”

Kili grinned. “Our tastes are pretty similar. I’ll just point him at the ones I’d love to fuck.”

Fili rolled his eyes. “Brat.”

“You love it.”
“This isn’t a very New Years thing to do,” Fili said.

“Dancing is a very New Years thing to do,” Kili said.

“How much have you had to drink?” Fili asked.

Kili laughed and wrapped his arms around Fili’s neck, propping his chin up on the other’s shoulder. “Who cares? Stop thinking about being judged. Enjoy this.”

“I’m not—”

“You are,” Kili said, teasing. “C’mon, let the music tell you what to do. These are the days we won’t regret. These are the days we won’t forget.”

Fili sighed and swayed with Kili, hands on his hips. “How much have you had to drink?”

“Shut up and dance with me, asshole,” Kili said. He leaned back, grinning, feeling fiery and lit up and insanely happy. “This is good. This, us, everything.”

“I’m aware,” Fili said, a tiny smile on his face.

“You know that tiny smile pisses me off?” Kili said. “It’s like a dare. It makes me want to make it this huge, overblown smile.”

“I know,” Fili said. “I’m pretty sure I do it on purpose now.”

Kili rolled his eyes, biting his lips, and moved so they were clasping hands. Fili frowned and then started laughing as Kili led them in a wild motion of dancing—hands dipping down as they went back and forth, back and forth, dancing like a tiny dingy across a dangerous ocean. One of them, Kili wasn’t saying who, lost their balance and they went down in a tangle of limbs and laughter.

Gunny, hearing the commotion, darted over to leap on them. Kili laughed harder as Gunny dug around in Fili’s hair.
It was a perfect way to welcome in the new year:

Together. With laughter. In their new home.

As the song said--These are the days we've been waiting for, Neither of us knows what's in store, You just roll your window down and place your bets. These are the days we won't regret.

These are the days we will never forget!

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