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### Bricks in the Wall

by [Gamebird](http://archiveofourown.org/users/Gamebird)

**Summary**

A collection of unrelated drabbles and one-shots set in The Wall. Each chapter is to be read as a stand-alone story, not related to any others in the series.
Sylar looked up over his book, watching as Peter cradled his guitar but instead of playing, was tapping out an irritating beat on the case. It reminded Sylar of the steady, ticking progress of a second hand and in fact, Peter's tapping was exactly one tap to the second … except for that nagging half beat every four taps. It threw the whole thing off.

Sylar itched to fix, to regulate, to calibrate. Peter had always marched to his own drummer. One of the things Sylar had to learn was that not every clock needed to be fixed.
"You … You …" Peter couldn't finish the sentence as he sat there on the couch trying to assimilate that very wonderful, gentle kiss Sylar had just given him. The words simply weren't there. Yeah, he'd known Sylar was flirting with him; he'd known the man was making passes and in some cases outright offers. Peter had ignored them, blown them off, declined and sometimes rejected them angrily. It had never occurred to him that Sylar actually liked him. Never. Shock was coursing through his system so hard and fast that he couldn't think, much less speak. All this time …?

When it had first happened, he hadn't been sure what Sylar was getting at. Then he thought maybe the guy was just really poorly socialized. Or just unhinged by the idea that he'd been alone for three years. Or just really bored and looking for a diversion. And a lot of the time, Peter thought Sylar was flirting with him just to unnerve and upset him, intentionally setting Peter off because he thought it was funny. Just, just … just. It hadn't occurred to him there was something else going on.

Peter felt like a mix of being punched in the gut and having the rug jerked out from under him, as his entire perception about Sylar's motives and behavior shifted and changed. Everything looked different now - everything Sylar had done here in this world took on a new spin and Peter could sense puzzle pieces falling into place that he hadn't even realized were missing. His eyes widened as he stared at Sylar's face, unsaid, unspeakable words hovering silently on his lips.

The blood drained from Sylar's face as he realized the game was over - Peter knew. And Peter did. Sylar's involuntary physical response proved it, not that he needed any proof. Just the thought, the firm suspicion, was enough of a key to unlock all the mysteries and confusing, arbitrary and sometimes moody-seeming behaviors that Sylar took with him. The man was smitten, to use an old-fashioned term, and he acted like it. Peter just hadn't recognized it - until now. Sylar's face pinched in worry and he slowly retreated backwards on the couch until he was at the other end.

All of this … he's crushing on me. He really … he really has a crush on me. He … he likes me. He really likes me! Like really likes me. Seriously likes me. Has liked me for a long time, apparently. Shit! What the hell do I do about that? Peter got to his feet, aghast, still trying to process. He ran a hand through his hair, looking away and blinking as though that would clear things up. How do I feel about that? How do I feel about him?

He felt uncertain. He felt scared. He felt flattered. He hadn't realized that Sylar really liked him for himself. That was what had made it so easy to dismiss his interest and semi-permanently friendzone the guy. That and the complication of everything Sylar had done and been in his life recently. People of Sylar's experiences weren't what came to Peter's mind when he considered backgrounds for possible lovers. But … can I get past that? Do I want to get past that?
Peter was lost at sea here, not least of which because he didn't know how he was supposed to feel about this. How am I supposed to respond? What am I supposed to do? What's Sylar going to do now that the cat is out of the bag? "I've … I've got to think about this," he finally managed to say, the words halting and accurately conveying how pole-axed Peter felt by the whole thing. He knew it had to be nothing compared to how Sylar must feel right now - exposed, found out, vulnerable and probably embarrassed, but for once Peter's own feelings overwhelmed his usually so-sensitive regard for the feelings of another. Or maybe there was something about Sylar, about all the past with Sylar that allowed Peter to step back and be himself, to feel his own feelings, without guilt. Peter shook his head, walking over to the door and reaching for the knob. I need to get some time alone and think this through, think about what I'm going to do. I'm here; he's here; and he's been in love with me all this time? Love maybe? He loves me?

Sylar, though, was not letting Peter leave quietly. He rose and stood in the middle of his apartment. "So that's your big reaction? You're just going to walk away?" His voice started as uncertain and ended by hardening up fast to a hateful sneer.

Hand still on the knob, Peter glanced back to see Sylar's face. Sylar's feelings about this ran through his mind again. He didn't know what to do for the guy. He didn't know what to do for himself. Sylar loves me? It made his heart beat faster just to think it. It made him flush and feel warm. It was a stupid reaction. It was confusing. Sylar was a killer. Peter hated him. And he still hated him - all the while feeling hot and bothered and restless all of a sudden. "I just … Sylar, I've got to think about this."

"Oh really?" Sylar asked sarcastically. "What is there to think about, huh? The answer's obvious. It always has been. Now I can't even fucking pretend!"

Peter opened the door, the pain bleeding through Sylar's words hitting him too deep. He couldn't remember the last time, if ever, anyone had loved him for him, knowing who he was, what he could do, his background and his real personality, and still … loved him? Simone had dumped him like a wet sandwich. Caitlin had never known what she was dealing with. Everyone before that blended together into a small crowd of casual hook-ups and short-term relationships that usually ended abruptly when he confessed his feelings. He'd never been in the position of being the person who was confessed to and it gave him a hell of a lot of sympathy for those who had walked out of his life. But he still remembered the pain from every time that had happened. "That's not it! I didn't know-"

"Of course you didn't! You're the empath here, but no, of course you didn't know what the fuck I was feeling. And you want to know why, Peter? Because you didn't care. You didn't pay attention. Not to me. I'm not worth paying attention to. I'm not worth caring about. Not for you." Sylar's lip curled in disgust as he nailed it dead-on.

Peter's mouth fell open in shock as he stood in the open doorway. "No … that's not true." He wasn't sure which part of it he was arguing, though. It was almost certainly all true and Peter felt weak inside, jolted by guilt and his own deliberate insensitivity. The one person he'd intentionally walled off any feelings for, any empathy for, was the one person who actually loved him. The irony was stifling.

"Oh yes it is. Why would you care?" Sylar continued, closing up on him to an arm's length away, disdain and contempt thick in his words. "Do you think I haven't thought about this already? Maybe you're a little behind in the game, but I know where I stand with you. There's nothing you need to go 'think about'. So just walk the fuck away, Peter. It's not like you're walking away from anything you actually care about!"

"Would you shut up!" Peter snapped, angry that Sylar was so sure he'd already made up his mind.
He knew it was all of Sylar's insecurities and fears given voice after having been bottled up so long. "I told you I needed to think about it. I'm not lying!" Peter spoke through clenched teeth, angry and frustrated, feeling trapped and crushed under a welter of emotions he couldn't even begin to process. Sylar's proximity just made it worse. No matter how much he wanted to ignore the man's state, he could feel Sylar's heartfelt desires radiating around him like a numinous aura.

Sylar crowded up even closer to him and Peter felt his breath coming short. His vision was narrowing. Sylar seemed like the only thing in the world, disparaging and taunting. "What do you need to think about? How best to humiliate me with this for the rest of time? Or are you just going home to go jerk off to the idea of me drooling over you and never getting so much as a kind look or a pat on the head?"

"SHUT UP!" Peter shouted at him, agitation and fear beginning to fill him at the idea that Sylar thought that of him. And that, by walking away, Peter was somehow confirming that impression, verifying the worst that Sylar thought of him. Metaphorically spitting in the face of someone who loved him ... Peter wanted to be loved. But by Sylar?

Sylar laughed dismissively, belittling his consternation. "Oh, sure, now I don't even get to talk to you? Let's see how that works to-"

Everything that Peter was feeling coiled and crashed together into a single bright point of certainty - he had to shut Sylar up. He had to. Nothing else was more important than that and he didn't think it through. He just lashed out, punching him in the face. He hit Sylar on the cheek and staggered him backwards. He instantly regretted throwing the punch, but at least it had stopped Sylar from spewing so much venom and poisoning the very air with the pain of his perceived rejection. Peter panted, barely able to breathe, his chest was so tight.

Sylar, though, was not going to take such abuse without retaliation. Maybe he'd even been intentionally pushing it to provoke Peter. It wasn't like he didn't have plenty of experience mashing Peter's buttons. He swung back, surging forward. Peter ducked and dodged backwards, out into the cluttered hall. The blow intended for the middle of his face clipped his forehead above his temple instead. It rattled his brain more than the usual headshot did. The world tilted crazily and he stumbled.

Sylar grabbed his shoulder and yanked, keeping him from falling. The cloth of Peter's shirt made a complaining sound. Peter assumed he was being lined up for another blow and flailed his arms, jerking his head to the side and grunting. Although he connected with Sylar's arm and was rapidly regaining his balance, he somehow managed to miss that one of Sylar's limbs was still over to the side where he couldn't see it. Maybe he was distracted by how the man was a lot closer than Peter had expected. There was no 'at arm's length' about Sylar's positioning as Peter blinked his eyes and got oriented. Before he could fully get his bearings, Sylar had Peter's head in both hands and pressed in fast, smashing their lips together painfully in a far rougher kiss than he'd given earlier.

Peter rose up on his toes in unexpected reaction, reaching up to grab instinctively at Sylar's hands. Sylar slipped one to the back of Peter's head to hold him there, while the other batted away half of Peter's interference. The fight had suddenly turned into something else and the latest of too many shocks in the last few minutes zapped through Peter's frame, paralyzing his brain as he stuttered over what he should do in response. The taller man lightened his touch a little, his lips working fast against Peter's, trying to squeeze all that he could into the precious seconds he had. Peter's other hand found Sylar's and curled around it as Sylar's fingers tangled in his hair and held fast, making Peter have to pull his own hair to get him loose. His free hand found Sylar's forearm and gripped it.

Peter paused in the struggle, trying to think as his breath panted out hotly. Sylar softened his touch
again, opening his eyes to look into Peter's and there was a plea in that expression, in the way Sylar's brows drew together and the now-gentle motions of his mouth. He kissed more sensuously, less frantically, and Peter could feel his emotions - it was one unending entreaty for recognition, acceptance, and affection in return. Peter swallowed. He felt his body flush from top to bottom and he whimpered from that emotional onslaught that he couldn't deny. His fingers, twined with Sylar's at the back of his head, flexed irregularly as his will to fight the man off fragmented. He moved his mouth experimentally. Sylar sucked in breath and tilted his head a little in response to Peter's tentative movement.

Peter pulled away a tiny bit; his lips were sore and the pressure too much. Sylar allowed it, fingers clenching at the back of Peter's head, still entwined with Peter's own. Peter shut his eyes and let the moment have him. He'd already signaled his acquiescence and approval. He didn't want to think of why he shouldn't be doing this. He didn't want to think of anything. Lucky for him then, that at the moment thinking was the most difficult thing he could attempt. Just being - just experiencing and feeling and giving was so much easier. It came to him naturally. It felt right. His mouth meshed with Sylar's, moving with him and showing the other man how they could fit together perfectly. Peter crooned softly and Sylar redoubled his efforts, sucking at his lips and bringing his other hand up to touch the side of Peter's face. They were faint, ticklish touches that raised goose-flesh across Peter's body, stiffening him and making his eyes roll upwards behind their still-closed lids.

Peter let go of Sylar's forearm and put his hand on the man's chest, feeling Sylar's heart hammering away just as Peter's was. His fingers curled into Sylar's shirt and his croon became a moan, obscenely loud in a hallway that was quiet aside from their heavy breathing. Again, Sylar reacted as though that sound dowsed him with energy - his breath came faster, his fingers caressing gently and tenderly. Peter felt like he was melting inside, drowning in passion and rising arousal. With utmost difficulty, he forced his eyes open and flexed his fingers, spreading them until his palm was flat on Sylar's sternum. He didn't want to do this, but he had to - he had to before this went somewhere way further than a kiss. He pushed.

Sylar wasn't holding Peter's head anymore. When shoved back, he didn't clutch at Peter to keep him close. The kiss that had started as spite and thwarted desire, embarrassment and shame, had turned into so much more as Peter had returned it so unexpectedly. Sylar's eyes took in Peter's face and he managed to fight off smirking or doing anything else that would ruin the moment. They stood a little too close, Peter's hand still resting on Sylar's chest as if forgotten, or perhaps just left there to make sure Sylar didn't kiss him again. Peter studied Sylar's face, but it was neutral enough. There was nothing there to trip him into fury and so Peter was left with his own feelings and the knowledge that he'd … well, he'd pretty well answered the 'how do I feel about Sylar' part of his internal interrogation. He looked down and relaxed, taking deep breaths and feeling the cooling moisture on his still-warm lips. He swallowed and looked up threateningly at Sylar, who lifted his brows slightly at the return of a hostile expression.

"Not a word," Peter said gravely. "Not a single word." He dropped his hand, waiting a beat to see if Sylar understood what he was asking for … demanding. He couldn't face what he'd just done. He couldn't accept that he'd done it. He'd kissed Sylar. He'd kissed him! He could feel the emotions inside of himself and there was definitely a returned enthusiasm and interest. He wanted more and he wanted it desperately, but there was everything else snarling and storming inside of Peter so noisily that he couldn't sort it out. He was back to the beginning - that he needed a chance to think about this. And maybe, just maybe after that kiss Sylar would let him do what he needed to do. Sylar's brows lowered, but he was silent. Peter nodded once, turned and walked away.
Performance Anxiety

Sylar's cock slid inside of Peter's slicked, prepared body with a ridiculously minor degree of resistance. What that implied about Peter was positively obscene. It certainly wasn't a hot dog down a hallway (not that Sylar had any personal experience what that phrase referred to), but he'd expected a little more difficulty. Peter was definitely feeling it, at least, so that was good. Peter's hands clenched the cotton sheets in a white-knuckled grip and he grunted - a noise that usually didn't indicate pleasure. Sylar knew if he wanted to rate well as one of Peter's (apparently many) lovers and be invited to do this a second time, he needed to perform.

He made shallow thrusts, holding himself up over Peter's prostrate, facedown form, prodding into him. He could feel the wet warmth progressively sheathing him and it was fantastic. Peter's ass was firm and elastic - not nearly the barrier to access he'd imagined. Peter made another noise that sounded like a grunt and put his head down further, forehead pressed into the mattress. *Shit. I'm not doing this right.* Sylar drew back in a long, steady pull so that he was nearly out, then pushed back inside in a single lunge. This time the sound was a groan and Peter lifted his head a little. *Oh, yeah. That's good. He likes that. Thank God. Keep doing that.* Sylar repeated, time after time, feeling the muscles hug him oh-so-intimately with every motion. Peter bunched the sheets into his fists and began to croon between breathy gasps of air.

*He makes so many funny noises.* They were certainly helpful. And encouraging. While Sylar regretted not being able to see Peter's face for all the cues he might read there, he'd chosen the position precisely so Peter couldn't *see him.* He didn't think he would have been able to keep it up with Peter watching, seeing his uncertainty, and forcing Sylar to coordinate his own expression with everything else. He had no idea what expression was appropriate here. At least this way, it was one less thing he had to worry about.

Peter was starting to move under him, rocking his hips to meet Sylar's long, slow plunges. The beat was a little off, though, and Sylar realized Peter was trying to encourage him to speed up. *He's ready for more. Okay. I can do more.* He gradually picked up the pace, moving faster. The tenor of Peter's noises changed, too, until every thrust was punctuated by a guttural moan. *He must like this. Oh, wow. He sounds like he likes this a lot. For once I'm glad I don't have any neighbors! If you were a woman, you'd be a screamer for sure!*

Peter began squirming again, lifting his ass and reaching under his body to touch himself. *You dirty little boy, you. Filthy little slut,* Sylar thought with a grin, putting more force into his hips and watching Peter dig one shoulder into the mattress and put his head down to compensate. *You know exactly how to do this, how to get yourself off, don't you?* Peter was wriggling his ass really oddly, making Sylar wonder if he wasn't doing it right any more. He realized he'd gotten distracted by putting down Peter in his mind. *Focus. You only get one first time. Especially with him.*

Peter stopped touching himself, and braced with both hands, he came up partly to his knees, necessitating Sylar to shift position with him. *What the hell? They were half doggy-style, half lying on the bed. Sylar didn't know what else to do, so he just kept fucking.*

"Up," Peter huffed out. "Go up a little."

*Up? What?* Sylar leaned his center of gravity back, supported on only his knees. He held Peter's hips for balance. *He's giving directions now? I'm so bad he has to give directions?*

"Up like this." Peter reached a hand back and put it on Sylar's butt cheek, pushing upward while he himself shifted down. "Now point your dick down. You'll hit my prostate."
"Oh." **Yep, I'm so bad he's giving directions.** Sylar bit his lip and soldiered on, hoping he didn't lose his erection entirely. It was certainly faltering. What chance there was of that vanished with the cry Peter made and the full-body shudder he gave as Sylar did as he'd been told. He was fully hard again in an instant. **Oh! The hell? Is it that good?** Sylar had heard about the prostate, but he was not so gross or depraved as to have tried to find it on himself and none of his very few partners had volunteered, to date. If Peter was this forward and insistent about it for himself, though … then maybe Peter would offer it someday?

Peter's hand snaked under his body once more as he turned his head to the side, breathing hard. His hair screened much of his face, a little of it flopping back and forth teasingly in the wind of Peter's energetic respirations. The room already reeked of sex, so much so that Sylar wished he'd insisted they do this in his apartment, instead of this random one down the hall they'd agreed on using. It had seemed like the right choice at the time, but now that he was actually getting to fuck Peter's ass, Sylar wanted to be in his own apartment - safer, more secure, and more in charge.

Having found the right button, Sylar was hitting it repeatedly, listening as Peter's tone deepened at first and then started to choke up. He would come soon, at this rate, and the idea of that was spiraling Sylar up even faster. **Peter does not get to come just because he wants to. I'm in control here. I have some ... value, right?** Sylar slowed, changed his angle and leaned over to put his hands on the bed again, on either side of Peter. To his credit, Peter didn't complain of the interruption. He just sucked in air hard, getting his breath back.

Sylar pulled Peter's hand out from under him and for that act, Peter rewarded him with the most intense and raw expression of pure sex he'd ever seen. Peter, hair partly screening his face, twisted and curved his perfect, muscular back to look over his shoulder at him, parted lips swollen and darkened in passion as he looked to see what Sylar was doing - no objection, no complaint - only an open, willing acceptance of whatever Sylar did. Peter looked thoroughly fucked and completely shameless about it. Sylar stared, mouth agape for several seconds, barely breathing, until Peter turned away, waiting patiently.

Blinking from that vision of scorching hotness, Sylar reached underneath Peter. He took the man's member into his hand. It was hot, swollen and fleshy, so aroused that it was stiff against Peter's stomach. Sylar knew well how sensitive this was. If he'd had any doubts, Peter whimpered, shuddered and dropped his head and shoulders like he was praying. It was an especially profane analogy given the way Peter followed it by rocking backwards, fucking himself on Sylar's dick. As soon as Sylar adjusted his grip, Peter was fucking his hand, too. The arousal slammed back through Sylar's veins at that, at Peter using him to finish himself, pleasured front and back by **Sylar - not by himself.**

The complete control Sylar had over Peter lit Sylar up inside. It ran all through him, leaving him tingling as Peter mewled, begging for more. Peter could only manage short jerks backward in the position, flexing that beautiful back. Sylar bent over him, pushing all the way inside as he bit him on the shoulder, tasting the perfection of his flesh and the faint salty tang of his skin. Peter arched and cried out, hands alternately splaying and fisting in the bedding - whether from the complete penetration or the bite was unclear. Sylar felt so high; he was so hard; his cock was aching. Every continuous wriggle of Peter's hips was nudging him closer to the edge. Peter was fucking **good** in bed - even with Sylar's limited experience he could tell that.

He thought about Peter's face as he'd looked over his shoulder at him, mouth open so invitingly, looking to see what the person fucking him was going to do next. Peter was so handsome and so full of lust at that moment, that it was going to be burned into Sylar's memory forever if he had anything to say about it. He took his hand from Peter's cock and pushed Peter flat on the bed, wild to get all the way inside of him. He used both hands to brace himself as he pounded Peter's pliant ass hard.
The lewd sound of his groin spanking Peter's bubble butt filled the apartment to the accompaniment of Sylar's harsh breathing and Peter's pleasured cries.

Peter was even more vocal now - so incredibly vocal, as he spread his legs in an eager effort to take Sylar even deeper. Sylar bent and bit him again, this time hard enough to leave a bruise. Peter's sharper cry of pain sent Sylar's peak crashing through him in a sudden, blinding surge. Sylar made the first significant sound of pleasure he'd made so far: a short, deep groan as he released inside of Peter. His head was spinning with the exertion, as he'd given it his all for a little bit there. A few seconds passed in silence as he reveled in the sensation of absolute fulfillment. No matter what happened, no matter how bad Peter judged Sylar's performance, he'd still gotten to fuck Peter. After all this time and everything between them - he'd still taken a willing Petrelli to bed. An oh-so-smug grin silently lit up Sylar's features.

Panting, he started to disengage, but Peter said, "No! Stay there, please."

*What? I was done.* He did as directed though, feeling himself softening as a natural reaction. There wasn't much he could do about that.

Peter pushed back against him, reaching under himself to stroke fast and roughly.

*Ah! He didn't … Oh, crap,* Sylar thought as he realized he should have made sure Peter came first. The smugness evaporated into worry as he began to think of the future. *What do I do if he doesn't come at all now? What will he do if he doesn't come? Will he be done with me? I liked this - I want to do it again sometime! Should I be jerking him off now? Was I supposed to hold off until he did? Of course I should have held off, dammit! There must be some sort of etiquette for this, like, an order. I fucked up. I did it wrong. Got carried away. If he wasn't so fucking hot and sexy and noisy, that wouldn't have happened. Little slut.*

In a mere handful of seconds, Peter's toes curled and his muscles began to stand out sharper. His skin flushed and beaded with sweat as he danced along the edge of orgasm. Sylar watched, realizing the opportunity to do something to fix his faux pas was gone - Peter had taken matters into his own hand. With a single, final, full-bodied jerk he climaxed, making an inarticulate noise into the bed.

Sylar felt stuck. He'd flubbed it, somehow, and he didn't know what to do next. *I … did bad. Does this mean I'm bad in bed? Inconsiderate? Selfish? He won't have me again? He might as well be alone, after all.* He looked down at the pair of bite marks on Peter's shoulder - one faint, the other quite clear, and felt ashamed yet thrilled at the same time. He'd performed so much better with Janice, but then again, he hadn't had his own buttons being pushed. It had all been a head-trip on Matt, rather than this, which was sort of a head-trip on himself, and for that he blamed Peter. Or at least he wanted to.

Peter, with a great languorous slowness, disengaged from him, crawled up the bed a little, pulled his knees up, and rolled in place so he faced Sylar now.

*Convenient,* Sylar managed to think. *He's covering up the wet spot.* Sylar remained still, basically holding in place until he figured out how badly he'd screwed things up. *Am I making him lie in the wet spot? Should I make him move? He put himself there … Or maybe he's just gross enough that he doesn't care.*

Peter reached up and hooked a hand behind Sylar's neck. He pulled him down, kissing him deeply and repeatedly, servicing his mouth the way a good lover had sex with you - thorough, intense, finding your pleasure spots and dancing between them until you had no choice but to respond. *He seems happy. Oh, God, he seems happy. This is good, too. I like this. Jesus, Petrelli!* Sylar kissed back as Peter tangled his legs around Sylar's and pulled his whole body onto him, wrapping his arms
around Sylar as their mouths engaged over and over. He loved the taste - foreign, human, hot and wet. He loved the feel of the stubble around Peter's lips as his own larger ones occasionally slipped the bounds and brushed over it. It was unique among Sylar's lovers, to date.

Sylar's head was spinning, but he kept at it until Peter finally let him rise for air. Breathing hard, he separated, rolling off to the side. He faced his partner and caught his breath. Peter shut his eyes and smiled, basking in the afterglow. His lips were still puffy, now shining with saliva, and his skin still flushed. Sexy. Head to toe. Please let me be with you again. You liked that, didn't you? I hope you did. I hope I measure up. Jesus Christ, if this is how you are in bed, then I understand how you got all the fucking experience! If my dick was up for it, I'd fuck you again right now.

For a while they lay quietly next to one another, bodies cooling, breathing slowing, hearts no longer racing. Sylar began to review the session in his head, trying to learn from it what he should do next time, if he was so lucky as to have a next time. Overall, I think he liked that. He liked it long and slow, in and out, at first at least. He liked me hitting his prostate. He likes moving around on his own and maybe he likes telling me what to do. He didn't mind me touching him - his dick. He didn't mind me denying him - at least not that I could tell. He seemed to really get off on it when I fucked him hard. There might be specific areas I need to pay attention to.

Sylar reached out and touched Peter on the shoulder, stroking one fingertip down the smooth, pale skin. Peter turned to him immediately, too much the empath to let even a simple touch go without response. Sylar gave him a brief, small smile and then went on touching. It would ruin the test if he told Peter what he was doing. There were many things to keep in mind - an excess of contact, by itself, would provoke a reaction, as would the speed of the touch. What Sylar wanted to know right now was location, not degree or speed, and so he kept his eyes on his hand instead of on Peter's, moved slowly and steadily, and hoped that Peter would oblige him by relaxing.

A moment later, Sylar's attempt at communication via body language worked. Peter sighed in acceptance and let his eyes slide mostly shut. Sylar stroked lightly down Peter's arm, noting a tiny twitch at the hollow of his elbow, but nothing on his bicep before or forearm after. When his touch came to Peter's hands, Peter turned them as if to hold his, opening his palm in invitation and holding his breath for a moment. Sylar moved on promptly. It was no surprise that hands brought about an immediate attempt to engage. He'd expected that.

He shifted closer, waiting a few beats for his subject to still again from the alertness that his increase in proximity caused. Sylar repressed the urge to shush Peter. That might artificially dull reactions. He stroked the man's nearly hairless torso - no reaction for abdomen and he didn't risk going too low for there was sure to be a reaction then. A small reaction for navel - Peter opened his eyes and looked, but Sylar declined to meet his gaze. Peter calmed again. But the upper chest … ah, Peter breathed faster, his eyes opened fully and he scanned Sylar's face continually, even as Sylar ignored him. Gooseflesh rose on Peter's arms. He jerked a little when Sylar touched one nipple.

And that … was enough to trip some trigger inside the empath. Peter raised up on his elbows and kissed. Sylar tried to parse out if it was the degree of touch - some accumulation?, or that specific area that had prompted Peter to be amorous again. This was all territory he hadn't had the chance to explore like this, before. Sylar supposed the experiment need not be considered finished just because Peter was lip-locking with him. It was quite entertaining and more than a little distracting, but Sylar could multi-task. He smoothed his hand over Peter's shoulder and neck as they kissed, gaining a small sound of approval as his hand reached the back of Peter's neck. He ran it up through the man's hair, which evoked a momentary push forward on Peter's part, kissing him harder. Sylar toyed with the hair without pulling, just fondling it over and over. It felt fantastic, but Peter wasn't giving him reactions anymore. He touched the scalp, then cradled the back of Peter's head.
Immediately, Peter rolled him onto his back and crawled on top of him. Oh! Big response! He disentangled his hand and repeated the whole sequence again - rub shoulder, stroke back of neck, fondle hair, cradle back of head and it was definitely that last motion that did it because Peter reacted again, strongly, pushing into him and adjusting the set of his hips where he straddled him. Peter's pubic hair was scratchy against Sylar's dick and his ball sack was a spot of heat squashed against him in an equally intimate place. Our balls are touching, Sylar thought with amusement. So gay.

Okay. Likes his head held. Sylar brought his thoughts back to figuring Peter out. Both hands came up and held Peter's face to his. Peter shifted his weight and sent one hand to stroke himself, settling in over Sylar's own hips. Sylar worried. He didn't have an erection right now - clearly Peter did, and clearly Peter could feel him underneath him. He's ready to go again? Am I supposed to be hard? Is he going to fuck me now? Shit! That wasn't part of the plan, the agreement. I didn't think this would be my-turn-his-tur? I can't say no. I don't think I can do anything …

Peter noticed Sylar's apprehension, or his state of unarousal, or something, and started to pull away, his hand leaving his cock. Peter shifted to hands and knees, his eyes scanning over Sylar's face, trying to figure out what was going on.

I can't put him off. I can't let him think I don't welcome every advance he makes. No hot-cold or he won't be as enthusiastic with me. I want him to think he doesn't need to second-guess me. He reached up and pulled Peter back to him, holding the back of his head with one hand and sending the other to rub the back of his knuckles against Peter's nipples, putting what he'd already learned to good use. Even if this means I have to let him fuck me. That's okay. I think. I think he'll be okay with me. If I can hold it together.

He made a fist in Peter's hair as the empath's clever tongue probed inside of his mouth. He'd already had the experience of Peter's oral mastery (snigger), and he submitted to this version of it almost as happily as he'd enjoyed the other. He is such a complete slut. Thank God I didn't get stranded with someone who doesn't know their way around a bed. He'll treat me okay … I know he will, right? He worried about not measuring up, but at least he was dealing with someone willing to let him try. He worried more about what Peter was about to do.

Peter moaned a little, shifting his weight again to stroke himself. Testing the waters, Sylar let his own hand fall lower. The second his hand brushed Peter's, Peter moved to support himself with both hands, making tiny motions with his hips that Sylar couldn't help but read as plaintive. Just in case he didn't get it, Peter whined as they kissed.

Oh … oh, yeah. Beg me, Petrelli. Sylar's hand slipped around Peter's equipment, flinching a little at the unexpected slime at the tip. While yes, of course Sylar knew what that was there for, being quite familiar with his own anatomy even if he limited his explorations to the bare minimum, he still hadn't expected to get it on his hand right away. Peter pulled back and looked at him uncertainly.

Sylar smiled confidently, stroking up and down gently and smoothly. Inside, he was kicking himself. Peter was way, WAY more attentive than Maya, Elle, or Janice. He wasn't so sure how Peter stacked up against Lydia as that whole bout had been very weird. He had to be careful with his reactions here. "Tell me what you want me to do." Not that he particularly wanted to be told … well, actually, he wanted to know, he just didn't want to ask. He was asking now mostly to allay Peter's suspicions about how much Sylar was into this. If he learned a little extra along the way, so much the better.

"You're doing great," Peter said, tilting his head back and shutting his eyes. Sylar's hand slipped from behind Peter's head to the front, caressing the cheek and jaw line, then slowly, ever-so-carefully, moving to Peter's throat. A moment later, Peter leaned into it.
Oh, fuck me! No fucking way! Sylar thought in thrilled disbelief. His fingertips dug in slightly and one side of Peter's mouth curled up as he started to pant. *Kink jackpot, you naughty, dirty little thing!* He adjusted his grip a fraction, being well familiar with how to strangle someone. It had been one of the first tricks he'd learned - with telekinesis, admittedly, but it was perfectly possible to do it with one's hands as well. He was careful just to restrict the airflow, not cut it off. He could feel Peter's pulse hammering away under his fingers - so much life in the palm of his hand, and Peter was putting it there so willingly.

Peter rocked his hips faster, so Sylar sped up his strokes, wishing he had leisure to test different patterns, but Peter didn't seem like he was going to last terribly long. Sylar glanced down at him, only now thinking about what that meant, given their position with Peter straddling him, dick over Sylar's belly. *He's going to come on me. The little shit's going to spunk right on me.* He looked back up at Peter's blissed out face, letting himself be served and his choking fetish indulged with a certainty of his own safety that was almost arrogant.

*Jeez, why don't you just piss on me while you're at it, Petrelli?* Sylar didn't know how to take this. He was about to be not only marked as territory, but as a sexual possession, a landing zone for Peter's sperm. It was disgusting; it was unfathomably hot. His fingers tightened a little on Peter's throat and Peter gave a shudder, his hands moving to Sylar's shoulders, gripping him in passion as he rose up off his body. Seeing him respond and submit so clearly gave Sylar a weird twist in his gut and a throb in his cock. Peter wasn't acting insultingly dominant. If anything, he was in complete submission to Sylar bringing him off. Sylar's ideas of who was on "top" in this scene were completely muddled. All the neat lines were blurred.

In any case, Peter pressed forward hard enough that his airway really was endangered. A moment later, he gasped, stiffened and spurted hot, viscous liquid onto Sylar's stomach. The smell of Peter's sweat and musk wafted through the air anew and Sylar breathed it in greedily, a little repulsed and a lot fascinated by the scent. *Well.* Sylar stared down at the mess, as Peter pulled his neck back from Sylar's faltering grip. Sylar's hand fell to the bed. His other was still holding Peter's softening dick. *I let that happen. I ... want him to ... want me. What does this mean? Does he still respect me? Am I used goods now?*

Peter leaned forward, hands on the mattress on either side of Sylar's head. Sylar suddenly realized he was the subject of really intent, close scrutiny as Peter observed him through a screen of floppy bangs. Sylar looked up at him and thought he needed to smile and put on a thoughtlessly happy false face. But some shred of matching empathy in the back of his brain, working in conjunction with his own intelligence and knowledge of Peter, told him not to bother. He blurted out the first thing that came to mind: "Do you like me?"

Peter answered immediately, completely serious: "Yes."

Sylar looked back down at the whitish fluid on his stomach, trying to settle the uneasiness he felt at seeing such a substance on him. *He didn't fuck me.* And he felt grateful, because he wasn't ready for that and maybe Peter knew that. Because Peter had had (more than) a few partners, and he was an empath, and he wasn't in any hurry. *He didn't fuck me ... yet ... but he liked it enough that he wants to make me his. Is that it?* His gaze went to Peter's - Peter, who was watching every feature of his face like he was trying to memorize it. *He wouldn't want to make me his if he didn't think I was worth having.* The uncertainty cleared as he figured it out. Sylar tilted his head and puckered his lips slightly, an expression that brought Peter in to kiss him immediately, just as he'd suspected it would. *He wants me. He really does.*
Paint the Town Red

(Sylar's POV)

Sylar and Peter were leaned up against a concrete planter, admire their morning's work. They'd been painting – Peter's idea, of course, but Sylar was far more pleased with the outcome than he'd expected. He'd grumped about it at first, but followed along because why the hell not? He might as well. Neither of them tried to paint people, not wanting to test the world's limits, but they happily painted something abstract. It was different and way more interesting to look at than a blank wall.

Sylar had helped Peter hump the paint cans, brushes, rollers and ladders out to the smoothest wall they could find and then they'd gotten started. Peter's portion of the 'art' had ended up as a series of jagged, vivid green lightning bolts and irregular, blue stars. Despite the raging asymmetry of Peter's accomplishments, Sylar found himself liking them. His mood had lightened as the project had worn on and his own carefully plotted spirals, arcs and cubist shapes had taken form in red and yellow and black. They'd started joking with each other. Even Sylar's snark had become friendly.

At the moment Sylar was smiling up at the mural, pleased and relaxed for the first time in a very long time. When they had finished, at least with the first coat, they'd fetched sandwiches and returned. Food eaten, at the moment they were still resting and appreciating the results of their joint labor. Or at least Sylar was. Peter's attention had strayed to his companion. He was looking at Sylar rather intently. Of course it caught Sylar's attention to be looked at, with that creepy out-of-the-corner-of-your-eye awareness of being observed.

Sylar kept looking forward at the wall though, until he saw Peter's hand lift towards him. At that, Sylar's head turned fractionally and his eyes shifted to Peter. The beginnings of a gesture towards Sylar's face warranted a direct look, but Peter demurred immediately. He blinked and dropped his hand, but kept regarding Sylar – just a little less intently than before. He was certainly being open about it. Sylar let his eyes burn holes in the side of Peter's head while Peter tried to act like Sylar wasn't...
staring. *What if he was going to touch me? Shouldn't I … let him?* Sylar dropped his gaze as he thought about how to arrange that, then glanced back up briefly. "Permission granted, then." He said it softly, but they were right by each other. He used an intimate tone, almost a whisper.

Peter kept looking at the mural for long enough that under other circumstances Sylar would have become bored and given up. But this … if Peter had been about to touch him, make a pass at him, whatever … that gained Sylar's sharp attention for however long it took. Was Peter's incredible resistance finally crumbling? Sylar had made offers and motions, each more overt than the last. Peter had acted tempted from time to time, but he'd ultimately always declined. Clearly it wasn't that Peter didn't want.

Eventually, Peter turned slowly, shifting his weight forward and putting his legs down, twisting his body so that he sort of faced Sylar. Peter's eyes drew up even with Sylar's with an expression that was unmistakably … interested. He wanted all right.

*Oh! Fuck me. He IS going to touch me!* Sylar held perfectly still as Peter lifted his hand again and reached for him, slowly … and hesitantly. Sylar kept his gaze steady, letting his eyes widen and his face relax into what looked calm or neutral. He didn't want to look too interested or desperate – that would make Peter self-conscious. He didn't want to look challenging or judgmental or upset, much less hostile. Peter's green-stained fingertips, just the very tips of them, touched Sylar's hair over his forehead. Peter swallowed nervously, eyes flitting between the tentative contact and Sylar's face.

*Oh please God, Peter, don't freak out on me. I don't know what the fuck I did today to make you feel friendly enough towards me to do this …* Sylar leaned his head forward slightly, tilting it slowly into Peter's touch, and dropping his gaze so Peter wouldn't feel 'watched'.

Peter's fingers skimmed so lightly over Sylar's hair, hardly displacing it at all – just … feeling it. Sylar realized his breathing had accelerated quite on its own, something that wasn't allowed. He tried to ramp it back down. *Don't look too interested. Just look neutral, sort of neutral-pleased, like this is normal. Let him do it. Please do it, Peter. But why now? I just don't get it. How do I make you do this in future? What is it I did today that made this okay for you?* But Sylar was getting touched and that was what mattered more than the mystery. Peter's fingers came to the side of the nape of Sylar's neck and he toyed, just for a moment, with the ends of Sylar's hair, brushing them back and forth.

Sylar's chest was tight. Goose flesh pimpled his forearms and frankly, he wanted to moan. To have gone for years without seeing anyone at all, and then so long trapped here with Peter as an enemy, to have suddenly catapulted to the status of being an object of something like affection, or at least someone Peter was willing to use as a distraction, a friendly distraction … it was a big deal. It was huge. Sylar was embarrassed at how desperate he was, that the lightest petting made him ache inside. Sylar fought the urge to swallow noisily and even pant, because he had a role to play here if he wanted this to continue and oh my God did he ever want this to continue, for as far as Peter was willing to take it.

Peter's hand swept forward slowly, letting just the pads of his index and middle finger touch Sylar's cheekbone. It was skin-to-skin contact and this time Sylar didn't completely stop the sucking in of breath that he did. He leaned into it just a bit more, trying to gauge how responsive he should be and walk that fine line between 'enough and encouraging' and 'too much and off-putting'.

Peter's hand dropped to under Sylar's jaw and touched with a little more pressure, urging him to lift his head. Sylar did, bringing his eyes up as well. He adopted an open, vulnerable expression that was maybe even a little needy. He'd used it a time or two with Peter before and it had never failed to move the empath. That it hadn't moved him enough wasn't so much that Sylar would risk trying something else.
Peter chewed his lower lip as though with indecision. *All or nothing*, Sylar thought, letting his lips part slightly, trying to make the invitation as clear as he could. *Come on, Peter. Come on*.*I won't bite unless you want me to.* Peter shifted and turned further, coming onto his knees with one hand on the planter. Sylar felt somewhat trapped and uncomfortable with Peter looming over him as he was now, but he swallowed that down and tilted his face up to meet Peter's. The other man came in slowly, face nearing his, eyes darting across Sylar's visage, alert, it seemed, for the least sign of threat. *He's still afraid of me. He doesn't know how I'll take this.* It was kind of flattering. Peter was making a lot of assumptions and in a way he was throwing caution to the wind, but he was still hesitant, trying over and over to read Sylar's receptivity and mood.

Sylar puckered a little, hoping Peter actually carried through, because if he didn't, this was going to be crushingly embarrassing. But no, Peter seemed pretty fucking determined and it wasn't like Peter would get out of it unscathed if he did back off now – unscathed ego-wise, that is. Sylar wouldn't "do" anything to him, because anything retaliatory would make it less likely that Peter might try this again later.

As Peter's face neared his, Sylar noticed Peter was breathing harder, his chest rising and falling as fast as though he'd been running. Peter was tense, uncertain, and afraid, but he was doing it anyway. Peter's brows quirked and drew together in an expression that trumped Sylar's hands-down for 'vulnerable' and added a healthy dollop of 'scared' to go with it. Sylar made absolutely no other motions, whatsoever. He let Peter set the pace entirely.

Their lips touched with a light brush that was so faint it was ticklish. Sylar suppressed his urge to twitch his lips away and instead parted them even more. Peter turned his head so their noses didn't bump as he came in a second, more definite time. His lips pressed against Sylar's. They were warm and soft and gentle, moving only slightly, but it was a real kiss even if it seemed like Peter was petrified to be giving it. And then Peter made a tiny sound in the back of his throat, like an abbreviated sigh, or the word 'huh' at a high pitch. That sound shot through Sylar like electricity, prompting life in all sorts of places. It was a sound of barely restrained desire and there seemed to be no reason why Peter would make that noise unless he was a lot more turned on than Sylar had suspected.

*Is he about to come in his pants over … this? (Me? Over me? Seriously?)* Peter kissed him again, kind of forced and hurried, then backed off suddenly with a nervous, but happy smile. He chewed at his lip again and rocked back onto knees and the curled-under soles of his feet. Sylar let his eyes drop, discreetly checking out the obvious fullness at the front of Peter's jeans. *Oh yes. That … that is an erection. Oh. My. God. I've got him!*

Sylar's eyes shifted up to Peter's face. The empath was looking over at their collection of paint cans, breathing deeply and clearly trying to calm down. A look of pure, predatory glee swept across Sylar's face, but only for a moment.

**Second Base Coat**

*(Peter's POV)*

Peter and Sylar reclined in front of their masterpiece - a mural that was an impressive six feet high and twenty feet long. It had taken an outrageous amount of paint, but less time than Peter had expected. So far they'd only applied the one coat to it. It would need another or two to be really vibrant. Peter was looking forward to it, having found his partner in crime to be especially friendly, warm and engaged through the process of their vandalizing. Peter had really enjoyed the day so far and the easy camaraderie they'd managed to share during painting.
He breathed deeply, thinking about the goofy smile Sylar had sent his way as Peter had outlined where he would put a three foot wide bolt of green lightning. He recalled the absorbed, utterly focused look Sylar had given his own project, carefully measuring and marking off precise lines and arcs with a seriousness that far exceeded that required of their morning lark. Sylar's full, unadulterated attention was definitely something to see. His focus was complete and pure, blocking out all the rest of the world except for this one thing, or person.

Sylar was usually focused on Peter with a laser-beam intensity that made Peter defensive and off-balance. But today had been different. Sylar's eyes were on the mural still, taking it in as they let their lunches settle before working on the second coat. Peter glanced down at the orderly pile of sandwich wrappers weighted with a stone between them. When he raised his eyes, he let them run from Sylar's paint-speckled forearms over the curled up sleeves of his shirt, thence on to his strong jaw, already darkening with faint stubble.

Peter exhaled slowly, indulging his gaze with the scenic route. Sylar had well-defined cheekbones even if one was smeared with white paint; a big, masculine chin; generous lips the likes that Peter had seen on very few men, but would have looked totally out of place on a woman; a nose whose dimensions lent prominence to Sylar's features and balanced out the striking, devilishly handsome brows that shadowed Sylar's most astonishingly handsome trait: his eyes. Those eyes were gorgeous. Peter had seen them so dark as to be made of coal and once so brightly lit that they looked almost golden. Usually they were a rich brown and so alive, so clear, so attentive and alert and perceptive. If they were windows into the soul, then Sylar's soul was a vast and multi-faceted thing.

Sylar had noticed. What Peter registered was 'Sylar has noticed me', even though what he discerned less consiously was that Sylar's breathing had become shallower, his body had stiffened just a tiny bit, his face had lost the mobility it had held a moment before, and his eyes, that had previously been sweeping the painting at will, now confined themselves to a small area. Sylar was pretending not to have noticed, yet his pretense was clear. Peter couldn't have told someone exactly how he knew this, but he knew it.

He's letting me look at him. It was generous of him, of Sylar, to allow that. Peter appreciated it. He didn't get the opportunity very often - hardly at all, really. No, actually he couldn't off-hand remember a time when Sylar had been aware of his observation and not challenged Peter over it, one way or the other. Generally it was just a look in return with eyes slightly narrowed and brows pulled down in promise of a threat that would get stronger if Peter did not immediately defer. So Peter did. It wasn't his place to be looking at Sylar like that, despite Sylar's approaches and flirting and overt invitations. He invited, but then the slightest action on Peter's part - even just looking at Sylar 'wrong' - provoked a defensive or even apprehensive response that had Peter back-pedaling as fast as he could.

But now Sylar was letting him look. Peter looked at the man's hair - long, fine and changeable with the light just like his eyes. Right now the noon sun brought out the golden highlights and made apparent every strand. It was a bit of a mess at the moment. Peter wondered what it felt like and just how far Sylar's generosity extended. Oh, but if he could have a fantasy come true, Sylar would be asleep and unaware and Peter could touch him without suffering for it, without waking the man. His hand rose without him thinking about it, and the spell broke. Sylar's eyes swiveled in that creepy way he had, without moving any other part of his body.

Peter dropped his hand immediately, but other than a brief glance to meet Sylar's eyes and acknowledge him (also to subconsciously note Sylar's constricted pupils - a clear sign of 'back off' even if Peter chose to ignore it), he kept looking. The looking had been allowed. Maybe Sylar would just look away and let Peter go back to it. Sylar did not. Disappointment thinned Peter's lips and he sighed a little at what he could look at and not touch, and, apparently, not even look at for too long.
without causing a problem, because Sylar was still staring at him for having the boldness to not turn away.

Peter leaned back and turned to look at the mural, face blank of interest in it. Sylar snorted disdainfully at having successfully asserted who got to look at who around here and sneered, "What are you waiting for, permission?"

Peter's brows lifted slightly and he shifted back to face straight ahead. Dejected and frustrated, he breathed out, "Yeah," not caring if Sylar heard him or not. It was rhetorical anyway. Sylar glared at him. Peter could sense the stare and feel the way it made his skin prickle, like it always did. It felt like the hairs on the back of his neck were standing up, all the more because they were less than an arm's length from one another, proximity forced by the narrowness of the concrete planter they were leaning against. Before, the closeness had felt warm and companionable. Now it felt claustrophobic, but Peter refused to move away. Yet.

He was aware of the shift in Sylar's posture, breathing and sightline as Sylar backed down from the aggression he was emoting. Just like before, it was something Peter sensed organically rather than intellectually. He just knew the pressure had lifted. A moment later, Sylar said quietly and gently, "Permission granted, then."

Peter thought about that, his eyes unfocused and straight ahead. He tried to weigh whether to take Sylar seriously or not. He rolled around in his head that soft tone of voice and the more relaxed posture Sylar had adopted - Peter could see it out of the corner of his eye, the way Sylar's feet moved a little now, the micro-sounds of his deeper breathing, the faint shift of fabric against the sidewalk. Sylar wasn't as still and tightly coiled as he had been a few moments before. It translated to 'serious' in Peter's head.

Having reached that conclusion, he worried over what to do about it. It was an offer. Sylar had made a number of those, usually with an attitude like he was throwing down a gauntlet or presenting Peter with a prize - neither of which Peter sensed organically rather than intellectually. He just knew the pressure had lifted. A moment later, Sylar said quietly and gently, "Permission granted, then."

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It didn't read so strongly of 'danger', like all the other times had. Peter focused on the painting and on an intricately interlocking set of spirals that made something of an infinity symbol now that he looked at it. He thought about the way Sylar had held his brush over that part, making short, careful strokes. Peter wanted that attention on him. He wanted to matter. He wanted.

 Summoning his courage, he turned slowly to face Sylar again, letting his own interest show through as clearly as he could and watching for Sylar's response to that. Aggression? Indifference? Contempt? Fear? Even the least reluctance would have put Peter off and he scanned for it assiduously. Sylar went still again, but his skin pinked a bit and his pupils dilated. That was definitely not a 'back off' signal.

Peter's own breathing was speeding up fast as tension coiled inside of himself. He raised his hand once more and extended it slowly, still watching for response. Sylar's eyes widened as Peter reached for him and his face relaxed, brows lifting slightly. Peter wasn't thrilled at being stared at, but he took Sylar's expression as a qualified invitation - assuming Peter understood the qualifications, which he didn't, but he kept on anyway. He swallowed nervously as he touched just the very tips of his fingers to Sylar's hair, just enough to make contact. He looked to Sylar's face, because he'd now taken an irretrievable step - touching with interest. He'd established, definitely, that he was willing to touch. Did the invitation include that?

Very slowly, Sylar tilted his head into the petting. More importantly, he looked down, accepting the
contact and asking for more. Peter breathed more heavily, feeling almost light-headed with tension, and blinked. He let his fingers follow the course of Sylar's hair back, shifting a little to lean closer, noting that Sylar didn't pull away. On the contrary, Sylar's own breathing was coming faster.

Peter toyed with the ends of Sylar's hair. It felt lovely even if it still carried the residual stiffness from his hair gel. Peter brought his hand back to Sylar's cheek, touching along the upper edge of a smear of white paint. Sylar sucked in a short gasp and leaned into it more, still looking down. Peter could feel himself stiffening within his jeans. Sylar's responsiveness was totally doing it for him. He was barely touching the man and yet Sylar acted like it was the most sensual of caresses. Plus, he wasn't pinning Peter with his gaze anymore. He was submitting himself to whatever Peter would provide, without Sylar making demands, setting conditions or issuing challenges.

Peter dropped his hand under Sylar's chin and lifted it. Sylar's face was open, beseeching and begging. He'd used that expression before and it always got to Peter even though he knew it was false. False insomuch as it was an assumed expression, deliberately cultivated for effect. What got to Peter today was knowing why Sylar was using it. Fake or not didn't matter - Sylar was communicating to Peter that he wanted him and the message was coming through loud and clear.

Peter was hard, feeling heavy in his groin. He chewed his lower lip, doubt creeping in about the wisdom of what he was about to do. He was terrified of the man and he had to admit he wasn't sure how he'd feel about this later, when he wasn't looking into Sylar's plaintive face. But Sylar wasn't the only one with needs. They drove Peter on now, without any of the usual speed bumps and full-stops that Peter experienced when Sylar was the one initiating.

Sylar's mouth opened slightly and Peter was decided. That was just too much of an invitation to pass up in his current state. That was all it was - an invitation, not a demand. Peter rose to his knees and caught his weight with a hand on the planter, over Sylar's head. That Sylar didn't flinch from that, from Peter so clearly taking the dominant role, heartened him. Peter bent to bring his lips to Sylar's, going slower as Sylar turned his face up to meet him. Peter paused for a last moment, feeling Sylar's breath against his face, giving a last second for Sylar to demand the control that was so important to Sylar. Peter had no idea how they were going to negotiate that between them because Peter was so fucking scared of what Sylar might do if he had it.

But Sylar looked genuinely willing to surrender that for the moment, in exchange for what Peter was promising. He puckered his lips as though to reach for Peter's, but refrained from moving his head up. He left it to Peter to pick when and if they kissed. Peter's lips felt hot to himself and he could feel every puff of Sylar's breath against them. He felt like he was straining at his pants. He felt dizzy and like he was beginning to sweat. Fear and desire warred within him but he closed those last few inches and thank God Sylar did not so much as twitch because Peter would have bolted if he had.

His first attempt at a kiss was more attempt than kiss, with Peter pulling back immediately. He felt like every muscle in his body was being contracted all at the same time. He was so tense it was painful. He took a deep breath, tried to calm his nerves, and did it right the second time. He still kissed only lightly. He was so wound up he wondered if, for the first time in his life, he might come from doing no more than kissing someone. His throat made a noise without consulting him at all, prompting him to clamp down immediately on what was almost a whimper.

Sylar jerked slightly at the sound and kissed back with desire. Peter pulled away, then changed his mind. Worried that Sylar might interpret the withdrawal as a disapproval of Sylar's response, he kissed him again, quickly and nervously, then pulled back with an awkward, semi-relieved smile. Peter rocked back onto his knees and feet, looking off to the side and trying to calm himself. I did it. I did it. I did it. It's okay. He's not mad. It's okay. Everything's okay.
He was breathing hard like he'd run a race. Sylar was looking up at him - he could see that in his peripheral vision, along with a brief flash of white as Sylar grinned and then fixed his face. Peter smiled slowly, glad that Sylar was happy. He imagined Sylar was thinking something along the lines of 'Score!' or 'I'm going to get laid for sure, now!', neither of which seemed all that inappropriate or insulting to Peter.

Thinking himself sufficiently calmed to at least talk, Peter glanced down at his companion and said, "So, do you want to do that second base now?" Sylar froze completely, eyes fixed on Peter, who mentally reviewed what he'd said. "Coat! Coat! I meant that second coat of paint! Jeez!"
"Political protest doesn't accomplish anything, Peter. Direct action does."

They were standing on the street talking about nothing, really, just talking to hear each other's voices. Peter frowned at Sylar's pronouncement, but his attention was caught by the man's grimace as Sylar reached back over his shoulder with one long arm, elbow in the air. He scratched at his back briefly, then grunted and gave it up, twisting his arm behind him and reaching up with it. From the half-snarl on Sylar's face, he still wasn't able to reach the annoying patch of skin.

There was that magical spot in the middle of the back that was impossible for most people to reach. When it itched, there was not a lot a person could do about it but endure the irritation. Maybe they could rub themselves on a building, which was even more undignified than Sylar's current struggles, or if they had a backscratcher, they could use that.

Peter walked around behind Sylar, prompting the man to straighten and yank his hand out from behind himself. Maybe he'd thought Peter was going to grab his wrist and wrestle him down, because that position did make it easy to get an immobilizing hold on him. But that wasn't Peter's intention.

Sylar's hands hung loosely at his sides as the other man breathed carefully and turned his head just slightly as Peter moved behind him. He was hyper-alert, but for nothing. Peter matter-of-factly reached up and scratched the center of Sylar's back, curling his fingers enough to get his blunt nails into play. Sylar gave a faint shiver at the frisson of sensation.

"Do I have the right spot?" Peter asked softly, aware that Sylar's reaction was taking this out of the realm of friendly acquaintance and to an intimacy that Peter wasn't quite sure he was comfortable with. Sylar didn't answer, so Peter expanded his circle, scratching thoroughly and a little harder. "I know that really sucks when you can't quite get that spot there in the middle. There's no reason why we can't help each other out sometimes."

Peter paused, his fingers flexing slightly so the pads of his fingertips were against Sylar's back, feeling the warmth of his body through the shirt and undershirt the man wore. Sylar's breath pulled in just a little too fast. Peter felt the urge to touch a lot more than he already was. Instead, he pulled his hand away and walked off several feet, sitting on the curb of the street. "Protesting at least attracts the attention of the media, and sometimes that's all that needs to be done," he said, casually continuing the conversation they'd had before.

Peter had won their latest fight, which he of course felt bad about. Like most of their skirmishes, it had been stupid, but that apparently didn't stop either of them from having them. He tried to tell himself it was the guilt that motivated him when he got up and walked over to the other man, asking, or rather saying, "Let me take a look at you. I want to make sure you're okay."

Sylar frowned up at him, eyes narrowing slightly as he obviously questioned Peter's motives. It was silly, so Peter gave him a warm, friendly smile to put him at ease and casually brushed Sylar's hair back from his forehead. Peter threaded it back, thinking about how nice that felt - all the lovely, silken strands. He crouched a little, ignoring Sylar's sudden shift in expression to forced neutrality and let the fingers of his right hand drift across Sylar's forehead as he brushed the left back through the man's hair a second time, and then a third.

Peter touched the knot over Sylar's eye. It had bled, but it wasn't hot to the touch. "This isn't fevered.
I don't think it's going to infect. It seems to be healing fine." His fingers ghosted across Sylar's temple to caress his cheekbone, palpating gently as he petted the man's head with his other hand. "This is definitely not broken. Sometimes I wonder if something about being here makes our faces tougher than they should be. What with the way we beat on each other, we've been lucky nothing worse has happened than that time I broke my hand."

Speaking of which, he let his not-too-long-ago-broken right hand trail down Sylar's cheek to his jaw. There was another bump there, which hadn't directly been Peter's fault. Sylar had fallen and hadn't caught himself well. Aware that it might be sensitive, Peter's touch was light. "I'm sorry I hurt you," he murmured. "We shouldn't be beating on each other." He petted Sylar's hair again.

He looked at Sylar's eyes, finally, taking in the man's expression. It brought home to Peter that he was a lot physically closer here to Sylar that he'd realized, having leaned in a lot during the examination. He swallowed and pulled back. "I think you'll be fine," he said in a more normal tone of voice, standing. He nodded to Sylar, or to himself, or to no one, and walked off, stopping where he was turned away three-quarters and only barely able to see the other man. Peter's subconscious was screaming at him, but he was pretty good at ignoring that when he wanted to. Right now, he couldn't quite put his finger on why, but he really, really wanted to ignore it.

Sylar sat down on the couch very nearly right against Peter. He was no more than a couple inches away. He was angry about how much Peter had been touching him up and how little he was allowed to respond, and so with the entire other end of the couch and a dozen chairs to sit in, Sylar passive aggressively set himself down on Peter's end and crowded him. Take that, you bastard!

He knew the trick to this was to act casual, like it hardly mattered at all, like Peter wasn't even really there. So he opened up his book immediately, settling back and pretending to begin to read. Two could play at this game.

Peter, for his part, had looked up when Sylar approached, but the lack of eye contact had prevented any comment or address. After Sylar claimed his space, a little too assertively perhaps, Peter held very still for a long moment. Sylar breathed steadily, forcing his eyes along the line of text in his book while he was inwardly poised to respond to the inevitable reaction. Were there positions reversed, if he were dealing with himself, this would be the most dangerous period. Or … no, actually Sylar knew himself well enough to know he wouldn't have waited this long. Pretty much as soon as Peter's ass hit the couch that close he would have been doing something because getting this close and being this obvious about it was crossing a line.

Peter wasn't him though, and his reactions didn't always make sense to Sylar, which was the whole reason why he was over here metaphorically poking at the man. Peter shifted, wriggling almost in his seat - a motion that entailed his knee perhaps accidentally touching Sylar's thigh before Peter sighed, relaxed, and turned back to his own book like nothing at all unusual was going on. Certainly he didn't act like his territory or personal space had just been invaded.

Sylar let his eyes slide to the side and observed the other man. Peter didn't look resentful, uncomfortable or much of anything other than content. Content? He's fucking content? I had the whole fucking room to be in and he's happy that I'm … He thought about all those touches Peter had given him. It occurred to Sylar that what he had intended as revenge was distinctly not.
Munchausen Syndrome

"I have a cut here on my arm I'd like you to look at."

Another one? "Let me see." Peter took Sylar's proffered wrist and rolled up his shirt sleeve. There was a thin inch long slice diagonally across his forearm, just above the wrist. It looked like a big paper cut. Sylar had been turning up with a lot of little injuries lately. They'd reached a critical mass, tipping the scale of probability for the level of accident-prone-ness that Peter would expect for someone of Sylar's care in personal conduct. "What happened?"

"I was using a screwdriver. It slipped."

"I'd think a screwdriver would have made a deeper gash." Doubt flavored Peter's voice as he looked at the cut and tried to imagine where the man's hands would have had to be to do that. It was possible, he supposed. But Peter had seen enough scars on cutters to know the back of the forearm wasn't an uncommon spot. It didn't feature any important veins, arteries or tendons and could be hidden with a long-sleeved shirt. The upper arm was even better, but a little harder to get to. Plus, forearm injuries were easier to explain – like, say, that you were using a screwdriver and slipped.

"There must have been a burr on it. It's not a big deal. If you don't care-" Sylar started to pull his arm away, but Peter's fingers tightened around his wrist and the man immediately desisted. Peter looked up at him, really intent, really trying to get into his head. In the last few weeks, he'd palpated more than his share of bruises, doctored scrapes, investigated bumps and in some cases just discussed ailments. There was something going on here. His hand around Sylar's forearm tingled warmly and Peter knew for sure this was a staged injury. He also knew that Sylar wanted his attention so desperately that it ached.

Peter swallowed and looked back down, trying to act casual. "No. You never know what might get infected. It's just that, you know, you might want to consider a safer occupation. Come on. I'll get my kit, but really, all you need is a band-aid."

"Sure. Of course," Sylar said cheerily, following Peter enthusiastically. His happiness confirmed Peter's suspicions, but the empath wanted to think about this before he started throwing around off-putting accusations of malingering. They'd settled into a routine for these matters, Peter realized as they walked into the rec room where he'd taken to keeping the medical kit. It had quickly become inconvenient to go up to his room for it.

Sylar knew his part to play as did Peter. They sat together on the couch so close their thighs and shoulders touched. Sylar was relaxed, pleased and warm towards him, his face open and receptive as he offered his hurt up for treatment. Peter cleaned the insignificant wound thoroughly before bandaging it, going through all the usual motions as he considered his realization about what Sylar was really trying to get from him. There was a ritual to the process and now that Peter thought about it, there was an awful lot of unnecessary closeness going on here – unnecessary from a medical standpoint, that is. Peter suspected it might not be so unnecessary from where Sylar was sitting.

Peter wouldn't deny his own feelings about it, either. He got to take care of someone, or at least pretend to, and he liked that. It made him feel important, useful and worthwhile. He wasn't sure what to do about Sylar hurting himself, but ignoring him might make the injuries Sylar inflicted that much worse – things Peter couldn't ignore with any good conscience. Right now it wasn't a big deal. He was half-holding Sylar's hand with one of his while the other smoothed down the bandage. "There,"
he said, smiling. "All better." He looked over Sylar's face again, taking in features he'd more than once thought were very handsome. The current expression on the man's face was one of Peter's favorites.

"Thank you," Sylar said softly, making no move to remove himself from contact with his nurse. He looked back in response to Peter's inspection, his lips moving slightly like he wanted to speak, but couldn't quite bring himself to do it.

"No problem," Peter replied in a similar gentle tone. He breathed in slowly, thinking that he should probably give some thought to other ways to give Sylar what he needed - if Peter wanted to give him what he needed. What Sylar wanted was so very human – it was basic. Peter studied his own emotions and found that he didn't blame or resent Sylar for his desires. Peter gave his the hand of his 'patient' a squeeze. After all, Sylar wasn't the only one with that need.
Seduction and Seduction

Chapter Summary

First scene is from Sylar's POV, next scene is from Peter's.

Seduction

Sylar flopped down on the queen-sized bed dramatically, watching to see if his companion paid him any attention. Peter spared him a short glance, but then his gaze moved on, scanning over the room and the furniture therein. They were exploring apartments again, which had gone really well so far. Sylar was very pleased. He'd made Peter laugh several times and Peter had returned the favor. Neither of them were laugh-a-minute comedians, but they both appreciated humor as much as anyone else. They were loosening up with each other. Peter had told him a few more stories of his EMT experiences and Sylar had even shared a few carefully chosen, somewhat edited tales from his youth.

He was in a good mood at the moment - a little playful even. He smiled to himself. So this is what it's like to have a friend? It's nice. I'd rather have some benefits to go with that, though. I wonder if I could get him into bed with me? Hm ... maybe I should try that in a literal sense and just see how far I get. He didn't think he'd get very far, but he had the impression that he wouldn't ruin the friendly air between them unless he was deliberately provocative. "Come here," Sylar said, keeping his tone light but direct.

Peter came over to the side of the bed, looking down expectantly. For a man as stubborn as he was, he was also surprisingly cooperative if you managed to avoid hitting any of his buttons. While Sylar had figured out where most of those were that caused negative reactions, he was still in the dark about which levers to pull to get positive ones. It wasn't something Nathan had paid much attention to. The elder Petrelli had had the benefit of a more organic, mutual relationship from the start. Sylar was having to construct such an association from scratch.

Some quick calculations ran through Sylar's head, taking in the glances Peter directed to his body and the distances between them. If he had to guess, he'd say that Peter had just expressed a mild concern that Sylar was going to grab him, along with a little lurking suspicion about why he'd called him over. If he was going to lure Peter onto the mattress with him, he had to address both of those. Sylar rolled over, away from Peter, ending up on his stomach. He left his arms over his head and slid his hands under the pillow directly over his head. Face half pressed into the blanket, he let his voice take on a relaxed, carefree tone as he urged, "Come on." Water's great, come on in!

Peter eyed him, reinforcing the idea that he was suspicious and somewhat reluctant. Not a lot though. Sylar, face down, hands hidden and encumbered by the pillow, looked restful rather than poised. Peter was not a fan of mischief or unexpected actions from Sylar, which was too bad as Peter was prone to both himself. It was unfair, but hardly the only thing Peter could get away with that Sylar couldn't. For example, Peter could be (and occasionally was) flirtly with him, but whenever Sylar reciprocated, Peter shut him down or rejected him. It has led Sylar to bypass the flirting and try some straight up propositions, but Peter had either ignored them or outright refused. It had served to squash Sylar's expectations.
Apparently Sylar's act of inoffensiveness won the empath over and he raised his leg to half climb on the bed. He left the other planted on the floor, half on, half off. *Oh yeah, almost there.* There was no particular reason why Sylar was trying to arrange this except to satisfy his own inward sense of humor. Previously in their relationship here, he'd collected up things like this with the intention of teasing the hell out of Peter with them, taunting and mocking. He'd saved them up and then realized there was no way he could express these things without offending and alienating his only companion. It had been a startling lesson in manners, one that Sylar had puzzled over for days while his nose stopped bleeding and lost the tenderness inflicted by Peter's fist. So - if he wanted people to like him, then he had to stop making fun of them.

Now, he kept his amusement and satisfaction very much to himself most of the time, or when he shared it, he did so in a more considerate manner. *How to get him on here the rest of the way?* Sylar stretched, deciding to play like a bird faking a broken wing. He could pretend to be harmless if that was what it would take to lure Peter closer. Indeed, the closest he'd been to Peter had been when Sylar was too hurt to fight him off (or try much of anything). The rest of the time, Peter tended to keep his distance. "Mm," Sylar groaned a little. "I am so sore."

"Really?" Peter asked, making a slightly furrowed brow at him. Which made sense - there was no reason for Sylar to be sore. They hadn't been doing any heavy lifting in their explorations, after all.

Sylar changed his story a bit. "I have a knot in my back or something. It's out of joint."

"That sucks," Peter agreed, pulling onto the bed entirely. Inwardly, Sylar crowed (*I'm in bed with Peter Petrel-li! I'm in bed with Peter Petrel-li!* his mind sing-songed in victory. *Mission accomplished. Now what?*) Peter asked, "How bad is it?"

The urge to exaggerate his imaginary infirmity was high, but he knew he needed to keep it within reasonable bounds. Otherwise Peter might question why they'd been at this exploration business for hours and only now was his back mentioned. Sylar huffed, "It's been getting worse all day. I think I must have reached for something wrong earlier." He shifted his shoulders back and forth, grimacing.

That was when Peter did something unexpected and far beyond what Sylar had been hoping or planning for. He'd just thought of getting Peter on the bed for the purposes of counting coup, of keeping an internal scorecard on what he could manipulate Peter into. He'd overlooked one of Peter's 'levers' for good behavior: letting Peter caretake on him and treat some medical condition. Peter scooted over across the bed to right next to him. Sylar stiffened in surprise, the tables having turned a little too fast. "It's okay," Peter murmured, and Sylar realized his tension made him look authentic rather than Machiavellian. "Let me see."

Sylar laid perfectly still as Peter put his hand on his back, first over his left (nearer) kidney, then up to between his shoulder blades, which was the limit of what he could reach without moving even closer. His fingers probed down Sylar's spine, feeling out the column of bones. Peter asked, "Where does it hurt?"

"Ah, shit," Sylar thought, realizing he needed to make something up. "Just, uh, a little under my shoulder blades." *He's touching me!* He enjoyed the sensation of Peter's fingers trailing down, apparently gauging the spacing of his vertebrae. *What if he doesn't feel anything out of place?*

"I can feel how tight your muscles are," Peter noted, reaching the small of his back.

Sylar barely resisted the contrarian's urge to relax, deciding in a split second that he was better off if Peter thought he was tense. *How far down is he going to go?* But no - Peter stopped at the top of his jeans. For a moment, nothing else happened as Peter pulled his hand back to himself. Sylar slowly let out the breath he'd been holding. "What did you feel?" he asked cautiously.
"Nothing, but that doesn't mean it's not there. I'd probably only be able to tell a severe spinal injury. I'm not a chiropractor. I … I don't know. Some people can tell those microslips by touch, but I never have."

Ah, good for me then. He believes me. "Yeah. Yeah, well, it still hurts," Sylar added, feeling the need to grump a little to more firmly establish his story. Again, though, he was tugging on that 'caregiving' lever for Peter, who put his hand approximately where Sylar had said it hurt.

"Right here?"

"Um, well, kind of around there, yeah," Sylar hedged, wondering if Peter was going to try to give him some manner of adjustment. The anticipation of receiving some sudden shove or thrust by the heel of Peter's hand kept him tense, taking short breaths.

To his renewed surprise, instead Peter splayed his fingertips, put a firm but comfortable degree of pressure behind them, and rubbed the area in a circular motion. "Is this okay?"

YES! "Yeah," Sylar said breathily. He's not just touching me, he's rubbing me! That's … that's like a caress! Oh my God, Peter, I'm going to have back problems forever if this is what it gets me.

Peter shifted again, getting right next to him so much that Sylar could feel the occasional brush from Peter's thigh. Peter bent over him, bringing both hands to bear on either side of his spine, rubbing slowly and firmly. Sylar let his eyes roll up in their sockets at how good that felt. There was nothing wrong with his back and he wouldn't know a good massage from a bad one, but what was so thrilling was that he was getting the attention, the contact and the gentleness at all. Peter had quite a range of physical expression, a lot of it including direct contact with someone. Most of the contact with Sylar had been on the negative end of the spectrum, with blows of a great variety, all painful.

He knew Peter could be kind and gentle, tender even. He'd seen it mostly in Nathan's memories, in the obscene degree to which the two brothers had touched each other. Embraces, touching each other's faces, grasping arms, shoulders, forearms and sometimes the entire torso, squeezing each other, pressing together, whispering in one another's ears while cheek to cheek … Sylar wouldn't have believed there was nothing else going on if he hadn't had every single one of Nathan's memories to be sure. All those casual and a-lot-more-than-casual touches were in his head, but the most he'd personally experienced from Peter on the positive end was some careful and considerate medical care and the occasional touch in passing.

It left Sylar with an ache inside as he missed something he rationally knew he'd never had. He felt so closed off from everything, especially Peter, someone that his mind constantly stumbled over thinking of as more than an enemy and near-stranger. He didn't want to be Nathan. He didn't want Nathan's relationship with Peter. For one thing, he wanted a lot more than that.

He couldn't remember Peter ever giving Nathan a backrub and that … that thought by itself made him so glad he was facedown. It hid any embarrassing physical reactions and the feel of both of Peter's hands fondling his back, manipulating him with strong, secure strokes, was certainly kindling such a reaction. He let his breathing deepen as Peter worked up to his shoulders, kneading and molding his flesh until Sylar couldn't maintain the tension anymore. He let it go and relaxed, sagging against the mattress. Peter worked downward, quiet and thorough.

Oh, God, Peter. Why aren't you married and settled down with someone? Do you have any idea how excellent a catch you are? I'll bet there are people who never do this for a partner. And why are you doing it for me? Because I said my back hurt. That's it. That's all. And because you're so fucking desperate to help people that you'll even help me if you have to. Sylar let out a deep sigh of contentment as Peter silently worked over his lumbar region, helping Sylar out for no apparent
reason except that someone had a hurt that a few minutes of his effort might dispel.

He finished, and sat with his nearer (right) hand resting on Sylar's back, just above his beltline. Sylar wasn't about to turn over. He was rock hard. *Jesus Christ, if Peter gives me this sort of treatment and doesn't expect a reaction, then he's way more naïve than I think he is. He's naïve, but he's not that that naïve.* After a few moments of stillness, Sylar cocked his head and twisted his neck to look back at Peter, who seemed lost in thought, staring off into the distance. Peter's thumb moved slightly, brushing back and forth slowly against Sylar's shirt. It was an absent-minded intimacy, but an intimacy nonetheless and made Sylar wonder where, exactly, he ranked in Peter's head that he'd even unintentionally touch him like that. He stayed still, not wanting to break the spell.

"Is that better?" Peter finally asked, giving him a few 'I'm done' pats before withdrawing his hand.

*If I say no, will you do it all over again?* "Yes," Sylar said very quietly, thinking that he really needed to give a little more attention to how to get Peter to do what he wanted - like this. Or more than this. *What else is it that Peter likes?* Gratitude came to mind. "Thank you," he said.

"You're welcome." Again, Peter wasn't moving away. It created a strained feel between them, at least for Sylar, as he tried to figure out what he needed to be doing without being able to see Peter's face, not that it would have been a lot of help. Peter touched him again, lightly now, over his left shoulder blade. Sylar exhaled heavily and didn't restrain the shiver that shook him. "You liked that," Peter said, without a hint of a question.

*Uh … how the hell am I supposed to answer that?* "Most people like backrubs," Sylar said, giving a non-answer that didn't expose how desperate he was for the contact.

Peter kept moving his hand around, apparently straightening Sylar's shirt, which had been mauled and twisted during the massage. It was a fastidious bit of grooming that seemed really out of place. Sylar fought the urge to look back at the other man and instead lay still, even though he felt about as defenseless in the pose as he'd been initially pretending to be. Peter's motions changed to stroking him again - freaking petting him! - and Peter cleared his throat roughly as though trying to summon up his courage for something.

*Whoa. Wait a second. I'm not the only one fucking around here trying to manipulate somebody.* *Holy fuck.* Instantly Sylar was tense all over again. *He's making a pass at me. He's fucking making a pass at me! Jesus Christ, what do I do? Just lay here? Tell him he's sexy? No, no. That's always put him off in the past. What got him on the bed was me rolling over like this. He doesn't even have to look at me this way. It's super-nonconfrontational, like he's scared of me.* Which wasn't out of character, now that he thought of various other reactions Peter had had (and that Peter had outright told him - Peter didn't tend to be shy about letting people know how he felt … just like now).

Peter said, "Hey … just … um … I know you've made some offers … I'm just … um," he cleared his throat again as Sylar strained to hear every nuance and freely left Peter to stumble through whatever it was he had to say. "Maybe sometime, okay?"

A grin spread across Sylar's face even though Peter was retreating, leaving the bed entirely. Peter hesitated at the bedside as though waiting for an answer. Face beaming, Sylar turned and told him, "Oh yes!"

Looking frightened and put off by the expression, Peter hared off into a different part of the apartment, but he didn't leave. Dumbfounded at his luck and the turn of events, Sylar was glad of the privacy. He couldn't get the huge smile off his face, and he knew the trick to this was to act casual. He had to. And he would. But in the meanwhile, he was going to grin like a maniac.
Seduction

Sylar was a frighteningly good student. At least, that was what Peter had decided was going on, as Sylar seemed to have enrolled in Seducing Peter Petrelli 101 and was acing the class. Currently, he and Sylar were sitting on the couch, each canted towards the other, and Sylar was letting Peter's tongue explore his lips in a gradual progression, having figured out that letting Peter take the lead was best for both of them.

Their first time of making out, Sylar had swiftly become too aggressive. Peter had turned away and shut down. Sylar, hypersensitive especially that first time, backed off immediately. The second time, Peter swore Sylar did it on purpose just to see what the reaction would be. Peter had jerked back, angry, and Sylar had ducked his head apologetically, reaching out to stroke along Peter's arm. When Peter jerked that away, too, Sylar trailed his fingers up and down Peter's thigh and hunched over even more.

It had worked. Peter had calmed down fast, rubbed Sylar's shoulder a bit, ignored him for a while, and then moved things along to a completely different subject. He hadn't missed the little smile Sylar had - though whether it was 'I got away with that', 'I learned something' or 'I just avoided getting punched in the nose' was unclear. Peter was pretty sure it was at least one of those.

Not that he cared much. Right now what he cared about was the exquisitely human taste of Sylar's mouth as Peter sucked Sylar's upper lip between his own and ran his tongue back and forth over it. Sylar positioned himself as well as possible to make it easy - that wasn't lost on Peter. (Good student, paying so much attention to his teacher, Peter mused. A-plus, definitely.) Sylar panted lightly as his wide, dark eyes took in Peter's face so close to his own. Peter watched him back, but he didn't make much in the way of eye contact. He was more focused on what he was doing, anyway.

Peter's tongue probed at the line demarcating lips and inside of mouth, stroking over the smooth but drier lips, wetting them thoroughly and tasting them. Sylar tasted good. It wasn't like any specific food or drink. He tasted clean, but he definitely had a flavor. Gradually, he crossed the line to the slicker membrane within, teasing briefly against the even teeth before coming back to suck on the fleshy lip again. He liked the way Sylar leaned into him and breathed harder at that. Peter delved back inside time after time as Sylar allowed Peter all the time in the world to sample him.

Even though Sylar wasn't aggressing on Peter, it was clear he was really enjoying this. His expression persisted in being one of stunned amazement, like he found it hard to believe this was even happening. His breath came fast; his heart beat quickly and his skin was slightly flushed. Peter adored it, absorbed it, took in that his partner was really thoroughly and deeply engaged, even if he wasn't acting much. One of Sylar's hands was at Peter's waist, but other than that, they hardly touched. Sylar looked like he was the luckiest man in the world and Peter felt so, so appreciated. He finally finished with his taste test, moving on to a long, involved kiss. He tilted his head to mold his own lips against Sylar's, letting them slide together. Peter felt a quiver inside of himself, loving every moment of this. Sylar was getting it just right – not pushing, but letting Peter get comfortable with him (and more than comfortable). With other partners, Peter expected and wanted more interaction, but Sylar wasn't 'other partners'. They had too much history for Peter to be relaxed with him right away. He needed the chance to work up to whatever it was they were working up to. Hell, just being friendly had taken forever. Intimacy was progressing in stages. Kissing – kissing was good.

Peter loved kissing. As an activity, he was more interested in sitting around making out than
discussing whatever, and with Sylar there were so many topics he didn't want to get into. Instead, he wanted what he was getting here: cooperation, affection, attention and appreciation. He liked how Sylar was letting him lead. Later, perhaps, Peter would want more assertiveness, but for now he was still a little too wary for that. He wanted what he was getting.

Peter felt more than heard a stifled moan in the back of Sylar's throat as he worked his mouth, finding new areas to tongue. Sylar's left hand bunched the fabric of Peter's shirt just above the jeans - once, twice and then a third time in suppressed desire. Sylar wanted to be all over him, that was clear. Peter wanted to make Sylar submit entirely to being pleasured and push him right over the edge. He pulled back and waggled his eyebrows at the other man, who raised his slightly in question.

Time for a new lesson. Peter sat up and shifted, straightening and then twisting, bringing his left leg up and over so he straddled Sylar, sitting on his lap. Sylar's eyes widened comically, as though this was something he hadn't contemplated, like it was almost too far. He swallowed nervously. Peter stayed upright, butt on Sylar's knees, a respectable distance between their bodies. With a slight smile on his face, he waited for Sylar to get comfortable with the idea. Sylar's eyes returned to normal and his gaze dropped to Peter's chest, then lower to his legs. He reached out and stroked Peter's thighs, glancing back up. Sylar puckered a little and tilted his head, something he'd done before to say, "Come kiss me," without actually speaking.

Peter accepted the signal, leaning in to take what was offered. Three kisses into it, he brought his hands up the outside of Sylar's arms, over his shoulders, to the man's neck and then his cheeks, caressing and stroking. Sylar's breath came hard for a moment and he shivered, his mouth opening wider. The expression of arousal shot through Peter, electrifying him. He wanted more of that and he wanted it now. He slid in closer, bringing their bodies together. Sylar stiffened again, looking alarmed and so vulnerable. He was 'acting' less and less, Peter could tell. It was hard to keep up a charade when you were groin to groin with someone, as now. In a very obvious way, they were both rather excited about what was going on.

Peter smiled. "It's okay. It's okay. This is all I'll do." Unless you show me you can handle more.

Sylar paused to give Peter an exasperated look and to roll his eyes at being patronized. Peter just grinned and moved his face in close, rubbing the tip of his nose against the side of Sylar's. That seemed to just knock the guy right out. The rolling eyes turned to fluttering lids and Sylar let his head loll back with a deliciously helpless sound. Peter kissed the point of his chin, then dipped his head lower to Sylar's throat. Immediately the other man's hands gripped hard on Peter's shoulders, on the verge of shoving him back. Peter kissed gently - very gently - again, and then again, slowly working his way back up towards the chin. He made a mental note about that area. Sylar relaxed slowly.

Peter returned to Sylar's mouth to provide the deep, thorough plunging that had gotten such a good response earlier. It didn't take long before Sylar started running his hands up and down Peter's back, responding strongly. They kissed the same way for what seemed like minutes, until Peter was light-headed with desire and the urge to thrust into something was getting overwhelming. Peter rocked his hips slightly against the other man, provoking a dazed look as Sylar's fingers began to curl into Peter's shirt. The side of Peter's mouth twitched upwards for a moment, pleased with the acceptance.

Peter's hands strayed from Sylar's face to run through his hair. At that, Sylar began truly struggling, like he was on the verge of losing it. He pulled fitfully at Peter's shirt and kissed back aggressively, devouring Peter's mouth. Peter let him, things having gone far enough that he was comfortable with it now. He let Sylar try to swallow him down as Peter kept prodding at him, trying to push him over that edge. He is so freaking responsive!

Peter pulled back eventually to reassert control. He nipped at Sylar's lips, feeling the man's breath hot
against his face, tightening his hands into fists and pulling Sylar's head back so that Peter was in control of how much they kissed. Sylar said something completely inarticulate at that, clenching Peter's shirt. For a moment, it looked like that was all Sylar was going to do, but then he dropped his hands to Peter's ass, where they hovered for a second as though undecided. Peter tugged Sylar's head back and dropped his lips to Sylar's throat. The other man gripped Peter's ass immediately, pressing them together more tightly. Peter rocked harder, taking that as the signal it was - full steam ahead! He kissed and then nibbled up and down Sylar's throat, going gently at first even though his hold on Sylar's hair was firm, allowing no dissent. He ground his hips against him with increasing pressure and energy.

Sylar moaned and seemed torn in what he wanted to do - he struggled briefly as though he wanted to throw Peter off of him, all the while he was actually thrusting back to meet Peter. He made a series of tiny, choked sounds that were plaintive, then shuddered. He jerked spasmodically against Peter as he came, his breath hitching so beautifully. The knowledge that Peter had brought Sylar off just by dry-humping him was exactly what Peter wanted. He reached down with one hand to rub at himself furiously while the other, still fisted in Sylar's hair, brought the man's head back up so Peter could taste him one last time before his own climax.

Peter groaned, feeling the orgasm rush through him, building fast, lighting him up. He shoved his mouth tighter to Sylar's, feeling teeth pressing painfully against his lips. He squeezed himself through the front of his jeans, freezing up as he peaked. He panted, breathing hard against Sylar's cheek. Peter held himself in place, quietly winding down. Sylar pulled his head slightly to the side and Peter untangled his hand from the man's hair, giving him his freedom.

Sylar slowly moved his hands to Peter's head, cradling it and looking up at him like he was worthy of worship. Peter looked back, just inches away, letting himself fall into Sylar's dark, dilated eyes. The other man drew Peter in gently and began to tenderly pepper his face with small kisses and physical endearments. Peter felt himself go to putty inside. He slumped and sagged. Oh yes, Sylar was the best student ever.
Stay

Title: Stay
Rating: PG-13
Word Count: 1,200
Setting: The Wall
Warnings: None
Summary: Peter realizes he is unwilling to leave Sylar behind in the world of the Wall.

Peter looked out at the desolate landscape, which was shrouded from his view by darkness, rain and the grime thinly coating the cracked window. He shoved his hands further into his pockets, ignoring the damp and cold that seeped into his bones and covered his shoulders like an icy mantel. What he couldn't ignore were the faint shifting noises from the corner where Sylar sat, shivering as quietly and stoically as he could. The taller, somewhat thinner man seemed more susceptible to the chill and wet, but maybe that was just another feature of this crazy mental prison. Sylar didn't believe this was fake; Peter did and so perhaps it was easier for him to shrug off effects that Sylar found unshakable.

They'd walked for miles, driven on by Peter's insistence that he find a way out of here, a physical route that might be just over the horizon. And so they'd walked. Peter was determined; Sylar had followed. At first, Peter had thought Sylar went with him just to gloat when Peter turned out to be wrong. But as the day wore on, other possibilities began to filter into his thoughts. Maybe Sylar wanted to get out, too. Maybe he believed Peter and didn't want to risk being left behind in eternal solitary confinement. Maybe he just wanted to be with Peter, to stand by him, to go where he went. Faithful. And strangely, loyal. As evening drew on, those last reasons seemed truest, odd as it seemed.

Peter sighed as he strained his eyes against the night, dimly making out the jagged edges of abandoned buildings. They were vacant by necessity - nothing else lived in the nightmare world of Matt's creation - but the further Peter had walked, the less defined the structures had been. They showed increasing signs of decay and decrepitude, like there might indeed be an eventual end to the signs of civilization. The whole buildings, the furnished apartments, the diners and grocery stores well-stocked for their needs; the books, the baseballs, the hot showers and functioning electricity that Peter had taken for granted - all these were well behind him. Before him lay a bleak nothingness - a flat, empty landscape of hardship and privation.

And here was Sylar by his side, unflagging in his company. It was almost like … devotion. As the day had ended and light had left the land, Sylar had not faltered. He had suggested they seek shelter, but when Peter, ever foolhardy, had disregarded his warnings and pressed on, Sylar had fallen into step without quibble. Peter was beginning to think Sylar would follow him anywhere, even unto the end of the world.

It was an unasked for honor. Peter didn't know what to do with it now that he had it, but he felt guilty for not protecting someone who was putting such faith in him. He glanced back, side-eyeing the other man. Sylar sat on the floor, on a ratty blanket reminiscent of the ones movers used to wrap and protect furniture. There were scraps of cardboard littering the floor and although they were both grateful to have found a building intact enough to stave off the rain and the cutting, fitful wind, there were no other comforts to be found here. Sylar's legs were drawn up to his chest and his arms wrapped tightly around them. His chin was tucked down atop his knees and his frame shuddered continually from the cold.
It was a little-known fact that people could get hypothermia at temperatures well above freezing. Neither of them had dressed for a long trek, nor brought supplies. They had only each other.

Peter frowned. The chance of getting out was slim. Sylar was already suffering from the journey. That was certain. Dying wasn't the 'way out' Peter wanted to explore, especially if it was Peter's own actions that sent Sylar to that undiscovered country ahead of him. He relaxed as a decision settled over him. In the morning, they would return to where Sylar was comfortable, where his things were, where his home was. And Peter would go with him.

That determined, he turned from the window and walked over to his companion, who looked up at him with dull, tired eyes. Peter gathered up some of the cardboard, making a stack of it at the edge of the blanket with the cleanest scrap on top. Sylar watched him silently. They'd already discussed that they had nothing to make a fire with, but that wasn't Peter's goal.

"Lie down. Use this as a pillow," Peter directed. Sylar looked at him blankly, still shivering jerkily, and obeyed. It was hardly the strangest thing Peter had asked him to do. No, probably the strangest was what was going to happen next. Peter knelt beside and behind Sylar, guiding him to turn onto his side.

"Wh-wh-what are you d-doing?" Sylar stammered out, letting Peter handle him anyway.

"I'm going to …" He wasn't willing to say what he was going to do. He felt embarrassed about it, but he had no other way to provide the warmth that Sylar obviously, desperately needed. They had no dry clothes (again, Peter's fault for not seeking shelter as soon as the sky had clouded and rain seemed immanent) and no way to get them. There was nothing else to do but what Peter planned. Instead of explaining, he just nudged Sylar into the position he wanted and laid down next to him, spooning up close as Sylar tensed all over, this time not from the cold. "Here," Peter said softly, wrapping himself against the other man's body, offering his body heat. "Maybe we can sleep like this. In the morning we'll go back home."

Throwing everything to the wind - caution, decorum and probably sense - Peter wormed his arm around Sylar's waist, holding him close with an intimacy they had never shared before, but Sylar had hinted a few times was desired. Peter had things he could offer besides just his body heat. Friendliness and affection were among them, along with actually caring about Sylar, and more importantly: showing it. Peter turned his head to the side and pressed his cheek against Sylar's back, between his shoulder blades. Moved by some empathetic instinct he hadn't even known he still had, Peter added, "I won't try to leave you again."

He meant it. They both felt it. Sylar's shudders faded. He gripped Peter's hand with icy fingers, holding fast to him and saying nothing. Peter wriggled a tiny bit closer, making sure there was no space whatsoever between them. Slowly, silently, the warmth grew and with the retreat of the chill came a peaceful sleep.
**Wall Fantasy**

Chapter Summary

Same scene from two different points of view.

Sylar slammed Peter back against the brick wall, giving up on words, however biting, to express his frustration with the recalcitrant, stubborn Petrelli. Peter's head bounced and his face momentarily took on a dazed look. Seeing a rare opportunity to take advantage, Sylar smashed his lips to Peter's in a rough mockery of a kiss. It wasn't the first time he'd done it – and that first time Peter had fought him off, slapped him and belittled him. *So, fine, I'll do it again.* Peter came back to awareness a moment later, quickly bringing his hands to Sylar's shoulders. The taller man braced himself, expecting to be thrown back.

But … there was hesitation on Peter's part, and the beginning of confusion on Sylar's. A moment later Peter's hands fist into the cloth of Sylar's shirt and he twisted his head with a grunt - but it wasn't to escape. Peter was just getting a better angle. His lips moved against Sylar's, his mouth opening.

Now Sylar was the one frozen in indecision as the tables were turned. *Holy fuck, he's responding!* He pulled back several inches, staring down at Peter, eyes wide. *Surely he was just doing that to fuck with me. … Right?*

Peter looked up at him inscrutably as several breathless seconds ticked by for Sylar. Peter took a deep breath and let it out, then tugged lightly on Sylar's shirt, pulling him back in.

Too stunned to know what else to do, Sylar complied. For several moments, he stood there awkwardly, only minimally participating, while Peter kissed at him with patience and persistence. *He isn't rejecting me. He's not making fun of me. What the hell is he playing at? Why is he doing this?* Questions came fast and furious in Sylar's head until finally he pulled away once more, shaking off Peter's hands from his shirt and staring at him in bafflement.

Peter regarded him briefly, then grimaced and rolled his shoulders, working out some cramp or knot from the fight. He acted like he hadn't been doing anything weird at all, like kissing on Sylar was a normal, day-to-day activity not worth reacting to.

Sylar had to ask. It seemed like a pretty stupid question, but Peter would give *some* response and he'd work from there. "What are you doing, Peter?"

Peter looked up at him, eyes narrowing slightly before he glanced to the side and said, "I liked how that felt." His eyes were on Sylar's right shoulder. A moment later he reached for that shoulder and Sylar, mouth gaping slightly, let Peter guide him back in.

*Holy shit. I've wanted it … but now that I've got it I don't know what the hell to do with it.* Sylar stood stock still. Peter shut his eyes and kissed him on the jaw, Peter's lips and then his teeth working along the edge of Sylar's face, nibbling and nipping. *His eyes are shut. Why the fuck is he keeping his eyes shut? Is he pretending he's with some woman?* Peter dragged his teeth across a healthy growth of bristle, biting him lightly on the chin and tugging the skin between his teeth. *Oh fuck yes!* Sylar shivered, putting his hands around Peter's shoulders more out of instinct than intention. When he next
had coherent thought, all he could really manage was, *There's no way he thinks he's with a woman.*

Peter ran his hand behind Sylar's head, turning it, drawing Sylar's face down, and moving his own up carefully, eyes still closed. Peter kissed him tenderly at first, then more passionately, his fingers beginning to twine into Sylar's hair. His breathing sped up and Sylar's did as well, feeling the beginnings of interest in lower regions as well. Peter moaned into Sylar's mouth, lids still shut.

*He's pretending I'm someone else, that he's not with me. Well, Petrelli, I've got some bad news for you, I'm the only other person here and you do not get to forget that.* With a snarl, Sylar worked his own hand into Peter's hair. It was as silky and lovely to feel as he'd always thought it would be. He made a fist and jerked Peter's head back. Peter gasped and bared his teeth, eyes flying open. Lip curled, Sylar told him, "I know what you're doing, Peter."

Peter yanked his head to the side to free it and Sylar let him rather than hang on and risk damaging that flamboyant mop. He liked it where it was, on Peter's head. What Peter had to say was not what he expected, but this whole encounter was not going to plan - not that Sylar had had much of a plan. "Then let me do it," Peter growled, glaring at him.

Sylar tilted his head a tiny bit, the snarl fading from his face as he seriously considered that. *Peter was ... touching me. Does it really matter who he's thinking of? Why do I give a fuck about whatever twisted fantasy is going through his stupid brain? He's touching me!*

After the pause for Sylar's thought and lack of response, Peter leaned back against the wall behind him and lifted his chin. He let his hands fall from Sylar's shoulders to his own sides and said, "Or would you rather I didn't?"

"No, this is good," Sylar blurted out so fast it took a moment for his thoughts to catch up with his words. *Oh, yeah, great. Why don't you get down on your knees and beg while you're at it?* But he shoved those thoughts away as Peter closed his eyes again and drew near, letting his hands rest on Sylar's stomach and then trail upwards. *Oh, God, that feels good. No begging's being required. Just let him touch me. He wants to pretend; he wants to fantasize; he wants to check out mentally and just ... fuck around with my body. Because I'm the only other person here and he hasn't forgotten that. I'm it. No matter what he wants, I'm the only one he can have it with and he knows that.*

Peter's hands ghosted over Sylar's chest and found his chin, gracing both cheeks with a gentle touch as the empath leaned in, lips slightly parted. Sylar obliged him by bending for the kiss, letting lips move against lips, feeling Peter's fingers cross over his ears, toying with them briefly before one hand cupped the back of his head and the other went far, far further south to find the small of Sylar's back. Peter pressed lightly there as he stepped forward until they were touching.

Sylar pulled in a faster breath, but Peter's eyes remained hooded. There was something very freeing about being unobserved. Human emotions were strongly affected by knowing one was being watched. There was an element to this like Sylar was alone, yet here was Peter in his arms and under his hands, touching and being touched, giving him sensations, tastes and sounds. And there was nothing to keep Sylar from feasting his eyes wherever he liked. He didn't even need to worry that Peter might take note of where his eyes lingered.

His gaze feasted on Peter's face, so close, so intent, so full of life and passion. Sylar drank it in, drawing in the faint scent of Peter's aftershave and shampoo, savoring the taste of his lips. Sylar tried to stifle the sound of pleasure that lurked in his throat, at the pleasure of having another human being touching him ... with care. Or at least it seemed that way. *I know he's not thinking of me, but this is so good. I need to make sure he's happy so he might want to do this again. I'm all he has. Make it worth his while and he'll come back.*
Peter responded to the noise Sylar made, kissing him harder and teasing at his lips with the tip of his tongue.

_You liked that? That noise?_ Sylar made a small, tentative whimper. _I sound weak. Fuck._ He didn't have much time to rebuke himself over it though, as Peter groaned in his mouth in response and pulled them together more firmly. _Oh! You do like that! Fuck what it sounds like, if it makes him happy, do it!_ Less bashful, Sylar full-out whined and Peter acted like he wanted to climb inside of him, starting with his mouth. His tongue probed deeply, one hand fisting in Sylar's hair while the other pressed rhythmically at the small of Sylar's back, encouraging him to grind against him.

Sylar took the hint, shoving his hips forward. Peter broke from his mouth and embraced him, his face buried against Sylar's neck. He was breathing heavily on him, hot breath and needy, incessant noises as Peter ground back against him, bracing himself for more friction.

_Oh boy, you're really something, Peter! Oh God, I like this. I know he's just using me, but holy fuck this is good. And way nicer than all the other times I've been used. He doesn't seem to mind that I like it. Even seems to want that. Weirdo._ Sylar kissed Peter's forehead, hands on Peter's hips for leverage. His hands didn't stray further because he still wasn't sure what was allowed and what would fit in with whatever fantasy was running behind Peter's eyes.

Peter kissed him sloppily on the neck, then bit him and sucked. Sylar groaned, backing Peter the few inches to the wall and fucking against him harder. Peter's hand snaked around between them and started hastily unfastening Sylar's pants.

_Whoa! Shit! What the hell is he …? I'm not sure I want to … Don't talk. Don't talk. Don't complain. He has to want to do this again. Make sure he wants to do this again. Don't stop him. Oh my God, he's touching me!_ Peter fumbled with the elastic band of Sylar's underwear, having trouble getting it to stay down. Sylar hooked his thumb into it and shoved it down firmly, presenting himself with no small amount of fear.

"Oh yeah," Peter murmured, not looking down, not looking at anything, and again that was a big help for Sylar. There could be no judgment or comparison if he didn't look.

_Is he going to blow me?_ Sylar thought incredulously. But no, now Peter was pawing at his own pants with the same energy as before, exposing himself to Sylar's startled eyes. He didn't get to see much though before Peter brought them back together, unbelievably rubbing directly against him, caressing up and down his own shaft, then Sylar's, then his own again. _This is really, really weird … sex? Foreplay? Whatever the fuck, it's weird. You are such a pervert, Peter. Leave it to you to be into forms of sex I've never even heard of!"

"Come on," Peter whispered, voice hoarse with passion. "Move with me like you were doing before."

Sylar started grinding against him. He swallowed, mouth dry. His voice was so rough he could hardly talk, but he got out, "Like this?" _Gotta give him what he wants. Make him happy. Got to. Such a burden. Ha.

"Yeah, yeah," Peter breathed, running his fingers up and down both of them at the same time, in sync with Sylar's faux thrusts.

Peter reached down with his free hand and took one of Sylar's, bringing it to where their members slid against one another. Sylar sucked in air and tensed. _I get to touch you?"

"Help me out here," Peter panted.
Okay … um … yeah. Sylar helped, just about agape at what he was being allowed to do and touch. For the first time in his life, he took another man's penis into his hand, marveling at how it felt - hot and velvety, hard and spongy. His motions were slow and tentative, like Peter was too delicate to be handled any other way. Peter began kissing his neck again between croons and mewls. Peter sucked on him hard and Sylar was sure he was getting marked up. He felt a swelling pride and pleasure inside that he'd have something to show for this. He won't be able to pretend this didn't happen. It'll be right on my skin. He can't keep his damn eyes shut forever!

Peter's hand slipped to take Sylar's shaft alone in his grip, pumping faster. His other looped around Sylar's neck, holding the nape. Peter leaned back against the wall, eyes closed in apparent bliss as he worked him. Why is he doing me? He's jerking me off, not himself. Am I doing wrong? Am I doing something wrong? Should I be kissing him? Sylar bent and Peter twitched a little when their lips met, then made a lovely, needy sound deep in his throat and opened his mouth. Sylar slid his tongue inside, tasting and probing. I've been manipulated by a lot of Petrellis, but it's never been this good … or literal.

He could feel the rush of orgasm rising through his body. Do I stop? Should I stop him? I shouldn't … I should just let him do it. He wants to do it. He's using me … oh God, Peter, please use me! His eyes rolled back in his head and he curled over Peter, pressing cheek to cheek and probably drooling on him with the intensity of the sensation. A flash of heat and light passed through him as he came, leaving him whimpering helplessly, vaguely aware that he was in Peter's power completely, wondering if that was Peter's point in all of this.

Peter, though, was not done. In fact, he seemed to go just about mad with passion. He brought Sylar's face back to where he could kiss him, and did. The empath growled in the back of his throat with a deep satisfaction. Sylar sagged against him compliantly, feeling as Peter's hand, wet and sticky with Sylar's come, switched to his own shaft. He displaced Sylar's hand where it had been resting, mostly forgotten by its owner, on Peter's cock. I … I should have been stroking him. I … how the hell did I forget that? Well, he was distracting me. His own stupid fault. I can't be blamed. I was letting him do what he wanted. If he'd wanted action for himself, then he shouldn't have been jerking me off.

Peter pumped at himself, rubbing his whole body against him and kissing Sylar deeply. The empath growled and hummed and sometimes even gasped in lewd response to his own touch. He … he's getting off on me. Like I'm turning him on. Was that it? He's turned on by getting me off? Like it's a power thing? Um … okay, you know, Peter, whatever it takes, I'm here to help, he thought almost gleefully at this discovery.

Peter's mouth strayed to Sylar's cheek and then his jaw, getting progressively clumsier as his breathing began to strain and his body tensed. Peter arched against him and came, hot liquid spattering onto the exposed part of Sylar's stomach. Sylar glanced down at the whitish streamer that was now dangling from Peter's dick. More of it was a little under Sylar's navel, rapidly sliding into his pubic hair. Peter Petrelli just jizzed on me. I don't know whether to feel like his whore or proud. I'm his blow-up sex doll … but at least I'm his something, right?

Sylar looked back up and nearly jumped out of his skin, because Peter was looking right at him, eyes fully open. Sylar swallowed and inhaled and pulled back, feeling like he'd been caught doing something nasty and forbidden. Something about Peter's face shifted and Sylar stopped. Regret? Embarrassment? Disappointment maybe? Peter darted forward and gave him a quick peck on the lips, drawing back slowly with a hopeful expression.

Okay … maybe not disappointment. Sylar felt himself smiling without even thinking about it. A moment later, Peter's face echoed his. Yeah, kind of embarrassing, I guess, Petrelli. You just sexed me up with your fucking eyes closed the whole time, obviously pretending it wasn't me. I can see
how that would be shameful for you to have to wake up and here I am.

He thought about that quick peck. It was somehow deeply touching, despite the smallness of the gesture. The kiss was nice though. You didn't have to do that. You could just shove me away and go get cleaned up. I wouldn't stop you.

"You liked that?" Sylar asked hesitantly. If it's just him, with his wants, his needs, then it's not me. I'm just letting him use me. I'm just making things here more tolerable for him. I'm just keeping his interest. … Please be interested, Peter?

"Oh yeah," Peter affirmed with a deep exhalation. "Thank you."

"Any time," Sylar offered, daring to let himself feel just a little bit smug.

Peter was slammed back against the brick wall that he'd been trying to maneuver away from. Obviously, Sylar wasn't so interested in giving him space. If that's the way it is, you're just gonna have to get inside his reach and- His head hitting the wall jumbled his thoughts and for a moment he went basically off-line, unable to do anything more complicated than keep his feet (and that was aided enormously by the wall itself). He came conscious to find Sylar … kissing him. It was so incongruous that for a moment Peter couldn't even figure out where he was.

What the hell? Weren't we just fighting? My brains aren't that scrambled! He brought his hands up to Sylar's shoulders to push the man off, but his next thoughts gave him pause. If I push him away, we're gonna keep fighting and that will hurt … more. He pulled this kissing crap before. He seems to really want it. But what is it he wants – the kissing, or is he just trying to skeev me out? Two can play at that game.

Peter's hands tightened in the fabric, holding Sylar to him and he moved his lips in unison. As he'd expected, Sylar freaked. Peter was disappointed by that. That kind of felt nice. Hell of a lot nicer than getting punched. I can at least make sure he doesn't kiss me again in the middle of a fight. He tugged Sylar back to him, fully expecting the other man to jerk away and the fight to be on.

Sylar let himself be pulled back, without any resistance at all. Oh, wow. Peter's lips pressed to Sylar's soft and warm ones, lovely and plush just like they looked, pliant and delicious. Sylar moved just a little to make it easier. He does want this. Of course Sylar wasn't reciprocating very much, but the situation was awkward and Peter didn't let the limited response deter him. So much nicer than fighting. He just kept kissing, waiting for Sylar to join in as Peter figured he soon would. Either that or he'll freak out again.

It was the latter, but as freak-outs went it was mild. Sylar pulled back carefully and shook Peter off firmly but gently. The other man stared down at him with uncertainty. And what looked a lot like hope. Peter looked over Sylar's face, watching the subtle play of emotions, reading them more accurately than Sylar himself probably perceived them.

Peter rolled his shoulders, trying to pop his stiff neck, but nothing happened. He was very conscious that they were only a couple inches apart and Sylar hadn't moved away. The other man was neither looming nor retreating. They were almost touching even now. The proximity told Peter a lot about Sylar's desires, a closeted homo-(or bi-)sexuality that cloaked itself with violence and aggression rather than admit to what might be seen as a weakness.

"What are you doing, Peter?" Sylar's voice sounded raw, maybe a little afraid and a lot bewildered.

You mean, why am I giving you what you were trying to take? Is it that hard a concept to imagine
you might be highly kissable? He looked up at Sylar with narrowed eyes. It's either this or fight with
you and I'm sort of tired of being the punching bag for your repressed urges. Especially tired of it
when your lips felt that nice. "I liked how that felt," Peter replied, reaching slowly but casually for
Sylar's shoulder and pulling him back in.

Peter shut his eyes. He didn't want to be kissing Sylar. The man he was with? Of course. But not
Sylar. Sylar had killed Nathan, he'd assaulted Claire, he'd killed Peter a few times, he'd murdered
scores of people. The man Peter wanted to touch was someone else - he was the person who so
desperately wanted to break out from behind Sylar's shell of cicatrized defenses. He was the person
standing so close, letting Peter's mouth find his jaw and lip along it, biting him lightly, teasing his
way to the man's chin. He bit and tugged. This other man, the one who disguised himself as Sylar,
shivered and Peter's breath caught.

Oh yeah, Peter thought. I like the way you taste. I like the way you feel. You're strong and you're
mine … Gabriel. He knew the name from their brief, faux-brotherhood. Peter wanted anything to call
him other than the moniker of the killer. He had no idea if the name 'Gabriel' would be welcomed,
but he didn't intend to speak it out loud. Peter ran his hand behind Gabriel's head, angling his head
for a kiss. It was soft and careful at first. Peter could feel Gabriel's chest rising and falling as if he'd
been running. He could feel Gabriel's breath hot on his face. Peter let his hand make a loose fist in
the man's hair as he kissed harder, channeling his aggression into this purer form of lust, rather than
the bloodlust and violence they'd been indulging earlier.

Sylar, Gabriel, whoever, was not done asserting his dominance though and grabbed Peter's hair to
yank him back. It hurt with a flash of pain to his scalp, but that didn't deter Peter from jerking his
head to the side as his eyes snapped open. Let go of me or this is over! Sylar let him go, but snarled,
"I know what you're doing, Peter."

"Then let me do it," Peter growled, wanting to do something in retaliation. Sylar's hand dropped
slowly to his side and Peter's violent urge faded. He's still right here next to me. He doesn't want to
fight or he'd back off and get some room to swing. Calm down. Sylar's expression showed
vulnerability, not anger, with a mix of hope, fear and uncertainty playing over his features. Peter
leaned back against the wall, assuming an arrogant, disinterested pose.

I'm not going to let you pretend I'm forcing myself on you, you asshole. "Or would you rather I didn't?"

"No, this is good!" Sylar just about yelped the words and it was all Peter could do to keep from
smirking.

Alright. As long as we're all clear on who wants who here. Peter shut his eyes again and leaned in,
letting his hands start with Gabriel's stomach - a region he looked forward to exploring in detail some
other time - and drift upward over his chest and up his neck to briefly cup his bristle-covered chin
before sliding over his cheeks. Peter leaned in, lips parted. He knew Gabriel was watching him. He
knew he, himself, was pretty damn defenseless with his eyes shut. If the other man couldn't allow
such a weakness without taking advantage of it, Peter wanted to know.

But instead Gabriel bent for the kiss, engaging and letting their lips join in a slow, osculatory dance.
Peter's hands moved on to momentarily trace the delicate rim of his partner's ears. Gabriel shifted
slightly against him, a half inch closer. I love how he smells, how he feels, how that tingles. Oh! Peter
ran one hand into Gabriel's hair again, cradling his skull and using it to guide their kisses. The other
hand dropped to the small of the man's back, again trying to offer guidance, not so subtly taking the
lead, but Gabriel didn't seem to mind. He was breathing faster and harder, something Peter was
doing as well.

Peter took a small step forward, all that was needed to put them in full contact. A thrumming
sensation of desire ran all through him, augmented in no small part by the near-gasp Gabriel made. Peter's arousal was drawn off his partner's and every sign Gabriel gave that he was into it was fuel to the fire. Peter moved his head repeatedly in little jogs, rubbing his nose against the other man's as they kissed.

Gabriel made a faint, choked-off noise, too inhibited to do more than that. Oh, no, Peter thought. Please be noisy. Please. Peter pressed to him, making a quick lick at Gabriel's lips, begging entry, begging for more sound and more indication that this was working for Gabriel. The other man opened his mouth and made a pitiful, pleading noise that sounded like exactly the sound Peter wanted to be making himself. Peter groaned in want and need, pulling down on Gabriel's head as he pushed up against him, kissing hard. Gabriel full-out whined and Peter redoubled his efforts even further, tonguing the roof of the other man's mouth and beginning to grind against him. Oh yeah, come on, baby. Come on!

Their passion was building fast. Peter could feel the stiffness of Gabriel's cock through their jeans, straining against his own. He broke off kissing to better respond to Gabriel's somewhat irregular thrusts. Oh my God, I don't think he's ever done this before. Whoa. Peter wrapped his arms around him, his face buried against Gabriel's masculine neck. He panted and used every breath to let Gabriel know, with his vocalizations, that this was totally doing it for him, irregular and clumsy or not. Come on, baby. It's not that tough. Get into the pattern, okay?

They finally got in sync so they were rubbing continually rather than bumping. Yeah, just like that. Oh, yeah. Good, good, good. Peter tried to reward him by kissing the other man on the neck, but it was sloppy. Oh fuck, he tastes good! He switched to biting and sucking. Gabriel groaned, his hands at Peter's hips tightening, fingers digging in and Peter loved that. He groaned again, arching against Gabriel. A moment later, Peter was backed against the wall. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, baby. Put me where you want me. Take a little control.

Gabriel's thrusts were becoming more purposeful and harder - painful actually, now that Peter had unyielding brick behind him. Don't discourage him. Can't tell him to back off. Next step then ... Peter reached between them and opened Gabriel's pants. He wasn't unaware of how the other man tensed and gasped. Had he been looking, he'd have seen Gabriel bite his lip. But he felt it when Gabriel helped him with getting his underwear to stay the fuck down and out of the way.

"Oh yeah," Peter whispered, a slow smile lighting up his face. Thank you, thank you, thank you for cooperating. He switched to liberating himself from his own clothes. Working by touch, he brought their shafts together slowly, rubbing one hand up and down his own male organ and then Gabriel's, up and down slowly, relishing the touch. He listened as Gabriel relearned how to breathe. Oh yeah, he's never done this before. Easy, buddy. It's not that tough. This is the good stuff. I'll teach you things that will make you never want to fight again!

"Come on," Peter invited, voice deep and rough with desire. "Move with me like you were doing before." His free hand went to Gabriel's back, urging him on with a steady contact.

Tentatively, Gabriel began grinding against him, letting Peter's hand draw them together so their bare shafts slid over one another. "Like this?" Gabriel croaked, obviously so wound up he could hardly speak.

"Yeah, yeah," Peter reassured, stroking them both with his fingertips. He was kind of surprised Gabriel hadn't popped off already. His other hand had made a fist in Gabriel's shirt over his back. After they seemed to have the pattern down, he reached over and took Gabriel's hand from his hip and brought it to them. The other man tensed up so much he quivered.

Come on, come on. It's okay. It's okay. "Help me out here," Peter panted, feeling a sudden spike of
his own vulnerability as foreign fingers, long and slender, curled around his penis. *Oh, shit, he's got a hold of me! For fuck's sake, Peter. Calm the fuck down. He's not going to hurt you. I hope the hell not, at least.*

As if Gabriel knew his thoughts, he kept his motions cautious and gradual, feeling his way into it rather than just grabbing and going to town. Now it was Peter relearning how to breathe. He started kissing Gabriel's neck again, giving more vocal encouragement. He sucked on him hard enough to give him a hickey. *Mine! I can't wait to see that on him.* Gabriel's chin was cocked to the side and his neck stretched for the treatment, as eloquent a statement of desire as any.

Peter wrapped his hand around Gabriel's shaft, stroking up and down faster than his previous touches. He adored how Gabriel shuddered against him with each motion. Peter hung off his neck, leaning against the wall and pulling Gabriel over him a little as Peter jerked him off. Gabriel's hand was still on Peter's cock, but the grip was loose like the other man had entirely forgotten what he was holding. *That's funny, Peter thought. Kind of flattering. Helps me concentrate on him, that's for sure.*

He loved the feeling of Gabriel's legs shifting against his own in time with the motions of his hand. He liked the near-throbbing hardness in his hand, dribbles of pre-come spilling over to slick the tip. Peter jumped when Gabriel's lips touched his. He was so appreciative of the initiative though. Peter made an immediate noise of approval, opening his mouth wide and letting Gabriel slide his tongue within. Peter felt his own dick twitch strongly and he shuddered as Gabriel's tongue explored him. The other man's hips were jerking in time with Peter's hand, his whole body moving at Peter's orchestrating touch.

*This is awesome. This is awesome. You are so mine! This is great. Awesome. Yeah, come for me, baby!* Peter shifted his hand to Gabriel's tip as the man gave up kissing him and just pressed to him cheek to cheek, mouth slack and wet. Gabriel curled and quivered, whimpering helplessly as he came with the single most erotic sound Peter had ever heard in his life.

Peter was burning with need and that sound … it galvanized him. It made him want to climb all over Gabriel and hump him like a crazed animal. As soon as he reasonably could, he pulled Gabriel's face back to his, growling as he kissed him, reveling in the feel of Gabriel's complete and total submission to him. Peter felt like he was flying. Literally the whole world had faded except the feeling of Gabriel's skin on his, their joined, heaving breaths and the sounds they were making. Peter took his own dick in his hand and started pumping hard and fast, smearing Gabriel's ejaculate over himself.

Peter growled and moaned against his lover, completely lost in the moment. He felt like he was glowing, lighting up from within as his peak approached. He kissed across Gabriel's cheek and jaw, struggling to breathe as the orgasm took his breath away with a final rush. His eyelids fluttered as the crash broke him to pieces and put him back together seconds later, leaving him panting and spent, head spinning.

*I don't think I've ever come so hard. Oh God. All those little motions he was making ... perfect, just perfect. FUCK ME. Oh ... FUCK.* He leaned his head warily against the brick, panting from his still-open mouth, staring blankly at Gabriel, Sylar?, as the other man was looking down at the mess they'd made of one another. Peter let his hand slip off himself and dangle to the side.

The other man looked up and jumped badly, apparently shocked that Peter's eyes were open. The man's face showed a flash of shame and a cringe, like he expected to be hit. Peter blinked, gathering up his sex-scattered wits. *No fucking wonder he leads with violence. He thinks I might hurt him now, after that? No, baby. No way.*

Sylar stopped, studying Peter's face. Peter moved forward quickly and gave him a peck on the
It's good. It's all good. He drew back slowly. Can you let it be good, be someone other than Sylar, at least for a little while?

Sylar gave him a small, very genuine smile that was completely unlike the Sylar whom Peter hated and feared. It was like someone else entirely. Peter smiled back warmly. "You liked that?" Sylar asked hesitantly.

"Oh yeah," Peter affirmed immediately, letting out the breath he'd been holding. "Thank you."

Sylar subtly, but noticeably, straightened a little, puffing out his chest just a bit in pride. "Any time," he said.
Just Talking

Chapter Summary

Written for means2bhuman's prompt of wanting to see Sylar and Peter, in the Wall, discussing a pregnancy scare.

"So … you ever had a Claire situation? You know, missing a month?"

Peter gave Sylar a blank look, having no idea what Sylar meant. A … 'Claire' situation? Missing a month? Like when I lost all my memories? "What?"

Sylar leaned against the piano, settling in as Peter went about tuning the instrument. It was an endeavor Sylar approved of, even if he wasn't helping. Peter hadn't asked; Sylar hadn't offered. He was secretly pleased Peter had been unable to find tuning forks, which was probably part of why Peter was unsatisfied with the quality of sound from it. "Have you ever had a near-miss? Thought the rabbit might die?"

Oh! Peter finally got it. He breathed out a light snort and started plinking along, listening for a few notes before answering, "No."

"Hm," Sylar replied, moving out of the way as Peter opened the top for access to the mechanisms. He kept watching Peter expectantly, believing that would draw more of a response out of the man.

It did. Peter glanced over at him a few times, then reached in to tighten a peg. He said, "There were a couple times though that I didn't use protection and found out later she wasn't on the pill or anything." He shrugged. "Nothing ever happened, though."

*Found out later? A 'couple' times?* That Peter could be so casual about his bountiful love life made Sylar's envy flare up. One brow crept upward as he snarked, "You make a habit out of sleeping with women who lie to you?"

Peter gave him another blank look. "They didn't lie." There was a small amount of heat in that, but mostly Peter was confused as to why Sylar would think that.

Sylar huffed and elaborated, "They didn't tell you they weren't on the pill?"

Peter's eyes shifted back and forth uneasily as he telegraphed his guilt. He blamed himself for taking stupid risks - that was all. That and he understood the implied immorality, even if his personal beliefs were different. "I didn't ask."

Now both of Sylar's brows climbed. "How does that conversation *not* happen?"

Peter chuckled and checked a few more notes on the piano, thinking about one particular encounter in the back of a bar. Her name had been Chelsea. That was about all Peter knew of her, aside from general appearance and her loudly proclaimed decision to take revenge on her boyfriend for dumping her by screwing the best looking guy in the bar. Peter was flattered to be nominated. The conversation hadn't gone much past that. "Well, you know, sometimes it just doesn't happen." He
Sylar frowned at him disapprovingly, even though it occurred to him that he’d never asked anything similar of Elle. Or Janice. Or Lydia. Or Maya, not that that ever went anywhere. But Sylar knew Nathan had tried to hammer into Peter the need for using condoms - Nathan’s own experience with an unexpected child being the impetus for that. And Sylar also thought that mature, reasonable, experienced relationships - like the ones he imagined medically-trained, sexually confident Peter having had - always included the dreaded, if stereotypical, 'conversation'.

Just in case he needed that misconception corrected, Peter said, "I didn't always know them all that well."

"But you knew them well enough to fuck them." Sylar felt angry about that - jealous, really, though he wouldn't admit to that emotion any more than the envy. The idea of Peter ignoring his brother's good advice was part of it, but mostly it was that Peter might have had a lot of quick, meaningless-but-thoroughly-enjoyable hookups in his life while Gabriel had had nothing.

Peter gave him a brief glower before pointedly ignoring him. Sylar's rough language, his angry tone and the implication of moral judgment all bothered Peter.

Sylar allowed the glare, mentally giving himself a point for having provoked his companion without suffering any other retaliation for it. "So what would you have done if one of these bimbos had turned up pregnant?"

"What?" he asked in surprise.

"I said-"

Peter knew exactly what had been said, but he wasn't about to let that sort of disrespect stand towards the people who'd been kind enough to share themselves with him. He jerked towards Sylar, snarling, "They weren't 'bimbos'!"

Sylar's more usual reaction would have been to hold perfectly still and coolly stare Peter down. In a fraction of a second, though, he changed his mind. He let his face show surprise at the vehement reaction, and let his gaze travel down to Peter's white-knuckle grip on the screwdriver that he hadn't had in his hand a few seconds before. Lethal weapon, Sylar considered. He'd learned a few things about Peter, as they'd spent so much time together. First - Peter really was dumb enough to use that screwdriver as a weapon. It was something Sylar had to keep in mind when toying with the man. Second - Peter responded well to social pressures. Looking at Peter expectantly tended to elicit conversation; looking aghast at the screwdriver now had the expected result of making Peter back down far more effectively than a stare-down ever would.

Peter blinked, caught himself, and looked away, putting the tool on the keys and returning to his work. "They weren't 'bimbos','" he grumbled. Chelsea, and all the rest, had been human beings. There was no magical dividing line that said a person didn't deserve respect because you hadn't known them for a certain length of time.

Sylar was quiet for a moment, listening as Peter plinked on keys and made a few adjustments. Entertaining as it was to set Peter off, sheer emotional response wasn't the point of his questions. He was trying to find out how Peter handled relationships and pry a little more into what he needed to do to get Peter to look twice at him. Or do more than look. He adjusted his language to make it more palatable. "These women you had sex with - did you love them?"

Peter gave him a sidelong glance before continuing. Sylar waited patiently for Peter's answer and
after a few moments more, Peter shrugged and said, "Sort of. Maybe. I could have."

"What you're saying is that you're willing to have sex with people you don't love." That was a vital piece of information to glean from the interaction. Sylar leaned against the wall, basking in the implications of it. Peter's standards might not be as impossibly high as Sylar had thought.

Peter made a grumbling noise and shrugged one shoulder, the other arm inside the piano as he started on a new set of keys. "Yeah, guess so." He didn't like the way it sounded, but it was true.

Sylar had other things he was curious about, though, and returned to the questioning. "It's possible - that maybe one of them, or maybe someone else you knew better - could have gotten pregnant."

Peter snorted. "No. I told you that. Nothing ever came of it." Peter admitted to himself that it was conceivable that someone had gotten pregnant and he didn't know about it, but it seemed pretty remote. It wasn't like he'd used a false name or tried to avoid anyone he'd hooked up with. His standard 'pick up line', if you could call it that, was a straightforward introduction, after all, last name included.

Sylar gave a single shake of his head and turned towards his companion. "That's not what I mean. Sure - nothing happened. But let's think about 'what-if'. What if one of them had gotten pregnant?"

Peter gave him another side-eye, wishing he knew where Sylar was going with this. Because he was always going somewhere. Yes, to some extent Sylar was just passing the time in idle conversation, but these little forays of Sylar's always struck Peter as having an undisclosed goal, like they were little ability-collecting missions, substituting some piece of information or trick of social interaction for abilities. "What if she had?"

"Well, would you have married them?"

Peter went through another octave on the piano, comparing sound and tweaking the results. "Yes." Sylar opened his mouth, then shut it, as something about Peter's demeanor looked like he wasn't quite done speaking. A moment later he confirmed this, adding, "If she'd have me."

Sylar resisted the impulse to roll his eyes. Why anyone would pass up Peter Petrelli was a mystery to him. A creepy serial killer obsessed with vivisection and out-of-date mechanical timepieces, and had to deceive and manipulate just to get people to tolerate him? Yeah, no questions as to why he wasn't a chick magnet. But Peter? It was weird. And unexplained. Especially given how Peter obviously had both normal sexual urges and the inclination to act on them.

"Would you even consider suggesting an abortion?" Sylar explored.

"No." There was no hesitation on that. It was a topic Peter had discussed at length with friends both male and female. He was firm - he was never going to have an abortion. Of course as a man, he was never going to face that decision. Should one of his partners face it, and his input was allowed, he'd argue against it. "That would be why I'd offer to marry her. So she'd know I was serious."

"Oh, you're very serious, Peter."

Peter glanced over at him, not sure what that bland statement meant. It might have been either compliment or derision and Sylar's tone left it open to interpretation. Peter decided to take it as merely observation and went on.

Sylar leaned against the wall, facing the room at large. "So if you're willing to have sex with people you're not in love with, and you're willing to marry people who happen to conceive of you, then it follows that you're willing to marry people you don't love."
Peter grimaced with one side of his face and continued tuning. That, too, was true enough. He wondered if this was a lead-up to Sylar trying to prove that love and marriage had nothing to do with one another, which was bunk. He hoped if he married someone he didn't love at the time that love would come eventually. He'd certainly do his best to try. Peter's idea of marriage, informed as it was by his Catholic upbringing, did not adhere to the popular romantic notions. If the people involved were madly in love, then that was wonderful. If they weren't, then they could work at it.

"That's quite a commitment," Sylar observed, knowing from Nathan's memories that Peter probably saw marriage as a lifetime obligation, much as Nathan had. Though that hadn't kept Nathan from straying. In fact, Sylar thought feeling trapped in a fairly loveless marriage had been a big part of Nathan's serial adultery.

"So's having sex with someone."

Sylar tilted his head. "How so? What commitment have you made?" His tone changed slightly to less preachy and more honestly interested. Peter had said something surprising.

Peter looked at him like Sylar was missing a few cards from the deck - not an unusual look between them, so Sylar ignored it. "You're having sex with someone. You're being with them. You're being intimate. That's … you're promising trust, and respect."

Sylar laughed out loud. "All right, Mr. Romance, I get it now. No wonder you manage to con so many people into the sack." What a hopeless dreamer. Nathan was right.

Now it was Peter's turn to tilt his head. "If you're having to con them, then you're doing it wrong."

"Fine. Whatever. Most people aren't quite as …" naïve? foolish? stupidly romantic? Sylar decided not to aggravate Peter more, so he picked a term less offensive than the other options, saying, "… sincere as you are." Does Peter really think that way? Sylar considered the man's irritation about the 'bimbos' comment and decided he probably did. He gave Peter a side eye as the man went back to his tuning. Sylar tried to work out what this meant about his odds with Peter. On the one hand, if he could ever get Peter in bed (willingly), then it sounded like Peter took that physical act as some sort of oath. It was a deal, maybe even a semi-permanent truce. That made the whole thing extra-appealing. On the other hand, it made it even less likely that Peter would extend that privilege to the likes of Sylar. It went an uncomfortably long way towards explaining why Peter had showed no interest in him at all. No, that wasn't true - Peter had shown interest, several times. He just didn't act on it, which was pretty much the same thing.

Sylar stood there quietly, looking off at the corner of the room, just sharing space with Peter. It was something he'd learned to do fairly recently. And it was nice. He supposed it was something friends did, but he wasn't sure, having never had one, other than maybe Luke. Nathan's memories on it were fuzzy and tainted by class and rank. All the friendships he'd seen on TV were always choked with dialogue and action. Television didn't value contemplative moments like this, where two people could relax with each other.

Sylar had always been defensive around Virginia. She was jittery, a different idea bound to strike her at any given moment, and when her sweet Gabriel was around, too many of those ideas involved him. Martin's company was decidedly worse, as Gabriel's very presence annoyed him. The longer the older man had to put up with Gabriel being in his sight, doing something other than following Martin's immediate orders, the more dangerous it became. Sylar hadn't realized how much he craved simple companionship. Peter, so rich with all things, probably didn't even realize the gift he gave as he finished up with the piano.

Or, rather, he should have been finishing up. Instead, Peter was doing nothing at all, which caused
Sylar to turn his eyes back towards the Italian, without making any other change. Peter was staring forward, at where Sylar's fingertips were idly rubbing at the top edge of the piano, tracing and retracing one of many scratches in the battered finish - this one deeper than most. Since he had Peter's attention, Sylar kept doing it, making the gestures a little bigger, caressing the slick wood. *What's he looking at? His eyes are focused. He's not staring off into space. He's watching me touch ... Touch. We were just talking about sex. Is he thinking about me touching him?*

Softly, in a deep, but indifferent voice, Sylar asked, "How long has it been for you?"

Peter snapped out of it, starting guiltily (which Sylar adored, but he kept the smirk off his face for the moment - he was stalking his prey now and needed the concerned expression he was wearing). Peter blinked at Sylar a few times, then sighed and sniffed, hitting a few keys at random on the piano. "Been years." He hit a few more keys, wondering about the wisdom of telling Sylar this. "A couple years. Two."

Sylar waited, but that was all the elaboration Peter seemed willing to give. If he assumed that Peter had time traveled here, or otherwise pulled a Rip Van Winkle, then what Peter was saying was that he hadn't been laid for two years back from roughly Nathan's death. Sylar's brows pulled together. "What about that Ellen woman?"

"Emma!" Peter bit out.

Sylar knew her name. He just didn't call her by it, quite intentionally. He resented that Peter was so fixated on saving her that he'd put aside the natural enmity he owed his brother's murderer and thought Sylar would just obediently play Peter's little game. It was insulting, and so Sylar routinely insulted her memory. Peter was being huffy, which meant he was done talking unless prompted. Sylar canted his body towards Peter, leaning on the piano and working at being inoffensive. He let his face relax and his expression open. "So you and ... Emma ... never ...?"

Peter scowled at him. "No."

"Really?" *Oh my. That's interesting.*

"It wasn't like that." Peter started over with the first notes, checking one after another and listening. "Yet," he added about halfway through. He'd liked Emma. It's just that so many other complicated things were going on at the time. It seemed wrong to try for anything more than friendship.

Sylar's brows climbed a little. "So how is the hero act for getting people in bed?"

Peter glowered briefly at him, but answered fast, snapping, "I have no idea. I've only been with ... two since I got my abilities."

"Ah, too busy saving the world?" Sylar asked sarcastically. *And yet you still found time to bed two different people. I got three. Sort of. So there.*

"Guess so," Peter answered blandly, not rising to the bait. He finished with the instrument and shut the top, packing away his tools.

"You don't have to save the world anymore, Peter," Sylar said, and for that brief moment, he wasn't acting. He was making an offer and he could tell Peter understood it. At least in a way. He could tell from the way Peter glanced at him and then back down at the shoebox he'd used for the tools he'd brought.

"No, I do but ... yeah." Peter frowned and grimaced. "Come on. Let's go get some nachos. How's that sound?"
Sylar straightened, gracefully accepting Peter turning him down. It hadn't been complete, he noticed. There was that 'yeah' in there, and then the refusal was followed up with an offer to spend more time together. He was wearing Peter down, he knew. It was just a matter of time and time was very much on the watchmaker's side.
"Tell me about the most beautiful girl you ever saw."

Peter smiled warmly as they sat together in the diner, enjoying coffee. "We were called for a delivery, but when we got there, the woman had already given birth in the home. It was the most beautiful little baby girl." His face glowed a little in memory.

Sylar scoffed. "You know what I meant." He rolled his eyes, trying to move Peter past the sappy bullshit and onto what he really wanted to know. "Fine - sexiest woman."

Peter sighed. "Yeah, okay. Best looking woman I ever saw … we got called to this nursing home."

"Peter-" Sylar tried to break in, not wanting some recounting of an aged starlet or whatever.

Peter grinned broadly. "No, seriously, listen. Dispatch told us she was twenty-five, but neither of us believed it. I assumed someone had misheard and it was ninety-five or something. But we got there a little late. There was already a fire rescue there. I don't know why they were there, really, but they were all crowded around her. She really was twenty-five. Even though she had some hives breaking out on her arms - she was having an allergic reaction - she was drop-dead gorgeous." He shook his head in remembered disbelief. "Like an angel and a pin-up model combined."

"In a nursing home," Sylar inquired flatly.

"Yeah, in a nursing home. She worked there. Not everyone good-looking is on TV, you know."

"No, I know that," Sylar said too quickly. Some of them are paramedics. He cleared his throat and added, "So what did you do?"

Peter eye-balled him suspiciously for a moment and then went on. "Anyway, I gave her some Benadryl and we took her to the hospital for observation. You've got to watch allergy cases for when the Benadryl wears off, but she was fine."

"Did you chat her up?"

"No, I let Hesam tech."

"Why? I thought he usually drove."

"Yeah, he does, except on transfers. I thought he'd really enjoy it and it wasn't like she was compromised or anything. She seemed to really like the attention from the firefighters, and Hesam was … well, she got plenty of attention."

"You had the most attractive woman you'd ever met, personally, and you let this other guy spend time alone with her in the back of the ambulance?"

"They weren't doing anything, if that's what you're saying."

"No, that's not what I'm saying. Jeez, Peter." Sylar ran a hand through his hair. "Fine, okay. Most attractive guy."

Peter was quiet for a moment. "I think I lucked out. My partner at work … Hesam … is a really, really good-looking guy."
Sylar stared levelly at him, optional definitions of 'partner' running around in his head. "The guy you work with every day."

"Yeah. He's a really nice guy. Good head on his shoulders. I disappointed him a lot." Peter considered that his appreciation of Hesam's personality might be coloring his judgment some, but personality and outlook made such a huge difference that it was almost impossible for Peter to consider it separate from appearance.

"Your ... partner."

Peter blinked up at him. "He's straight," he snapped.

"Are you sure?"

"He said so."

"So you've asked him?"

"It came up!" Peter said defensively.

"When you asked him out?"

"No!"

"So you've never gone out with him?"

"What? No! Well, we've gone out with the guys, the EMTs to go Houlihans sometimes, but no. Not with him. Like, not on a date."

"Does he know you're interested in him?"

"I'm not interested in him!" Christ, Sylar, cut it out! Interrogation, much?

"But you just said ..."

"Yeah, so? Just because someone looks good doesn't mean I'm into them." Not that, Peter knew, Hesam wouldn't be nice, but he was straight and that was that. "As far as that goes, you know, Mohinder is incredibly attractive, but ... no."

"No?"

"No," Peter echoed firmly, "He has no interest in people at all. Only in what they can do." Sylar made no answer, just regarding Peter silently. "You're really attractive, too, but I'm not making any moves on you, either."

"So I've noticed," Sylar said, voice chilly.

Peter sighed and looked away, chewing his lip slowly. Finally he said, "Physical beauty is like a set of clothes. It looks good on people. It catches my eye. I look more. Maybe I like what I see; maybe I really like what I see. But clothes aren't why I fall in love with someone. I don't think to myself, 'Wow, that's an incredible dress, I need to ask her out' or 'That's an incredible suit, I love the way it flatters his form, I wonder if he'd let me try his jacket on.' I suppose it helps to get my attention - you know, I'm human - but it's not what I'm looking for."

"What are you looking for?"
Peter looked back at Sylar, making eye contact. Sylar didn't look away from him, eyes boring into Peter's until Peter tore his gaze away. "I dunno. A connection, friendship, a good time, something that matters - to be someone who matters to someone, even just for a little while." 'It's my turn to be somebody now, Nathan.'

"A connection?" Sylar said, sounding dumb-founded.

"Yeah, guess so." Peter glanced up at him, but Sylar was still staring at him too intently. "Stop staring at me, man. It's creepy."

Sylar gave three slow blinks and looked away. A connection …
"Do you think people can change and improve themselves?"

"Obviously," Sylar muttered, peering into the clockwork gearing he was trying to fix.

"How so?"

"How is it obvious?" Sylar asked. Peter nodded. "Peter, I … why would I have been gathering abilities if it wasn't to make myself better?"

"Morally better?"

"It's the same thing."

"What?" Peter sounded, and was, aghast.

Sylar blinked at him slowly, in the way he did when he thought Peter was being particularly dense. He watched as Peter swallowed down the rest of the outburst he wanted to make. Then Sylar looked away and continued working, letting Peter sort through the issue by himself. As he'd become more familiar with the man, he'd come to see that Peter's brain handled ideas and information very differently from his own. If Sylar didn't understand something right away, he tended not to understand it at all and required new information to make sense of it.

As a result, Sylar learned or dismissed things immediately - he either got it or he didn't, and he could act on that straight off. Peter, though, might take the same information and chew through it for a while, coming to the answer (or not) eventually. Because of that, even when Peter didn't understand something, he was prone to follow along anyway, assuming that it would work out sooner or later and make sense. Peter was also prone to stewing on things - something that was occasionally productive for him. If Sylar stewed on something, it never helped at all and only meant he was stuck in a rut. Peter, though, might spin his wheels or he might suddenly get traction. It was interesting - to Sylar - and had taught him to just let Peter process at times.

"Might makes right?" Peter hazarded after a minute.

"Not quite."

Peter scratched slowly at his chin as more seconds ticked by. "Morality … is framed … by those with power."

Sylar smiled slowly. He wouldn't have put it that way, precisely, but yes, that was his point. "Exactly."
Peter pondered that for a few more moments. "I don't agree," he asserted firmly. Sylar shrugged without surprise. Peter's agreement or lack thereof didn't change the world. "So all those powers you were collecting," Peter went on, "you thought that would make everything all right? You thought that would save your soul?"

Sylar jerked, the calipers he'd been using to measure the gearing ratio clattering to the floor as he stared at Peter in shocked silence.
"We're made to love each other. That's what we're here for, to meet other people, learn about them, learn to love them. That's what heaven's about - we just exist in love. God's love, I suppose, but loving people, loving each other is our first experience of that. It's biological. We're sexual organisms. It's natural. All of that, 'love one another; be fruitful and multiply'? Yeah, I believe that. We're wired to make love to each other. That's how we come into being. It's what we should do with our lives."

"I'm never going to have your children, Peter," Sylar said blandly.

Peter reached out for him, caressed Sylar's forearms and leaned in to kiss him gently, first on the mouth, then his stubble-strewn cheek, then nipping along his jaw towards his chin. Sylar shut his eyes in bliss and made a contented sigh. Peter smiled at him and pulled back. "You like that, right?"

"No, Peter, I only melt inside like that over things I detest."

Peter grinned and gave him a quick smooch before settling back down. "I know I might never have kids. Lots of people don't. That's not a big deal. But just because someone is blind doesn't mean people aren't meant to see."

"You think being gay is a disability?"

"No, it's not," Peter said with a somewhat exasperated sigh. "Okay, maybe that was a bad example. Let's say that just because a woman chooses not to have children doesn't mean her body isn't made to do it."

"So now being gay is a choice?"

"Not having sex with women is a choice. Not wanting to isn't a choice."

"That's kind of convoluted."

"Yeah, well, I'm not a genius like you. But back to my point, we're meant to love each other. Grief is a way of honoring that love, for those you can't be with."

Sylar shifted uncomfortably, but said nothing.

"I'm never going to stop loving the people I've lost. I don't think you're going to either - not if you loved them to start with. There's no reason why that emotion would end. You still love them, and so you still miss them."
"Talk about yourself, Peter," Sylar said curtly. "Not me."

Peter reached out and took Sylar's hand, which was reluctantly allowed. "I'm going to miss Nathan for the rest of my life. I'm not going to get over it. I'm not going to forget it. I'm not going to pretend it doesn't matter. The same goes for everyone I love, especially you."
Title: Click
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Words: 400
Setting: The Wall

Notes: Peter and Sylar are sitting on a park bench. An idle discussion about parks leads to pigeons and then to birds in general, flocking habits and finally to mate selection. Also, I am experimenting with using pure dialogue, as much as possible.

"I don't know how much thought birds put into mate choice. They're monogamous, sure, but their brains are tiny."

"Not all birds are monogamous, Peter."

"Okay, sure. But some are. I don't think they have much control over it, like when two sparrows get into a fight. I don't think they have any big thought process about it. They see each other and they react - that's it."

"So that's what you think love is? Just a reflex?"

"Sort of. I mean, it's not something people get a choice in. It either clicks or it doesn't."

"What makes it click for you?"

"Ha. I think I click pretty easy with people. Too easy. That's the problem. Sometimes I wish I could turn it off."

Sylar raised a contemplative brow and said nothing.

"I saw a picture in a biology book showing this male frog who had grabbed this fish. You know, male frogs sit around croaking to try to attract mates and when something shows up that fits their profile, they just go for it, grab on and don't let go. So this frog had a fish." Peter laughed uneasily.

"Like that was going to work out well."

"I don't think our choices are always what's best for us."

"That's my point - it's not a choice. It's biological."

"So you think love's nothing special."

"It's special - no reason why it wouldn't be."

"But you said it was just a neurochemical process."

"So? Who you are is a neurochemical process. Doesn't mean you're not special. Just because we know it takes sperm and an egg to make a new life doesn't make it any less a miracle. What's miraculous is that it works at all." Peter sighed. "It's a complex system, like one of your clocks. Does knowing how they're made make them any less fascinating to you?"
Peter looked over when several beats passed without response. Sylar said softly, "You think I'm special."

Peter blushed immediately, and *hard*.

Sylar's brows climbed as everything made sense. "That's why you're going on about this." He grinned broadly, taunting, "Your tiny little brain didn't give you a choice!"
The House of the Second Chance

Title: The House of the Second Chance
Genre: Song lyrics (based on The House of the Rising Sun by the Animals, but the Muse version works better for tone)
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Words: 150
Setting: The Wall

I am a man from New York
They call Mister Sylar
And I've been the ruin of many a poor boy
From me you should run far

My mother was a mystery
She died some years ago
My father was a murderer
Till cancer laid him low

Now the only thing this killer has
Is heartache and regret
And all the powers that I have gained
Have not seen my needs met

(Organ solo)

Oh mother, tell your children
Not to do what I have done
Spend your life in blood and misery
With no end but dying alone

Well, I got one foot in purgat'ry
The other foot in the grave
I'm going back to New York now
To see who I can save

Cuz there is a man from New York here
Named Peter Petrelli
And he's been the savior of many a one
I'm glad he came for me.
Sylar glanced up when Peter finally joined him at one of the reading tables in the library. He looked over at Peter's book choice, wondering what Peter had chosen after such a lengthy search. His expression turned to disgust as he saw that Peter had in his hands a children's activity book. Brows rising in disbelief, Sylar said, "I see you found something appropriate to your reading level."

"Oh yeah," Peter snarked back, "I think what took me so long to find it was the long words in the title." He grinned then and opened the book.

To Sylar's dismay, he'd already dog-eared a place-marker. He growled, putting his gaze back on his own book and for once, saying nothing about the mistreatment of literature. What was there to say?

But then again, despite his rather negative opinion of Peter's reading habits, children's books weren't normal for him.

Peter studied a page of text, then said, "Okay. This is interactive."

Sylar raised his head. What?

"I need a name," Peter asked brightly.

"Sylar." He craned his head to see what Peter was doing, but Peter pulled the book back.

"No cheating! And I need a second name. It's not my fault my book's more interesting that yours!"

"Peter." What the hell is he doing?

Peter now pulled out a pencil and began writing in the book. Sylar started to object, but it was an activity book and writing in it was part of its purpose. That's not a library book. Where the hell did he find that?

"Okay, adjective."

Sylar glared at him. "Stupid."

"Okay, awesome." Peter scribbled that in, chortling.

"A verb ending with -ing."

*Mad libs.* He placed it now, vaguely remembering the game from grammar exercises. More pointedly, he remembered the other kids howling in glee over unlikely and wacky stories they
produced during rainy recesses spent indoors. He'd never been part of those games. *He wants to play with me? Or is he making fun of me?* His imagination began to run riot with the possible combinations of their names. "Killing."

"Oo!" Peter's brows flashed upward like he was impressed. "Another name?"

"Bob." *Bishop,* but he didn't add that.

"And a noun."

*Knife? Gun? Telekinesis?* "Brick." He recalled newspapers in Spanish held down by a brick.


"Heavy." *As all bricks should be. Unless they're Legos.*

"And a name of a celebrity."

He said the first thing that came to mind, which he regretted as soon as the words left his mouth. "Bob Marley."

"Really?" Peter chuckled. "I would never have guessed."

Sylar shut his book and pushed it to the side, fingers itching to snatch Peter's workbook away from him and see what the story was.

"Um, an article of clothing."

*Should I go exotic or mundane? A propeller hat or a shirt? Or a thong? What does this have to do with Bob Marley?* He decided to play it safe. "A shirt."

"Good choice. Now a liquid."

*Blood. But that's too obvious. Sperm's too gross. Unlike Peter, I do not have the mind of a juvenile.* He ignored that it had been the second thing to come to mind. "Milk," he said defiantly.

"Huh," Peter grunted as he wrote that in. Apparently that one didn't fit too well. "Ah, almost done. Need another adjective."

Sylar let his eyes roam over Peter's crowning glory and said, "Long-haired."

"Ha." He wasn't looking. "And a number."

"Five." *With a decimal point? Something outlandish?*

"Okay. That's great!" Peter reviewed the product, grin widening. "Oh, wait, one more name. First and last."

He was caught between being pleased to be included in a game, and insecure that he was the butt of a joke. "Nathan Petrelli," he growled, glad of the opportunity to say the name with impunity.

Peter glanced up at him, smile fading for a moment, but dutifully wrote it in. "That's kind of weirdly deep," he said after a moment of reflection.

He seemed done, and he wasn't offering to share, so Sylar reached across the table and grabbed the book away from Peter. *Give that to me!"* Peter didn't try to take it back. Sylar's eyes ran quickly
Dear Sister Mary,

I am writing you to ask if you would consider letting my son Sylar come back to school at St. Peter. I know that he behaved in a way that was stupid, but if you are willing to speak to him, he would like to sincerely apologize for the following.

1) killing his teacher.

2) Calling his classmate Bob a 'brick'.

3) Bringing heavy magazines with naked photos of Bob Marley to school.

4) Lifting up Sister Mary Katherine's shirt and taking a peek.

5) Writing his name in milk on the side of the school.

Please forgive him, and consider letting him back. He really is a long-haired child, and has since been put on medication that he is taking five times a day. He misses everyone very much.

Sincerely,
Nathan Petrelli

He snorted. "Deep?"

"Yeah," Peter said. "It's like your conscience writing a letter to God."

He looked at it again. 'St. Peter'. That was a bit creepy, given he'd mentally applied that moniker to Peter more than once. No, it's just random word choice. "Are you suggesting that my conscience is named Nathan Petrelli?"

"Well … it would probably be an improvement."

He shot Peter a look of death.

Peter met it briefly, then broke eye contact, smiling the whole while. Then he shoved the pencil over towards Sylar. "Your turn," Peter said.

Sylar picked up the pencil slowly. I get to play, too?

"Go on. Next one's called 'A Letter to my Bride.' Ought to be a blast."

I get to play, too. Sylar smiled a little, lightening up and glancing from Peter to the book, which he centered in front of himself. He let his eyes roam over the words and blanks. "Okay, but I get to pick the first one." He filled in the blank: 'To my dearest _', with his own name, letting Peter fabricate a love letter to him. That will be funny. "Now an emotion."
Butter Butt

Title: Butter Butt
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Butter used as a lubricant
Words: 2500
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Pretty much PWP. Sylar has been touching Peter up an awful lot. He finally gets a favorable response out of it.

Sylar thought this was a good time to get the vanilla down. Peter was in front of the spice cabinet, packing brown sugar according to the directions for the cookies. He was positioned perfectly - a situation Sylar had been waiting for. Sylar stepped up close behind him - way too close, brushing-his-body-close - and reached up over him to open the cabinet, brushing Peter again as he leaned in, practically pressing his body to Peter's, even if it was a light touch. The contact high was so intoxicating it gave Sylar a head rush.

He'd expected a grunt, or even more, a verbalized objection. Possibly he'd get elbowed or shoved. Those were the sort of things that had happened before when he'd done things like this. He didn't expect the low, indistinct noise that Peter tried to stifle. It was so surprising that Sylar, usually smoother than that, fumbled moving the cinnamon out of the way and blinked in astonishment. Was that … a moan? Desire? What the hell was that?

Peter had flattened himself to the counter and was perfectly still, his operations with the brown sugar on hold. Sylar set the cinnamon container back upright, retrieving the small, dark glass bottle of vanilla extract. He shifted back, shutting the cabinet, and since Peter hadn't objected, he did the whole, full-body contact all over again. Just because. Peter tucked his head down and to the side, evincing a slight tremor that was no doubt a shudder in the making. Whoa. That's not a 'fuck off'. Sylar set the bottle down without moving his feet at all, remaining right behind his partner-in-cookie-crafting. He waited a beat, again expecting to be rebuffed, but the absence of a refusal spoke loud in the silence.

"You liked that," Sylar purred accusatively, rocking back to being directly behind Peter. Definitely a shudder. Muscles flexed in Peter's neck and jaw as his head came up a little at the words. Tension now. Maybe anger? That's not good. "You don't have to agree," Sylar murmured, trying to soothe. Peter exhaled. Good sign. "You don't have to do anything at all." Sylar bent his head to Peter's shoulder, nipping it firmly, still expecting to get whacked in the face over this. Peter's head went back down, though and the set of his shoulders relaxed.

Sylar touched Peter's sides very lightly, checking for permission, poised for a negative reaction. Peter made another low sound in his throat, choked and quiet. He swallowed more noisily. Sylar plucked at Peter's shirt, drawing it up as he turned his head and inhaled the scent of the man at the base of his neck. There was warmth from his skin and his body radiating up. Getting a little hot under the collar, are we? He pursed his lips and blew softly, getting a sudden intake of breath from Peter and a fully body, uninhibited shiver. Sylar's face brightened. He watched gooseflesh show on Peter's neck. Piloerection, he thought, recalling the word for it. Are you getting erect elsewhere, hm?

His fingers touched smooth, warm skin, sliding over Peter's sides with both hands, inwards towards his belly and up, amazed that he was being allowed this, but then again, Sylar wasn't the only one
frustrated and wanting. It had been more than a year for Peter at the very least - much longer for Sylar. "I can understand how difficult this must be for you." Peter tensed again, but Sylar went on, "It doesn't have to be difficult. You're not asking for this. It's just something that's happening." His hands explored Peter's hard, flat chest as he cupped his groin to the man's muscular butt. "It wasn't your idea." Peter started breathing harder, pushing back from the counter just a little to firm up the contact between them.

He's going to let me do this. Oh! Man oh man. He really is. Is that the angle I have to work? No responsibility? No blame for his delicate Petrelli conscience? I can handle that. Make me the guilty party, Peter. Wouldn't be the first time. He turned his hands and drew his fingernails lightly down Peter's chest and stomach, from pectorals to waistline, while he thrust forward with his hips hard enough to trap the guy between his body and the counter. Peter called out, loudly, shamelessly, his voice bouncing around in the small kitchen. His hands came back to grip Sylar's hips, the first definite sign of reciprocation he'd given.

Sylar started pushing his hips against him regularly, rubbing his rapidly growing hardness against Peter's ass. Peter wasn't light in the pants. He wasn't enormous, but he was enough. Peter whimpered in need and Sylar could hear the change in quality of sound when the man bit his lip. So sexy. Oh my God. Sylar's own desire was starting to burn hot. He wanted to know how far he could go and he wanted to go there fast. He was pretty sure the answer was 'all the way', but he was still holding himself back. Patient. You've been patient all this time. Just ease him into it and he'll be yours. Sylar's hands worked the top of the man's pants, popping the button open. Peter stiffened again, this time his head whipping around and for the first time Sylar caught a good look at his face. Peter was terrified. Or at least very frightened.

The expression brought to Sylar's mind times from long ago when he'd been uninterested in an advance very much like this, but had to take it anyway. He didn't want to think about where his words came from: "It'll be all right. It'll be like nothing ever happened. We won't talk about it later." He said them softly, instead of the rough, intimidating tone from his memory. He rubbed his hands over Peter's hips soothingly, and then down the line of his arms to cover his hands, fingers twining briefly. Peter turned his face away again, letting it hang down as he lifted one hand and took it to his fly, unzipping. He took the surprising step of pushing his garments all the way down. Then he reached over with a slightly shaking hand and pulled over the softened butter.

Oh! All the fucking way, Sylar thought, brows rising. Not just the bump and grind then, eh? You don't do anything halfway, do you Petrelli? He ran his hands around and over Peter's cheeks, kneading and spreading them methodically. He leaned in again to cup the line of Peter's body with his own, biting and then kissing at his neck, wondering how Peter liked it - fast and rough? Slow and gentle? He couldn't ask - not without making Peter implicate himself. The lack of words when drawing the butter over said everything.

He reached over and dipped two fingers into the butter, rolling them for a thorough coating. With his right hand he held Peter's shoulder where it joined the neck, a silly precaution as Peter wasn't going anywhere, but it had been more necessary with Gabriel all those years ago. The moans Peter made as Sylar wormed his way inside were incredibly gratifying - not sounds Gabriel had ever made. Enjoying the hell out of this, I see. Sylar smiled, pleased with that. Peter shifted like his knees were weak, but he didn't go down and his pants around his ankles kept him in place. Oh, yes.
He opened his pants, one-handed, and coated himself further with butter. Lube was the trick, he knew. He pulled Peter's ass up and bent his knees slightly, lining himself up as his trousers fell to mid thigh. "Hold still," he murmured - another rote command made meaningless by the context, but Peter obeyed anyway. He nudged inside, finding Peter tight and hot.

Peter groaned deeply, getting out, "Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah."

_Sylar started working his way in and out with short prods. Peter shook, his breathing uneven and wracked by moans and mewls. So fucking responsive. Noisy little bastard. Oh God, yes. Come for me, Peter. The tail of Peter's shirt kept dropping between his groin and Peter's cheeks, which was annoying. He loved the alternating warmth and the lewd slapping noise his lower gut made against Peter's posterior. He yanked the interfering fabric out and tucked it into itself at Peter's neck, hearing Peter chuckle a little at his discomfort._

_Sylar had the rhythm down now, moving all the way in and out, his cock entirely encased in Peter's body, then drawing it out only to slam it back home again. He held the man's hips and caressed his sides, reaching up to claw his way down Peter's chest again, listening to the symphony of sex sounds Peter let loose with, along with the occasional expletive or encouragement._

_Sylar started working faster as Peter was shoving back on him more aggressively, hands braced on the counter and ass lifted. The guy was rocking up on his tip-toes and then back into him. Sylar followed the pattern, then sped it up doubletime. Peter's cries changed tenor. Whatever he was doing, it was totally working for Peter, who sounded like he was choking and moaning at the same time. A few seconds later, Peter shoved the brown sugar and measuring cup out of the way, granules littering the countertop as he curled over on it, no longer able to hold himself up against Sylar reaming him out. He collapsed, letting it hold him up against the barrage of ceaseless stimulation._

_One of Peter's hands found his dick, grasping the tip and squeezing as he raised up on his toes and stayed there, tension filling his frame. Sylar rammed into him harder, pounding him with everything he had. He could feel himself starting to come undone, warmth flushing him as the world seemed to contract so that the only important thing in it was his dick and Petrelli's delicious ass. Peter's breath caught in a gasp, released in a ragged, "Ah-h-h!" and Sylar felt the man's anus clench hard around his shaft. Peter's knees buckled suddenly, but Sylar held him, burying himself entirely within for his own release._

_He held in place, panting while the room stopped spinning and everything came back into focus. He pried his fingers out of Peter's hips, where they'd dug in convulsively for his last thrusts. Peter made a tiny pained noise, blew out air to knock his hair out of the way (though it only fell back over his face) and then shook with a lingering spasm that contagiously transferred to Sylar, making him grip Peter's body anew as his own aftershock ran through him. He pulled back finally, patting the small of Peter's back and tugging up his pants._

_As he took the two steps over to get paper towels, Peter straightened. Sylar returned, offering them to the man and then cleaning his hand and himself. He didn't know what to expect for 'next' or how Peter would react. Peter got himself taken care of and pulled up his jeans, refastening them. Sylar absently scanned the counter. Other than needing more butter and having to re-measure the sugar, all was still in order. He reached out and righted the fallen, but fortunately unopened, bottle of vanilla as Peter stepped next to him. Peter touched his hip and now it was Sylar who was apprehensive, not sure what would happen. He had the feeling that he ought to leave - that was the behavior of his only role model for this sort of thing with another male, but it wasn't Sylar's true instinct._
Peter leaned up and kissed him. A jolt ran through Sylar and his breathing quickened again - not arousal, but just the electric sensation of lips against his. It was the first time they’d kissed one another - quick and sweet, a firm press and then over with, leaving Sylar staring in surprise. Peter paused for a moment, and then did it again. This time Sylar kissed back. *This is not off-limits? Peter, you're kissing me on the mouth, looking right at me. Are you okay with this? With what happened?*

"Thank you," Peter said after they parted.

"Peter …" Sylar swallowed uneasily, caught between pretending arrogance and feeling the vulnerability that was running riot through him. "You don't have to acknowledge this. That was the deal. " *Your 'free pass', like the one all the Petrellis get.*

"I won't do that to you." He patted Sylar's hip again and hugged him, pulling him in close to kiss Sylar's still-very-surprised face.

Sylar blinked, eyes watering unaccountably. *Must be some side effect of sex.* He pulled Peter's shirt out from where he'd tucked it into his collar and smoothed it down, then as they parted he raised his hands to straighten the collar fastidiously. Bringing his hands around to the front of Peter's head, he busily brushed the guy's silly bangs out of his face and then swiped brown sugar from his cheek. Sylar let his fingers trail down the sides of Peter's face, not sure what to do about these sudden compulsions to care for Peter. *Probably just another side effect. Maybe an instinct. A biological imperative. Hell if I know.* He straightened the front of Peter's shirt, too, feeling nervous and self-conscious, but doing it anyway.

"Thank you," Peter repeated, dropping his voice a little and tilting his head as if in emphasis for his words.

Sylar looked at him blankly, not sure what response Peter was looking for. *What does he want from me? Am I allowed to talk about it? Would I be better off not to? What if I say the wrong thing?* At a loss, he responded with, "Cookies?"

Peter chuckled and rolled his eyes, heading to the sink to wash up more properly. "Sure. Cookies." Peter sounded amused, but Sylar had the nagging feeling he'd missed something there. Only later did he realize it was as simple as 'you're welcome.'
Title: Feet First
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Words: 1400
Setting: The Wall, Bricks
Summary: Peter and Sylar are reading on the couch in Sylar's apartment, but reading isn't really what Peter wants.

*Catcher in the Rye.* Peter remembered it vaguely from high school, but that was about it. It was failing to hold his attention now just as it had then. He kept wondering if maybe he was able to read the book because Sylar had memorized it; wondering if he was really reading it at all or if his mind was just making up the words to make him think he was reading it. He shifted uncomfortably on Sylar's couch, his eyes glazing over at the multitude of uninteresting letters on the pages.

Sylar was slouched on the other end with his own book, looking content and totally absorbed. He hadn't moved a muscle for at least ten minutes, besides the occasional flip of a page or the back and forth scanning of his eyes. Peter tried crossing his legs at the ankles, thinking that would give him a better position. A few minutes later, that wasn't working either. He toed off his shoes and hooked one foot up under his knee. It was better, though he didn't like putting his feet on someone else's furniture. His own - sure. His favorite reading positions were on his stomach or back, or on his side on his bed. Somehow the couch that seemed to mold itself perfectly to Sylar's form just wasn't working for Peter.

He glanced over at his companion. *Maybe it's the proportions. He's a little longer in the torso than I am. Taller. Maybe that's it. Maybe I should just adjust this pillow.* He did, wallowing it around. Sylar glanced over as he turned a page, but said nothing. Still, Peter felt annoyed and chastened to have distracted. When that didn't work either, he took the crass step of turning lengthwise on the couch, his back to the arm of the furniture, and putting his feet up on it, knees bent. Sylar gave him a longer look, but thankfully didn't object. Instead, Sylar shifted position so his legs stuck out in Peter's general direction, canting his back so he sat a little against the arm on his end, his body diagonal to the couch. It was a mirroring gesture and Peter calmed.

Peter sighed, feeling a little better like this. He went back to the book, trying to recall what little had happened in the plot so far. Soon the characters were drawing in his attention. His feet slipped from the tight, don't-take-up-too-much-space position he'd been holding. They crept over to the middle of the couch as he relaxed. Sylar was way on the other side anyway. Peter had his feet hug the back of the couch, keeping distance between their bodies, observing an unspoken boundary. He wiggled, settling his butt in as his torso gradually and unintentionally followed his feet, sliding down over the minutes.

Sylar shifted carefully again, and something about the care of his motion caught Peter's attention, tensing his whole body. Sylar caught the stiffening, looking over at Peter apprehensively. Peter realized he was taking up almost two-thirds of the couch now. It was unconscionably rude. He started to sit up, but Sylar reached for his feet, saying, "No! Peter ..." Peter stopped. Sylar did, too, with his hand a few inches from Peter's ankles. Swallowing cautiously, Sylar said, "Put your feet back here, beside me. You can straighten out all the way then." Peter eyed him warily. Was this a trap? Why would Sylar offer that? "It's okay," Sylar tried to sooth, his expression one of trying to
calm a nervous child.

It made Peter feel like he was overreacting. He extended his feet slowly, though, watching all the while. Sylar smiled a little. "Yeah," and nodded a little too fast. Peter sniffed and looked back to his book pointedly, trying to act like 'yeah, this is normal'. After about a minute, he wriggled a little to get comfortably situated. Sylar canted himself a bit more, echoing Peter's position except that his own feet were on the floor. It was companionable. Peter's feet had crossed that boundary at Sylar's request. They tingled a little, which seemed ridiculous. Peter sniffed again, trying to read.

Minutes passed. Peter's feet were cooling. He dug the toes between the cushions at the join of the arm and back of the couch. It created a couple inches of space between them. At Sylar's glance down, Peter invited, "You can scoot back a little if you want." That was all he'd intended, but Sylar wasn't a mind-reader. He scooted back until his butt was touching Peter's ankles and calves, crossing whatever new boundary was in place between them and initiating contact. Peter stifled his response to that, focusing his eyes sightlessly on his book, trying to figure out why such a nonsexual touch was setting him off, making his stomach do funny things and his heart beat faster. It probably had to do with how little he and Sylar touched normally. Casual touch was very important to Peter, and he'd had very little of it here, deliberately minimizing it every time it happened, drawing lines between them just like with his feet.

He took a deep breath and let it out, letting himself enjoy the body heat against himself, giving himself permission for it to be pleasant and satisfying to feel someone else against him. There was nothing more - it was just a touch. His eyes slid shut as his back relaxed, and then his neck. His feet warmed and then the rest of him, too. Tension drained out of him. He lef the book rest on his chest, thinking he'd go back to reading it in … well, just a minute or two. First, he would rest - the book wasn't that important. How long had it been since he'd been so amiably with someone? Years, at least. A few moments later, his body twitched in one of those pre-sleep, full body jerks. He turned, vaguely aware of where his feet were, thinking muzzily that Sylar would just have to deal.

He felt Sylar's hand rest on his topmost calf as he settled back down. It just touched there, creating contact and warmth - not rubbing or massaging, but just being there. Peter sighed in unabashed pleasure. He blinked his eyes open slowly, seeing the tops of Sylar's sneakers. Possessed of an entirely crazy idea, he said thickly, "Take your shoes off," without stopping to think it through.

With a second of hesitation, Sylar complied. Peter didn't look at him. He didn't want to. He knew what he wanted - he could feel it inside of himself - and he didn't want to see Sylar not understanding, or being confused, or blaming or angry or whatever. The man's shoes removed, Peter reached down and snagged at his sock-clad feet. "Come here." Sylar let him pick up his feet and pull them up to the couch in front of Peter, against his chest. They were bony and smelly and it was awkward, but they were human. And somehow, holding his part of Sylar, Peter could divorce himself from the idea that he was hugging Sylar to himself. He could blot that thought out and just curl his upper body around another, holding, touching, feeling he was with someone and not so desperately alone. He could pretend to himself that later, when he woke up and rose, that it had just been … damn, he had no idea how to explain this … well, maybe it was just so weird that Sylar wouldn't mention it. Fuck it all.

He held Sylar's feet to him like they were the oddest of teddy bears, and felt a slight pressure on his calf as Sylar gave him a small squeeze. It felt like approval. Peter sagged, getting his way, perverse and wrong though he thought it was. Sylar's foot funk didn't begin to push aside the soul-deep contentment he felt at having something to hold … something very much like a person. Book entirely forgotten, he drifted off to sleep.
You are so fucking easy, Sylar thought. Sometimes he felt like he'd won the relationship lottery with Peter. The guy was cooperative. Sylar settled in for the show, having situated Peter on the floor in front of him while he sat on the couch. His victim was blindfolded, the better to let Sylar focus entirely on observing Peter's self-pleasure without the distraction of being watched in return. "Let me see what you like to do when you're all by yourself. I'm sure you can't keep your hands off that body. You've never had the self-control …" Sylar purred.

Peter pulled in air, his hands rubbing over his knees first of all in a gesture that looked nervous to start, then more sensuous as he relaxed into it. Hm, Sylar pondered, spreading his own legs and thinking about those hands running over his own body. He'd had the pleasure many times now and even though Sylar's basis for comparison was limited, Peter seemed very, very skilled. You don't start right in even on yourself? All indirect to begin with, I see. Sylar rolled his own hands over his knees, watching Peter's motions as he stroked down the outside of his own thighs and mimicking them languorously.

"I like looking at you," Sylar murmured, and Peter smiled suddenly. "Come on, big boy. Show me what else you touch when you're desperate, lonely, wanting … How do you satisfy those urges an empath must feel so strongly?"

As before, Sylar's rumbling words seemed to turn Peter on all by themselves. Peter's mouth opened slightly and his head tilted back. His hands rose past his hips, over his stomach and across his chest, where they paused to stroke lightly over the flat planes of his pectorals. Sylar knew well what that lightly tanned skin felt like - so smooth and naturally hairless that he would have burned with envy if Peter didn't generously allow him to indulge himself and feel it as often as he liked. Sylar licked his lips, wishing he could kiss that sinful, clever mouth without spoiling this. He'd gotten a little too involved last time.

Peter's hands returned to his thighs, curling slightly to draw his nails down the outside and then again across the top, leaving faint red furrows. He likes the stimulation … either I've been overdoing it, or maybe he's just wary of letting me hurt him. Peter breathed deeper after the scratching, reaching up to brush his cheeks with his knuckles, then straightening his fingers to stroke over his chest again. His fingertips flicked over his nipples and he arched his back slightly, muscles flexing and tensing beautifully under his skin. Sylar's fingers itched to take the place of Peter's and play him like an instrument.

"Sweet, innocent-appearing Peter, but we both know the truth, don't we?" Sylar rumbled, as he pitched his voice down for maximum effect. "You'd do anything for affection, no matter how nasty. You're a slut, with such constant desires as to make even the busiest whore blush. Show me how
dirty you really are."

"Ha," Peter exhaled, reaching down to stroke and position his stiffening cock. Sylar was just about to say something about that when Peter scooted forward, right to him. Sylar spread his legs out of the way, not sure what was up. Peter kept going until his knees touched the couch and then he reached out on either side to find Sylar's shins. Sylar frowned. This wasn't part of his plan, not that Peter was all that good at sticking to plans. (Particularly ones Sylar hadn't even told him about, but where was the fun in that?) While Sylar was stewing over it, Peter's fingers trailed deliciously up and down Sylar's legs, giving him goose-bumps. Peter's breathing accelerated he made a low moan in the back of his throat.

_Oh, really?_ Sylar thought of that response. _Does he need touch that badly?_ To test, Sylar reached out with his left foot, rubbing it up the outside of Peter's upper leg. He was rewarded with an immediate, appreciative groan. _So, touch is mandatory. Check._ Peter ran his right hand along Sylar's calf, fingers slipping through what Sylar thought of as an embarrassing and probably gross amount of hair, to tickle lightly and tantalizingly at the delicate skin on the back of his knee. His left hand stroked himself in slow, deliberate jerks as he blindly explored his partner. Sylar's skin felt alive and tingly where Peter caressed him and it was no longer his imagination supplying the sensation. Sylar's eyes slid nearly shut in bliss as he started to pump his own dick, unconsciously keeping time with Peter.

"Mmm," he hummed in a deep, resonant tone as Peter kneaded the muscle of his calf and started tugging at himself more determinedly, milking himself from the root. But this looked a little too much like Peter was in control of things. Sylar disentangled his leg and raised his foot to Peter's face, pushing it against his cheek and asserting who was in charge. As Sylar pulled back, Peter snapped defiantly at that foot, teeth clacking together on air. Sylar didn't even flinch, protected as he was by Peter being blindfolded. He chuckled. _Feisty._ "You want my foot in your mouth, is that it? That can be arranged, you know."

Peter's right hand had joined his left at his groin - the right stroking at his erect organ and the left fondling his balls. Sylar was so distracted by those mesmerizing motions and the shift in color and shape of the head of Peter's cock, that he nearly missed Peter's quiet, needy whine. He'd opened his mouth invitingly, touching the tip of his tongue to the inside of his upper lip.

_Hm?_ Sylar tipped his long, narrow foot over, worrying about how clean the bottom of his feet were. Despite that, he felt a thrill at the filthiness of Peter touching his lips to Sylar's big toe, and then rubbing his cheek over it. Sylar wormed his toes around to present the largest to Peter's lips again. "Lick my feet," he whispered, surprised at how arousing it was to see Peter debase himself so willingly. "Suck it. Oh, yeah."

Peter pulled the big toe into his mouth, rolling it around like a tootsie-pop. Warmth, wetness, suction, and the brush of teeth did all kinds of good things to Sylar's excitement. He was breathing harder, starting to squeeze and work himself faster. He groaned quietly as Peter pulled off, raking the toe lightly with his incisors. Sylar dropped his foot to the side, noting that Peter missed a stroke and even let go of himself, probably preparatory to finding out where Sylar's foot had gone off to. Sylar snugged it up next to Peter's hip, which seemed to satisfy the other man.

Peter returned to stroking himself right-handed while his left touched himself or Sylar's leg. Peter was starting to make noises in the back of his throat, one with every few breaths. Had they been fucking, Sylar knew those sounds would have been moans - the harder the thrusts, the louder, but it was interesting to see Peter made them even from the pleasures of his own hand. He was breathing faster as his right hand transitioned toward the end of his dick and his left made another journey up his front, stroking his chest, neck and then lips as Peter moved his head restlessly.
He was getting close, and Sylar, his hand on himself still matching Peter's pace, was as well. I've seen enough. After this, if the pattern was anything like what Sylar had seen before, it would be a quick finish unless he interrupted. It was time to capitalize on something else he'd learned the first time. "Come here," he said, scooting quickly to the edge of the couch and reaching out long arms to touch Peter on the shoulder. He guided him closer. Peter understood what was wanted almost immediately. Hot, panting breaths puffed along Sylar's thigh as Peter's mouth quested for him. Lips wetted by an active tongue slid over the head of Sylar's cock similar to how he'd taken in his toe. He sucked him ardent, with a wanton, perverted keening like giving Sylar head was just what he'd been waiting for. Sylar grinned, his feet on either side of Peter's ass, bouncing a little, said toes scratching against Peter to spur him on.

It felt fabulous. Peter was a cocksucker of unparalleled skill and even more, now that he was turned on this much, he was wildly enthusiastic. "Mmmm," Peter moaned, swallowing him down almost completely, then pulling back to breathe and lap noisily at the glans. Sylar touched the top of Peter's dark head, ever so grateful for all of this - the eagerness, the cooperativeness, the depth of Peter's heart that he would be willing to be with someone like Sylar, willing to give him a chance, willing to take him to bed, willing to suck his cock on request or demand. Sylar stroked Peter's fine, silky hair, gorgeous to look at and even more fantastic to feel. He tugged off the blindfold to better run his hands through it, grabbing fistfuls as Peter sucked him, bobbing his head rapidly, one hand now on Sylar's shaft while the other was on Peter's own cock.

Sylar made an inarticulate noise of desire, starting to flex his buttocks so as to make small thrusts into Peter's mouth - so sweet, so hot, so sinful. And all mine. He gives me everything. Anything I ask for. Sylar lifted the blindfold and smelled of it, picking up the scent of Peter's hair and skin faintly on it. He rubbed it against his face as his other hand tightened on Peter's hair, pushing him forward and making him take him deeper. And he doesn't even complain about that.

Peter's back flexed and his hand on Sylar's shaft clenched. He moaned in the back of his throat, a loud but stifled sound that vibrated Sylar's dick until it felt like he was going to lose it. Peter lifted just enough for a quick breath before doing it again. This time after a few seconds, Peter shook, his mouth went slack, and his grip faltered. Sylar turned Peter's head to glory at the glazed look on his face in those few seconds of orgasm. Mine! You come from sucking me off, letting me use you. Jesus, Peter! Peter's lids fluttered and he leaned his head against Sylar's thigh, breathing hard around Sylar's painfully full, nearly-there erection.

Sylar pulled it out and stroked, long, full draws up and down the saliva-slicked organ, looking at Peter's lovely, satiated visage crouched subserviently between his legs. It didn't take long before he felt the fire in his balls, drawing up and priming him. Peter seemed to notice as well, as Sylar's motions became jerky and harder. Peter slipped his mouth back over the end of Sylar's cock and it was like liquid ecstasy - hot, wet, incredible suction hollowing Peter's cheeks with the edges of his teeth slipping against his head. That sent Sylar right over the edge. He came hard, feeling like the whole end of his cock was surging with pleasure. Peter sucked him thoroughly, extending the peak until Sylar curled his hands into the man's hair and whimpered.

"Please, please … stop." Sylar could barely believe those words were coming out of his own mouth. He'd never begged anyone for anything - except for Peter, whom he begged for release and begged for mercy. Peter leaned away, licking his lips and swallowing, looking up at him with a smugly pleased look that somehow made Sylar want to climb in his lap and curl up there. "Oh, Peter," he breathed, blown away in more ways than one.

Peter pushed him over on the couch, taking charge and directing him, and Sylar went meekly because in these rare moments, his whole world was glowing and good. "Scoot back." Peter climbed up with Sylar, bringing the towel from the floor with him. He tossed it over them both and snuggled...
up close, happy to be crammed together in the limited space. Peter tucked his head to Sylar's chest and rubbed his forehead against him lovingly. Sylar embraced him, breathing slowing, the rush of his blood slowing, feeling utterly transported by the continuing flood of endorphins. It made him high like nothing else. *One little blow job,* he thought. *That's all it takes to send me flying, I'm so fucking easy.*
Sylar devoured Peter's mouth with ferocious energy, wrapping his lips around Peter's, sucking at them, and dragging his teeth across them. He was desperate for more, to draw Peter in as much as he could, taste him, savor him, swallow him down. He was lost in the experience of taking someone … so much so that it was startling when Peter grunted, grabbed his head, and pulled him back. Sylar would have recoiled entirely, but Peter's fingers flexed, tips pressing in and subtly blocking him. Sylar held still after that, equal parts angry at having his happy time interrupted and frightened that he might have done some unknown thing to irrevocably foul things up. Peter looked over his face silently, then drew him back slowly, lips parting to renew the kiss.

Whatever, Sylar thought of the speed bump. *Maybe he just wanted to look at me.* He didn't care. He returned to kissing with abandon, but it lasted only a few seconds before Peter jerked him back, gripping harder and putting Sylar right back where he had been before.

Rage boiled in him at being manhandled. Sylar went still, glaring forcefully and blowing air out his nose in displeasure. He wasn't the only one unhappy. Peter frowned and Sylar would have thought they were about to have a fight, or at least an argument, but that Peter was still holding his head. That gesture made Sylar keep his lips sealed, as well as the certainty that anything he said right now would be the wrong thing. He didn't know what was going on, but that Peter was still holding him, eyes flitting between his own and his lips, told him that he wasn't being rejected. *Maybe … he's playing?*

He breathed out more slowly and evenly, the glower fading as he studied Peter's face only inches from his own. Peter adjusted his hands, thumbs moving over and a little ahead of Sylar's temples, fingers spreading through his hair. It was sensuous, but Sylar understood Peter was getting a better grip to fix his head in place. For the moment, Sylar cooperated. Peter was (or at least had been), after all, letting him make out with him. He'd find out what was going on before fighting about it.

Peter's frown disappeared and he moved forward slowly, leaning up on his toes so as to brush Sylar's lips. It was silent and careful and for a moment Sylar did nothing in direct response. Then he shivered, a mental vision of being confined, strapped down, helpless on Level 5, and yet wonderfully molested by this very same Peter Petrelli flashed behind his eyes. With a lustful sound in the back of his throat, his chin jutted forward and he tried to go back to the zealous manner he'd used before. He was blocked, though. Peter twitched his own head away an inch and held Sylar firm.

Anger blazed in Sylar's eyes for a moment, then it subsided with a small smile. *He's playing: playing at controlling me.* That made him laugh inside, but he allowed Peter his pretenses. *Whatever gets you off, Peter.* The other man came back in, gentle and slow, lips moving softly over Sylar's. Sylar
relaxed his mouth, letting it fall open a little, letting his lips loosen, and letting his neck unwind from the stiffness it had adopted.

"Scoot down a little," Peter murmured, and Sylar bent his knees a little in response, bracing against the wall behind him. Peter kissed his lower lip and then his upper in small, sucking smooches that included a delicious swipe by his tongue. Sylar made another sound of need, but this time didn't act on it. Peter paused as if considering that, then tilted his head to the side and kissed softly, full mouth on mouth. Sylar's hands crept up Peter's back as though of their own volition. Holding still and not responding with his mouth was setting the rest of his body on fire, desperate to take what was right in front of him.

Peter's tongue touched his, prodding it lightly, and Sylar shivered with the sensation. He kissed back, unable to resist, but he kept his motions small, and not the rampant vigor he'd been using before. Peter moaned in encouragement and pressed his body to Sylar's. His hands combed through Sylar's hair to the back of his head, where one cradled his skull and the other drifted down to his neck, stroking so softly as to tickle. Sylar shuddered again, eyes feeling like they were going to roll back in his head from pleasure.

He wasn't sure what Peter was doing - playing, controlling, teasing? - but it was totally working for Sylar, more intensely even than it would have been if he'd still been going to town, eating Peter's face like he'd been doing earlier. He kept having these erotically-charged imaginings of restraints and being sexed against his will … or sort of against his will. It was Peter, after all. Peter controlling him … him letting Peter control him. The idea that he could trust Peter enough to give up control to him … it was making him ache in his pants, making his heart hammer faster and faster against his chest. He was glad of the wall at his back, because his knees were growing weak from the fantasy running non-stop now in his head. Peter's lips gave it reality as they trekked across his cheek to suck at his earlobe. Peter's attentions blended seamlessly into the mental illusion. Sylar's fingers dug into Peter's back, over his shoulder blades, as Peter turned Sylar's head to get better access to ear and throat.

Sylar imagined being tied down, helpless, vulnerable, unable to escape … it would be a game he'd set up with Peter, explained and planned beforehand, but staged or not, he'd still be utterly powerless when the moment came. Unable to strike back; unable to get away. In his fantasy, Peter would treat him so tenderly, with such unfailing trust and support, warmth and love. He'd still have passion, just as Sylar could now feel Peter starting to rock their erections together, through the strained denim separating them. But it wouldn't be the frantic, desperate pace Sylar had set so far in their dalliances. It was deliberate, calm, going only as fast as Peter wanted it to, and Sylar would be forced to progress at someone else's pace. Yet despite the surrender of control, Peter would still progress. He wanted Sylar; he truly did. Sylar wouldn't be denied. He'd get what he needed - without having to take, without having to force.

He shuddered again, drowning in arousal and barely restrained desire as Peter turned his head back and kissed his mouth. Sylar, totally into the headsapce, passively and gratefully accepted the kiss with a mewl of pleasure. Peter smirked. The hand that had been on the side of Sylar's neck drifted down his chest, pausing to brush back and forth across his shirt, finding the hardened nubs and tweaking them - one, then the other. Sylar's breath panted out and his lids fluttered. He gave himself over to Peter to toy with, feeling the hand go lower as Peter leaned in for another leisurely kiss, sliding his tongue within Sylar's welcoming mouth. Sylar groaned as Peter's hand teased along the outline Sylar made in his underwear, a wet patch besmirching the front.

Peter pushed the white cotton cloth down, took him in hand, and started to pump. Sylar whimpered, eyes shut, fingers digging into Peter's shoulders. Peter nuzzled his face, rubbing the tip of his nose against Sylar's, and against his cheek. Sylar had completely given up initiative. He shook like a leaf,
already on the edge of release. He'd surrendered completely, giving himself to Peter on a silver platter, letting Peter drive. He came so quickly it was embarrassing - a few handfuls of strokes and he gushed with a spasm and a cry. Peter kissed him again, drinking in the noise he'd made, then sucking on his lower lip, and his upper, just like how he'd started.

Sylar looked at him with glazed eyes, feeling twitchy and frightened, worried that Peter knew (or didn't know) how vulnerable he'd let himself be, and how solidly the whole thing had rocked his boat. If Peter didn't know, then did Sylar need to pretend that his unusual excitement had been on purpose? And if Peter did … what did it mean to be that safe with someone? It was boggling. Sylar had no frame of reference. Peter put Sylar's clothes somewhat to rights and snuggled against him, nudging Sylar into standing taller once more. Sylar was still too mentally staggered to do anything but loosely hold his companion, aware of the regular motions Peter's arm and hips were making, slowly intensifying until Peter groaned into Sylar's collar, at a spot already sloppy wet from Peter drooling and kissing on him while he'd jerked himself off.

They stood together, all quiet breathing, warm bodies, and cooling damp spots. Finally, Sylar's recovering thoughts hit upon a possible way to spin this. "Peter Petrelli. I think you get off on controlling me."

Peter glanced up at him and raised one brow. "You're a pretty scary guy, Sylar," he said, neither confirming nor denying, which Sylar took as an unconditional affirmation.

_What a funny little man, who can admit that he's scared of me, but not that he'd rather be in charge._ Licking his lips slowly, Sylar looked off into the distance and smiled, giving Peter a squeeze. "I think we can work something out."
Playing Hard to Get

Title: Playing Hard to Get
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Explicit sexual content
Words: 2,700
Setting: The Wall
Summary: PWP. Sylar's upset that no one is willing to put up with someone as screwed in the head as he is. Peter proves him wrong. Beta by means2bhuman.

Sylar just wanted someone to be there for him. He knew he was a complete fuck up, with so few redeeming features as to be not worth saving. The whole world would be better off with him out of it, which was agonizingly ironic because Sylar didn't want the whole world. One part of it would do. Any part. One person, even. And they didn't have to be *his* - they just had to think he was okay under the layers of fucked-upedness that he knew he had and that he would gladly start trying to peel away … if he just had someone who cared that he was trying.

He'd been slapped in the face, again, by how unlikely it was that he'd ever get what he'd wanted. Peter's scathing comments reminded him of how unworthy he was of anyone's support. He sat on the bench in the park where they'd been arguing, letting his shoulders sag as he put his face in his hands. He'd gradually become more open with Peter in showing his emotions, because really - why not? There was no one else here. The stoic façade didn't protect him from shit. And maybe … fine, let Peter have what he wanted. Let him see that his words had struck home. Let him gloat or whatever it was he wanted to do. At least one of them would be happy.

Sylar's throat felt swollen and constricted. His too-large nose wasn't helping matters by being stuffy all of a sudden. He sniffed, determined to keep breathing even though his body seemed equally stubborn about complicating the simple process. A moment later, Peter sat down on the park bench next to him. Too close, but Peter and boundaries weren't always on speaking terms. Sylar tensed and turned his head away, expecting more of the same diatribe, just at closer range. Instead, Peter put his arm around Sylar's shoulders and squeezed.

"I'm sorry," Peter said gently. "I went too far. I shouldn't have said that."

Sylar turned towards him slowly, eyeing Peter sullenly, expecting to see some sneering, laughing 'Psych! Just kidding!' joke about to spill forth. What he saw was remorse and sympathy.

Peter turned inward with him, using and encouraging the rotation of Sylar's torso. He tightened his arm around Sylar's back, pulling them together until their chests touched. Sylar knew what a hug was, but to be given one right now was so jarring that his mind initially only processed Peter's act in terms of mechanics - each muscle contraction and physical contact registering separately as his mind fumbled on the identity of the gestalt. *Whoa. He's … what is he doing? Why?*

He started breathing harder, a flush of emotion - gratitude, his mind distantly catalogued - rushing through him from scalp to soles, leaving him warm and tingling. He could have questioned. He could have pushed Peter away and counter-attacked, rallying new energy to defend himself. Instead, he tucked his face against Peter's neck and let his arms creep up around the other man. His hands drifted up over sides that he knew were muscled and ribbed under Peter's shirt, over a back he knew to be both strong and broad. It felt good; it felt welcomed. He felt the silent tears that were wetting Peter's
neck, the idea that Peter was apologizing letting Sylar feel safe enough to let go at least a little bit. Maybe he could put down some tiny fraction of the crap piled on him by his shitty life.

Peter stroked his back, patted him quietly and consistently. It had a comforting rhythm to it that reminded Sylar of a magazine article he'd read in an ophthalmologist's waiting room years ago. It was something about there being a distinct pattern of patting that mothers gave to infants that soothed more than any other. It was the same that people gave instinctively in the much rarer instances when they were genuinely trying to comfort another adult. He held to Peter tighter, letting go inside - relaxing and giving up on it all.

It seemed like forever that Peter held him patiently, no hurrying, no rushing, no telling him to man up or get over it. He felt better as his crying jag passed, perversely delighted in fact. Playful, happy - feelings Sylar had been unfamiliar with for so long that they seemed like strange, anomalous conditions. He sniffed repeatedly, clearing his nose and regaining his ability to smell. Besides the salt tang of his weeping, he could smell the man he was embracing. His cock twitched. Sylar pressed the ridge of his nose to the soft flesh of Peter's throat, feeling the man's pulse throbbing so sensuously underneath, and inhaled deeply.

Oh, God. That scent! He'd never had the opportunity to get this close to Peter, much less perv on him like this. Maybe I ought to have emotional breakdowns more often. He breathed in again. Knowing he might never get a chance to do this again, knowing full well he might be ruining the most empathetic gesture Peter had ever made to him, he still didn't stop himself as the tip of his tongue darted out and licked. Peter was salty and wet; tears and sweat. It was an intoxicating combination for Sylar, especially at that moment. I am such a fuck up. But Peter hadn't jerked away, though he had stilled. Sylar tasted again, fully expecting for this to go bad, fast, but it was worth it. He was getting off on this.

Peter pulled aside and pushed him back a little without any of the urgency that would have been normal for someone you hated licking on you inappropriately. It occurred to Sylar that maybe Peter wasn't sure what he'd been doing there, he still didn't stop himself as the tip of his tongue darted out and licked. Peter was salty and wet; tears and sweat. It was an intoxicating combination for Sylar, especially at that moment. I am such a fuck up. But Peter hadn't jerked away, though he had stilled. Sylar tasted again, fully expecting for this to go bad, fast, but it was worth it. He was getting off on this.

Now Peter jerked away, shoving him back and holding him stiff-armed. "No!" he barked out, looking alarmed.

You started it, Sylar thought in sick amusement. And oh yeah, he had quite the boner going on. Hugging, smelling, kissing, patting, stroking, tasting - what did Peter expect? He was an idiot if he didn't think that would push Sylar's buttons so firmly that some of them would stick in that position. Sylar patiently pried Peter's hands off him, which Peter allowed, but Peter freaked out and scuttled backwards on the bench when Sylar came in for kiss number two.

Peter's retreat translated to 'play a game', 'teasing', and 'the hunt' in Sylar's twisted brain. Tag, you're it! He grinned and jumped forward after him. Peter leaped to his feet; Sylar followed, prowling closer to him and looking for his opportunity to grab Peter and pull him back close.

"Sylar?"

Sylar chuckled. Their stupid argument was long over with, flushed out of his memory with the emotional release. Peter's body heat still lingered on his chest and arms and face; the taste of him on his tongue - those things had made so much more of an impression. So delicious. His grin was all teeth, his mouth gaping a little in glee. Sylar lunged in too close and Peter smacked him on the cheek. It was half-hearted at best and a far cry from the solid, head-snapping punch Sylar knew Peter could
It was so rare for anyone Sylar toyed with to play back in return. Actually … he couldn't remember it ever happening. At all. But Peter was novel and special in so many delightful ways. Sylar sprang forward again, expecting and dodging Peter's jab, to snake in a long-armed slap of his own. It popped against the side of Peter's face with satisfying loudness. Like Peter's blow, there was little force to it except for shock value.

Peter snarled and tried to slap him back. For a moment, they fought like a pair of teenage kids in an undignified slap-fest, blocking and dodging and whapping on each other. Glancing blows, all, but Sylar's heart was racing, pumping hard and pushing blood where it needed to be. He felt heavy and full in his groin, excited in many different ways. His ecstatic grin showed it.

Peter gave up the fight (it was probably the grin that put him off) and tried to back out of it. As he retreated, his heel connected with the edge of a planting box and he stumbled, glancing back and trying to change course. Sylar grabbed Peter's shirt and jerked him close, pulling Peter flush with him from head to toe. Sylar was breathing right in his face, feeling his erection pressed into Peter's abdomen. Peter's eyes flew wide. Before he could recover, Sylar kissed him sloppily on the forehead. It was handy - right there in front of his lips. He puckered firmly, hoping that Peter wouldn't head-butt him too hard for this.

Yet Peter didn't counter-attack. He yanked back, throwing his weight away from Sylar, who still had a hold of his shirt. Also, there was still the edge of the planter box to take into account, which tripped Peter up just as surely the second time as the first. Off-balance, they both went down into soft earth and begonias.

He just pulled me down on top of him! Sylar's mind supplied in an overjoyed crow. Even though he knew that was mostly accident, he couldn't help but be thrilled about the serendipitous arrangement. Onto a bed even! Flower bed, but whatever.

Their fighting turned to wrestling, with Sylar's sole goal being to writhe and wriggle on top of Peter as much as possible, humping on him when he could. Peter struggled with him and it was really starting to seem to Sylar that Peter wasn't fighting this as hard as he could. Yeah, Sylar had noticed that before with the flimsy whack instead of a solid punch, but Peter had opportunities even now to knee Sylar in the groin, head butt him, gouge his eyes, punch his throat, or any of a number of fight-ending moves that Peter was … not taking.

Peter was certainly objecting verbally, though: "Would you stop it!" "Sylar!" "Fuck!" "Ow!" "Damnit!" "Quit it!"

And that was when Sylar felt it: he wasn't the only one turned on here. Grabbing Peter by the shoulder with one hand, he put his other to Peter's crotch. Peter froze, hands on his collar and the bicep of the arm now occupied with Peter's groin. That arm rubbed hard and steady, up and down in forceful strokes that made Peter shudder every-fucking-time. This close, Sylar could see as Peter's already dark eyes got darker and lost focus. His breath hitched in beautiful time with Sylar pumping him. Peter flushed and panted, hard as steel under Sylar's palm.

It seemed like forever - a long, crystalline moment where nothing happened except for Sylar making Peter twitch intimately with every pass of his hand. Then Peter shattered it by coming to his senses. He kicked Sylar on the thigh, shoved him away, and rolled, ending up on hands and knees off to the side. It wasn't too hard to get away. Sylar had been thoroughly distracted and felt like he was about to pop off himself just from watching Peter respond. But he wasn't done yet.

They both got to their feet together, with Sylar moving in immediately to finish the job. Peter swung
on him and this time, he wasn't playing. He hit Sylar hard, right in the face, causing an actual undignified yelp of unexpected pain. Sylar recoiled, glanced at Peter (saw that there was no follow-through attack coming - something one had to be careful about with Peter) and stooped over, holding his nose and playing up the injury with a low noise.

A few seconds passed as the air sounded with the heavy breathing between both of them. "Ow,"
Sylar moaned, straightening a little and grimacing. He was starting to think Peter wouldn't fall for his ruse, but here he came, the little Boy Scout, stepping right up to him and beginning to say something about letting him look at Sylar's hurt.

Well, it wasn't hurt that bad. Sylar tumbled Peter back into the same planter they'd been in before. Sylar was gratified to find Peter was still packing heat in his drawers. The fight hadn't taken that out of him. Feeling safer, Sylar grabbed Peter's jaw in one long-fingered grip and kissed him, openmouthed, while he rutted against Peter hard enough to grind him into the dirt. Peter had every excuse to bite him on the tongue - bite it off, even. Sylar took that risk and played a bet. Like so many seemingly suicidal dangers Sylar had exposed himself to over the years, this one paid off. Peter kissed back, madly and passionately, fingers gripping Sylar's arms and digging in - but not pushing him away. A long minute of surprisingly mutual coupling later, Peter shuddered, gasping around Sylar's mouth. For a brief moment, Sylar thought he'd broken his toy. But no. Peter's fluttering lids and vacant expression spoke of something else. With a last, violent snap of his hips, Sylar joined him in release, laughing from euphoria and victory as soon as his voice started working.

He laughed harder when he saw Peter's face. It looked like the empath was trying to have a halfdozen emotions parade across there at once. Poor guy, Sylar thought with amusement. I'm too much for him. I'm a freak. Someone shows me a moment of kindness, and I have to fuck it up in the most royal and complete way I can. His laugh turned bitter, hopeless, and sad, as Peter shoved him away with an enraged snarl, then rose to stand over him. Sylar cringed and winced when Peter grabbed the front of his shirt. He wanted to take his beating like a man, but he just couldn't. Pain was pain, no matter how much of a psychopath he was. Peter stared at him for a moment, long enough for Sylar's eyes to creep cautiously to Peter's face. Peter looked put-out and exasperated, not angry.

Peter leaned in fast, pulling Sylar towards him, tilting his head and kissing him with a hard, quick, but unmistakable smooch before shoving Sylar all the way back to the ground. Peter huffed. "This is a one-time pass. Next time I say no, you respect it. You hear me?"

"Yes," Sylar said immediately in a small, wondering voice. His fingers traveled to his lips, touching them disbelievingly. He kissed me? There's going to be a next time? His eyes widened. There's going to be a next time!

"Good." Peter stood and started to walk off. He threw his voice over his shoulder, calling out, "I'm going to go get cleaned up. See you tomorrow," like it was no big deal.

Sylar watched the man walk away for a good minute, noticing Peter's stride actually looked … jaunty. He rolled over, finding a stupid grin on his face as unasked for as the sorrow that had marked it before any of this had started. Sylar put his hands over his face again, thinking that maybe he'd found someone crazy enough to put up with his fucked-upedness after all.
Another rejection of Sylar's advances was delivered; the man in question tried to kill Peter with his eyes.

Peter weathered Sylar's angry glare, answering with a slow, unimpressed blink and looking away. The other man kept looking at him anyway - he could see that in his peripheral vision, as well as when Sylar finally stood. Peter glanced back and started to rise as well, only to be told, "Stay," like he was a dog or something. Huffing a bit, Peter obeyed, assuming Sylar was going to get something out of the fridge and was just telling Peter, rather rudely, that there was no reason to get up, from where he was sitting in the kitchen of Sylar's apartment.

But Sylar stopped behind him, directly behind him, and put his hand on Peter's shoulder. Peter glanced up and back, not sure what was coming. He tensed all over, seeing that Sylar had something small and black in his hand. A moment later, its identity as a comb was clear but that didn't really lead to Peter relaxing. What the hell?

"Hold still," Sylar snapped, the hand on Peter's shoulder holding him firmly in his seat.

"What are you doing?"

"Improving the scenery." And with that, Sylar began to touch the comb to Peter's hair - gingerly at first, with just the teeth of it touching against the out of place locks.

Peter frowned, caught by indecision. He didn't want Sylar touching him like this - he'd given no permission (it hadn't been asked), it was overly intimate, and it made Peter feel like a child. On the other hand, he'd turned Sylar down again, and he knew that had to hurt. This was Sylar's revenge? If he thwarted it, Sylar, like anyone with an ego, would just find another way to stand up for himself. This wasn't painful … just a bit embarrassing. It wasn't like there was anyone here to see it. Peter faced away and sat quietly, allowing Sylar to have his way.

It wasn't bad. Sylar moved very slowly, making multiple passes, each a little deeper than before, until the comb was lightly scraping against Peter's scalp. There was something awkward and odd about the motions, as if Sylar had never combed anyone's hair other than his own. Peter wasn't exactly that experienced at it either, but the various barbers and hair stylists he'd been to had always handled him much more familiarly. Peter had always enjoyed getting his hair done by a professional. It was nice now, even with the less practiced touch.
He took a deep breath and let it out slowly, letting the tension drain away. Sylar shifted from combing sections and started doing long strokes from the hairline over Peter's forehead to the nape of his neck. They were slow, careful, dragging motions. Peter took another deep breath, easing up. *This feels really good. It's not so bad. A lot better than other ways he could resolve the fight. Or react to it. He could have yelled, or snarked, or told me to leave, or whatever. Yeah, this is nice.*

Sylar's hand lifted off his shoulder and a moment later, Peter felt it displacing the hairs over his temple with tiny, furtive motions. The combing fast became repetitive as Sylar split his attention, obviously putting most of it on his free hand. *He's petting me,* Peter thought. *What do I do about that? I could tell him to quit - another rejection, that I won't even let him touch me. Is this so bad, though? I'm here in his apartment trying to help him. This isn't sexual. At least, not unless he starts humping me through the back of the chair. Is it bad that he's touching my hair? It feels good. This doesn't have to be a big deal. It's okay ... right?*

Peter breathed out slowly and leaned back in his seat. Sylar took that as acceptance and started touching him more freely, stroking his hair, threading his fingers through it, carding it back, and playing with Peter's bangs. He mussed it, then combed it flat. He skimmed the rim of Peter's ear, provoking Peter to twitch his head away. Sylar waited a beat, then touched that ear again, this time deliberately, sliding his index finger more firmly around the top of the cartilage shell. Peter shifted to the side in his seat, jerking his head away with a huff. "Hey! Stop it!"

Sylar's free hand was back on Peter's shoulder with lightspeed. The pace of the combing sped up, but neither of these actions helped. Peter felt annoyed and irritable. He shook his head in a twisting motion. "That's enough."

"Let me finish." There was a faint undertone of pleading to Sylar's voice, but Peter was unmoved by it.

He shifted his head to the other side now, avoiding Sylar's attentions. "You finished a long time ago. All you're doing now is perv ing on me. Quit it."

"You liked it," Sylar accused with an edge of smugness as he walked back to his seat. He tugged a couple captured strands of Peter's hair from the teeth of the comb, and raised them to his lips with a leer. Sylar brushed them across his lips and inhaled.

Peter sighed, but otherwise ignored the display. "Yeah, I did," Peter said, voice softening. He looked away and changed the subject. "How's your headache today?" After a long pause, Sylar accepted that, and they spoke of the hair thing not at all for the rest of the day.

The next morning, though, Sylar took out his comb and laid it on the table next to his plate. He looked up at Peter from under lowered brows. It was a challenge, calling Peter out to say something about it. Peter met Sylar's intense stare for a long beat, enough to establish he wasn't intimidated, then looked down at his food. "You ever had cinnamon toast?" Peter asked, deciding to explore other breakfast options rather than discuss the looming threat that Sylar was going to brush Peter's hair. *Let him win this one. He wants it. It hardly matters. Of all the things he wants to fight over, that's it? I can deal with that.*

Sylar let the conversation go where it would as they ate. Always before, Peter had finished first, but Sylar had a mission. He ate fast, scraping his plate clean in (for him) record time. His hand settled on the comb and he checked Peter for reaction again. Peter met the man's eyes much more briefly this time, and looked away more definitively. He felt weird about it, glancing back to see Sylar assuming an expression of a man gathering his courage, before Sylar rose and walked behind him. Peter sat up straight in his chair and leaned back.
Peter had a lot of thoughts while Sylar played with his hair. Primary among them was the morality of this. He couldn't find where it was wrong, though it felt wrong. It felt wrong because Peter enjoyed it; it felt wrong because he was sure Sylar enjoyed it. But what was wrong with enjoying something together? He couldn't consider it sexual; it wasn't inappropriate - a bit weird, yes, but helping groom and care for people was something Peter had done himself without qualm.

Sylar said not a word while he did it, nor did he touch Peter's ears. His hair got a thorough tousling, which continued until Peter's temper finally turned and he'd had enough. He pulled his head away and said quietly, and only needed to say once, "You're done." Sylar stroked the back of Peter's neck once as he walked away, and he remained in a markedly better than normal humor all day long.

After that, it became the normal way the morning went - they'd eat, then Sylar would get his fifteen minutes of petting Peter on the head, followed by Sylar being pleased the rest of the day. It frustrated Peter, at himself, at how quickly and how much he started to look forward to that time. And he was envious of what a kick Sylar clearly got out of it. As the days ticked by, he found himself getting irritable where it had initially been soothing. He still looked forward to it, but he was excited by it, and agitated. The attention, the handling, that private moment of intimacy that he forbade any other manifestation - it had infected him. He'd let it slip past his defenses and now he was desperate to respond rather than just passively receive. He wanted to do so much more than just brush hair in return. He wanted to do things he refused to even think about, or admit to himself, which left him tense and wanting.

But then one morning, while heading to the fridge for more juice, he hit on what he could do.

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Peter expected a jump or at least a twitch when his hands came down on either of Sylar's shoulders. There was no response whatsoever. Not that Sylar continued moving - he didn't; he just sat there perfectly still. If it had happened to Peter, he would have said something, he would have moved, he would have looked back; he would have reacted. Sylar's reaction was the non-reaction, a negative image, where he stopped acting and sat in tense passivity, like Peter had hit the pause button on the man.

That wasn't what Peter had had in mind. He wanted to make Sylar happy. He wanted to get the same sort of hands-on contact Sylar got to do with Peter when he combed his hair, but Peter had heretofore been unable to justify to himself doing it in return. But now he'd hit on a way for it to make sense to himself, in a way that wasn't wrong or immoral or a betrayal. Massage therapists, chiropractors, and physical therapists weren't doing anything wrong to touch their clients like this. Peter was trained as a nurse and paramedic - the therapeutic impact of positive touch was huge. He'd managed to talk himself into the idea that this was a medical service. Not, you know, Peter caressing Sylar's body without permission or warning.

He began to rub, very gently at first, using the same pressure with each hand. Sylar's muscles were hard and stiff, like he was poised. Unhappy about that, Peter smoothed his hands to either side, stroking the top of Sylar's shoulders and the deltoid. He recalled his own jumpy complaints and initial resistance to Sylar's touch. He assumed Sylar would relax if he kept at it and demonstrated that this was just a shoulder rub - no big deal, nothing to freak out about.

He rubbed lightly, alternating with stroking and petting. "Relax. I'm not going to hurt you," he murmured, dipping his head because he was starting to feel acutely embarrassed and unwelcome at this. Sylar's continued frozen act was putting Peter off. He breathed in, smelling Sylar - the faint, clean odor of masculinity and shampoo, fresh from the morning's shower, wafting up from the man's scalp. People had this bubble around them, a range of a couple inches within which Peter, whose
nose wasn't the best, but it wasn't non-functional by any means, could pick up people's scents. It was something of a cue to him, not just a 'you're really freaking close to someone' cue (which it was), but also a cue that if he'd gotten this close without a definitively nonsexual context, that he was cleared for takeoff. He felt the most delightful tingling fireworks going off in his gut.

This was about where Peter's hindbrain started having a lot of say in the goings-on.

He inhaled another breath, making a small sound in the back of his throat and swallowing. His hands enfolded the superior edge of the trapezius muscles, thumbs lining up along the spine and burying themselves in the delicate, downy hair at the nape of Sylar's neck. He gripped more firmly, massaging with knowledgeable, sensitive hands. "Relax," he said again, this time a whisper, more intimate than it should have been, but still loud in the quiet of the kitchen. He could feel that Sylar was slightly less tense, which was probably an involuntary response to the manipulation. Or he was just getting tired, which gave Peter an idea.

"Okay, listen. I want you to do something for me." Peter stopped rubbing, but left his hands resting lightly on Sylar's shoulders. He liked the simple feeling of the warmth of the man's skin a lot more than he'd expected. "I want you to tense up your neck and your shoulders as much as possible. Got it?"

He would have thought Sylar was deaf if it weren't for the shift he felt under his hands. He was obeyed, if not answered. Sylar's frame hardened, muscles like corded cable under his skin. Peter couldn't help running his fingers along the man's neck and the top of his back, feeling the difference. Gooseflesh rose on Sylar's skin, and his breathing became audible as Sylar dropped his mouth open slightly.

"Keep it up until it starts to burn. Tight as you can. It shouldn't take long. Keep it clenched up."

"Why?" Finally, Sylar had spoken.

"I don't think you know how to relax. I'm going to show you how. Is it hurting yet?"

Sylar was silent, and Peter felt the most bizarre urge to give the guy a kiss on the back of the neck just to get a reaction. He moved his thumb in a small circle over the bulge of a vertebra at the base of Sylar's neck. When he thought he detected a slight tremor of muscle strain, he said, "Now stop. Relax. Let it go."

Sylar exhaled in a huff, then drew in a deeper breath and let it out, too. The muscles slackened and eased; they were softer and rolled under his hands more easily. Peter leaned down, putting his lips closer to Sylar's ear as he started to lightly massage. "Feel that? Isn't that better? Let the tension go. Let it out. Just relax." He smoothed his hands out to either side. "Let's do it again, just not for as long. Okay?"

"You're … trying to get me relaxed?" Sylar asked uncertainly.

"Yeah," Peter said, straightening. He gave Sylar's deltoid a slight pinch. "Tighten up here. We'll do it again."

He saw the muscles tighten up, and a minute later, on command, release. "Do you feel that?" Peter asked, insistent about getting feedback here. "Do you feel how different it feels when you relax?"

Sylar's back was sagging a little and the set of his head was different. That was what Peter was going for. "Yes," Sylar answered quietly. "It feels better."

"Yeah, I'll bet. You carry around so much tension."
Sylar made a small grunt. Peter chose to interpret it as affirmation. He went back to kneading Sylar's shoulders, who now had enough flex in his frame that Peter could shift Sylar's whole upper body a little with each palpation. It was gratifying that the guy was loosening up. "You gotta learn to relax, man. Just let it go. Be present in the moment."

"Oh," Sylar purred in a deep, resonant tone, "I am completely present."

Peter chuckled in amusement at that. It didn't hurt that it was sexy, and Sylar speaking in that tone of voice gave him a thrill. His right hand darted forward to give Sylar a lingering pat on the side of the neck. The skin there had a different texture – thinner and more sensitive than the back of his neck; hot, with the same faint oil as his face. Peter liked it. Even more, he adored how Sylar immediately tilted his head back and to the side, baring the part Peter had touched in a wordless plea to have it repeated. Peter saw that and didn't think enough about what he was doing. He moved his hands to either side of Sylar's neck, fingertips finding his sternomastoids and rubbing small circles.

Sylar slowly tipped his head backward until it bumped against Peter's stomach. He looked up with a wide-eyed, worshipful expression, as if blown away by what was happening. Peter smiled down at him, letting himself get lost in those beautiful, rich brown eyes – so clear, so deep, so expressive. He had lovely lashes, startling whites, and flawless skin, all framed by those impressively solid and dark brows. There was nothing menacing about them at the moment as he stared up, looking utterly vulnerable and open. Peter's breath started coming faster and shallower. His fingers, running partly on autopilot, brushed up and down Sylar's neck, drifting over to his throat. Sylar gave a few slow, languid blinks, sighing in complete submission to whatever Peter wanted to do. Peter could feel the slightest vibration of a hum, purr, or some other vocalization too faint for him to hear.

And Peter was gone, adrift in a sea where the only anchor was Sylar's face – attention that was wholly and completely on Peter, like there was nothing else in existence for Sylar. It made Peter feel important, appreciated, and respected. That was so blinding Peter could hardly think. He was responding in other ways as well – heart pumping faster as rambunctious butterflies fluttered in his gut, turning Peter's smile goofy and infatuated, which only seemed to intensify Sylar's expression. Sylar rolled his head back and forth very subtly, the smallest motion against Peter's stomach.

Peter was mesmerized, his fingers tracing the strong line of Sylar's jaw, thumbs straying just slightly onto the man's freshly shaven cheeks. Their texture was silky and smooth – a rare thing for Sylar, but it was only breakfast. The scent of his aftershave stirred from his skin as a slight flush colored it. Peter's hands moved to cup Sylar's jaw, thumbs rubbing into the masseter muscle.

"That feels good?" Peter asked faintly.

"Wonderful," Sylar crooned, and Peter smiled, blushing. He shifted his weight and licked his lips, watching the small motions Sylar's lips made from the movements of Peter's hands. Truly the man felt boneless with relaxation at the moment, head lolling against Peter's stomach. Peter moved his hands towards Sylar's chin, manipulating it slowly with the spontaneous goal of moving Sylar's mouth, watching it part and close, asymmetrically and at his touch. Sylar had such a generous mouth, plush lips for a man without being disproportionate or unattractive. To the contrary, they were perfect. Peter wondered what they would feel like pressed against his own, or trailing across his cheek, or nibbling down his throat, sucking at his nipple, dragging across his belly … wrapped around his cock. Peter made a tiny groan of want, feeling tight in his pants.

"Lips. They were beautiful lips. Just like Sylar's eyes – his two most perfect physical traits, both set on a face so handsome it could arrest the breath and send the heart aflutter. Peter's thumb strayed across the lower corner. The lip was soft and smooth, just like it looked, and Sylar's mouth opened wider, breath tickling out as his brows turned up to look both needy and desirous. God, that expression!
Peter's mind was helpfully presenting him with ways to meet those desires and he'd lost himself so fucking badly that his mind floundered, struggling to remember why dragging Sylar back to his bed and screwing his brains out was off the menu. Faced with such a perfect, willing creature, what sane person would have ever decided that?

Peter found the answer, a freezing cold jolt running through him as he realized that a simple neck rub had somehow escalated into him cradling Sylar's face, caressing the man's plump lower lip while running porn scenarios through his brain to pick the one he most wanted to enact. "A … uhhh …" he said, paling fast as fear and alarm painted themselves on his face.

Sylar's expression shifted, too, no longer the invitation to sin it had been before. "Peter?" he asked with trepidation. The weight of his head lifted off Peter's stomach.

"I … I … I can't. No. I'm sorry," Peter stammered out, letting go and backing away. He still had a hard-on, even if it was fading about as fast as it could from its previously rampantly erect state.

Sylar sat up and turned to face him, looking like a man desperate for water, but unable to keep it from slipping through his fingers. "Peter!"

Peter's thoughts were a clamoring welter of mental noise – remembering the feel of Sylar's skin, the carnal intentions Peter had had, Nathan's death, someone's hot blood on his hands, fire, ice, the rush of air … things less distinct and a mess of urges and emotions, like the whole of his empathy turning on at once. He stumbled to the door and escaped.

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Peter looked up guardedly from where he was resolutely pumping weights. He'd been at it for hours since the issue that morning. Sylar had a paper sack with him, top rolled up. He set it on the bench near the door. "Brought sandwiches," he offered simply.

Peter made a half-nod-like gesture at him and went back to work, hunching in a little on himself. He was embarrassed and still a bit freaked out. Sylar had made his intentions and desires crystal clear some time back, but Peter couldn't claim Sylar had seduced him here. His own lusts had done him in. And now, instead of the firm, no-nonsense, defensible position that he wasn't interested … well, Peter had pretty much blown that right out of the water. The degree to which he'd wanted had surprised even Peter, something that he was still turning over in his mind.

Sylar came closer, leaning against the exercise bike across from Peter. He rolled his shoulders and his neck in an exaggerated motion. "I've been trying those exercises you suggested this morning. You know, learning to relax. I thought maybe you'd like to check."

Peter colored profusely and mumbled, "No, I'm sure you're doing fine."

"There's nothing like a hands-on approach, Peter. You know that."

Peter said nothing and moved his feet uneasily, continuing his bicep reps, watching the floor between Sylar's feet.

Long seconds passed before Sylar said, his voice edged by pleading, "Peter, there's no one else here. No one will judge you. No one will know."

Peter shook his head, still staring at the floor.

"It's just you and me."
Peter frowned. Lack of better options was not a reason why he wanted to be with someone. Though he had to admit, as the days and weeks and months had crept by, he had become desperate for more than he had.

Seconds dragged by in noticeable silence. He could hear Sylar's breathing, sharp and distressed. It said a lot about how genuine he was, which made Peter feel like an incredible cad. "I won't hurt you," Sylar added desperately, grasping at straws for what to offer.

Unknowingly, the killer had hit on something that was a big concern for Peter. Peter's eyes snapped up to Sylar's, pinning him so forcefully that Sylar looked frightened for a moment, before he managed to tuck that expression behind a veil of momentary blankness. Sylar could tell he'd stumbled on something and continued, "I won't. You'll be safe. You can do whatever you want. I won't do anything to you. No revenge. Nothing."

"Sylar …" Peter held up his hand to stop the guy, putting down the weight with the other. He sighed, and rubbed slowly at his face. The futility of his abstinence assaulted his senses and not for the first time. Time had worn down his other objections - for the past couple weeks, he'd let himself be combed and caressed by the guy every morning and he was pretty sure Sylar jerked off after breakfast each time. There just didn't seem to be any point to fighting about it and if he was going to be safe … "Okay."

"'Okay' what?"

"'Okay' we'll …" Peter didn't know how to say it. He wasn't even sure what he was offering. His available brainpower was absorbed with 'No revenge' and 'You can do whatever you want', coupled with an image of Sylar's face looking up at him that morning, and the feel of his lip under Peter's thumb. He tried to blink it away. "We'll figure it out."

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They ate. Sylar combed Peter's hair. It wasn't something Peter cooperated with much. They were on a bench against the wall in the weight room, which didn't make it easy for Sylar to stand behind Peter, had he tried. Peter could have turned sideways, or moved to one of the pieces of equipment, but he did nothing. A lot of nothing had happened while they'd eaten, too. Peter, still pondering what he'd agreed to, determinedly didn't make eye contact. Sylar fidgeted in the silence. Maybe that had something to do with his current approach, which was to scoot close until their knees bumped, then reach out with the comb. Obligingly, Peter bowed his head forward, but that was the only assistance he gave.

It was the first time Sylar had done this facing Peter, and Peter found his eyes rising in curiosity to read the other man's expression. It was studious and attentive, not at all the lustful or engrossed look that Peter had imagined. Or maybe that was just the face Sylar was using now that he could be seen.

He finished; put away the comb. Then Sylar reached back, taking Peter's chin in his hand and tugging him forward as he leaned in. As soon as Peter recognized he was being pulled in for a kiss, he jerked away and sat up straight, leaving Sylar to tilt back to vertical more slowly, a sulky, suspicious look on his face to go with the hard, unwelcoming one on Peter's.

"Tell me again what 'okay' means," Sylar asked guardedly, like he felt he was getting ripped off here.

Peter looked away, exhaling. He'd been thinking about that as he ate. "It means … It means I'm going to try. I'm … going to be … open, I guess. To you. It's not something I'll say no to automatically, but it doesn't mean I'm …" automatically going to say yes, either. "I don't know," he
ended with a frustrated shake of his head. He felt like he was the bad guy here, not falling into line and letting Sylar have his way with him, or whatever the plot was. He stared blankly at the floor for a while, before finally turning to look at Sylar, who had been sitting still and silent the whole while.

Sylar reached out, telegraphing clearly, and touched a stray lock of Peter's long bangs. He rolled it briefly between his fingers, then leaned forward to tuck it behind Peter's ear. "You like it when I touch you like this," Sylar said, making it a question.

"I like it when you touch me," Peter agreed, making his answer broader intentionally. He shifted his knee against Sylar's, drawing attention to the contact he hadn't objected to or pulled away from. It was just getting presumptively pulled into kisses when he wasn't ready that he wasn't into. Well, that and probably a host of other things, an inconvenient number of them involving his brother's killer, who was perversely also the guy he had the unbearable hots for at the moment - enough so that he literally had trouble thinking at times. The universe, or at least my sex drive, has a pretty sick sense of humor.

A small cock of Sylar's head indicated he'd heard Peter's distinction. Instead of pulling his hand away, he curled his fingers and skimmed the knuckles down the side of Peter's face. Peter leaned forward receptively. He could see the 'ah' on Sylar's face as he started exploring a careful, arm's length intimacy that was a leap beyond what they'd done before, even if it wasn't the immediate kiss Sylar had expected. He fingers trailed across Peter's jaw and up his cheek, over the patchy hints of stubble. They came down the side of Peter's nose, making Peter's lids tremor - not quite a flutter, but this slow torture was sexier than any rushing would have been. Peter's lips parted, eyes darkening, and he turned his face a little so Sylar's fingers came down over his lips instead of the corner of his mouth.

Sylar paused there, rubbing one finger back and forth over Peter's lower lip, folding it down just a little. He paused in the middle and Peter reached up to capture that hand, pulling it away and looking at it. Sylar frowned at first, then lost that expression for one of watchfulness as he realized what Peter was doing. Peter examined the hand, turning it palm up and touching over it feather-light. Sylar tensed a little, probably involuntary, probably ticklish. Peter stroked along the sensitive skin more firmly, tracing each finger and taking his time about it.

When done, he lifted Sylar's hand, molding it to cup his cheek. He shut his eyes, holding it to him, breathing in the faint scent that accompanied the appendage. Sylar flexed his fingers a bit under where Peter was holding him, making short strokes of fingertips over the side of his face. Peter opened his eyes, turned his head a little, and bit Sylar on the fleshy part of the base of his thumb. Sylar made a noise of desire, mouth opening as his fingers twitched and his other hand went to Peter's knee. Peter's tongue flicked out to lick along the trapped flesh, evoking an actual groan this time from the other man. He released him, moving his hand to Sylar's face for the briefest brush before sweeping behind his head to bury into his hair. Sylar leaned forward eagerly, eyes on Peter's lips. An inch or two from the prize, Peter's hand made a fist, Sylar stopped with a gasp and a flash of anger.

Peter raised a brow at Sylar's expression. "Anything I want?"

"That's what I said," the other man growled.

"No revenge? No retaliation?"

Sylar looked over Peter's shoulder, eyes losing focus for a moment. "Not if you hold up your end of the bargain."
"There's a bargain, huh?" Peter's hand twisted and Sylar bared his teeth at the pain. "You didn't mention that before." Peter was right in the other man's face, his free hand on Sylar's forearm. Sylar's other hand held in mid-air, as though not sure what to do. "What's my end?" Peter demanded.

"I've seen how you look at me. Act on it!"

**Deal.** Peter jerked Sylar forward to kiss him, brutal, fast, and hard, leaving the man breathless and gaping when Peter pulled him away by the hair, tilting his head back to bite the side of his throat firmly enough to bruise. Sylar grunted. Peter yanked him back again. "Anything?" When Sylar didn't answer instantly, Peter twisted his hand in the man's hair again. "I want to hear you say it!"

"Yes," Sylar snarled.

Peter kissed him again immediately, a little softer this time, loosening his grip. This time he let his tongue play along Sylar's lips - wet, delicious, and just as wonderfully plump as they'd looked. The idea of being able to do anything he wanted to Sylar - hell, the reality of it - was making him hard for the second time today. This was the kinkiest game he'd ever played, no doubt, and he'd played some doozies. He needed to know the rules, though. "What do you want to do?"

"You're the one with the last name of Petrelli here. You call the shots."

"Hm," Peter hummed, kissing Sylar gently on the neck, licking and sucking softly. Sylar's free hand finally found a home on Peter's shoulder, holding him. He had Sylar right where he wanted him at the moment, Peter's fist still in his hair, holding the man's head back and exposing his throat to Peter's questing mouth. "I need a hint, though. You like kissing?"

"I like what you're doing." Sylar was panting, his hand rolling over Peter's shoulder restlessly.

"Kay," Peter said, nibbling up to the man's jaw, kissing and tasting, losing himself in the moment as his mind supplied him images of Sylar in lust for him, trying on dominant or submissive for size. "You prefer fucking or being fucked?"

Sylar snorted and said sarcastically, "I don't know, Peter. How are you as a bottom?"

Peter tilted Sylar's head back to even to look right into his eyes. "Wildly enthusiastic," Peter rasped, locking his lips over Sylar's startled ones, turning his head to plunge his tongue inside deeply. Sylar made a surprised noise at the invasion, then a moan as he sagged into it. Peter snatched him away before he got too invested. "How are you? As a bottom?"

"Uh." Sylar blinked uncertainly. "Fine. Good, actually." Peter could see the man trying to bolster the poor advertising his tone had given.

Peter didn't let Sylar finish getting his feet under him, and pressed him. "You ever done it?"

"Yes," Sylar said with a curl of the lip.

Peter tilted his head, watching him carefully. That disgust on Sylar's face answered in the negative as to whether he'd liked it, so Peter skipped that as a question. "Were you willing?"

Sylar's eyes dulled and his expression faded towards fear. He evaded the question with, "I said you could do whatever you wanted."

**Rape? Huh.** Peter kissed him again, lighter, and this time Sylar took the initiative in forcing himself into Peter's mouth. Peter let him have a good, long plundering. When they parted, Peter said, "Good. You're in luck. I prefer to bottom." He pressed his cheek to Sylar's, rubbing against him and getting
an overload of sensation. It pulled an inarticulate 'guh' noise from Sylar. "Anything else I need to know here?" Peter whispered in his ear before pulling away. Sylar's eyes darted around Peter's face, but he said nothing. Peter went on, "You like oral?"

"Who doesn't?"

"I've met people who didn't. But I like it, so we're in sync there." Peter placed a light kiss on the point of Sylar's chin, needing only a tiny tug to keep the other man from trying to make it lips-to-lips. Sylar was easily trained (or at least a fast learner). Peter liked that. "What about other stuff? Kinks I need to know about? Things that freak you out?"

"I can take anything you want to try."

Peter's brows rose and his head snaked forward, biting Sylar hard on the thinner skin just under his jaw. Fingers dug into his shoulder and curled around his elbow, drawing him closer rather than pushing him away. Sylar groaned. Peter leaned away, staring at the reddened, darkening mark. He'd never done that with another partner, but the situation with Sylar was extraordinary in a lot of ways. Peter had a lot of anger that he'd been keeping buried in the interests of being civil. Intimacy was stripping that away, fast. He wanted to hurt Sylar. No retaliation.

XXX

Peter rose from sore knees, blow job complete, and kissed Sylar open-mouthed as the shower rained down on both of them. He was watching for the moment of alarm, and not disappointed, when it crossed Sylar's features after their mouths met. Whether or not Sylar could taste himself was irrelevant – it was the idea and just how far Sylar's 'anything goes' would go. Sylar had a moment of tense revulsion before shutting his eyes and sliding his hands around Peter's back, tonguing him in return.

XXX

Peter turned Sylar around, nudging his legs apart for a more thorough swabbing and scrubbing. Sylar looked back hesitantly, knuckles turning white where his fingers flexed against the tile. But he made no objection. Peter kissed him on the shoulder. "I might have my mouth down here later. Need you squeaky clean."

Sylar's befuddled expression was priceless. He either wasn't familiar with rimming, or didn't understand why Peter might do that for him.

XXX

Peter handed over the lube, as it was clear Sylar was about to fuck him without it. It was a reality check for Peter. It wasn't the first sign that Sylar was a virgin at this, but it sealed the deal. "Prep me first," Peter insisted. A few moments later, Peter laughed and wrestled Sylar onto his back. "No, no, no. We're going to have a demo first on you, so you know what I'm talking about. Don't worry," he said to Sylar's look. "I won't fuck you."

"You can," Sylar said, his voice rough.

"Kinda had my heart set on the other," Peter sighed, kissing him again for Sylar's complete submission. It didn't cease to amaze, thrill, and arouse him to have such a powerful man going to such lengths to please him.

XXX
It took Peter a few moments to figure out why Sylar had stopped. "Just because I'm done doesn't mean you have to be. Finish," he ordered, watching as Sylar's eyes ran over Peter's face as if double checking his sincerity. Peter drew back his knees a little further and pulled Sylar forward, deeper inside of him. A barely guarded expression of relief settled on Sylar before being chased off by lust as he began plowing Peter in earnest again. Peter jerked him down for another savage kiss, followed by mauling Sylar's throat for the umpteenth time.

XXX

Peter lay half propped up, his fingers tracing the bruises and bite marks that littered Sylar's jaw, neck and upper chest. The guy had a couple on his back, too, one on his arm and another decorating a butt cheek. Other than a few possible bruises, Peter was untouched. "Do you mind? These marks?"

"No."

Peter smiled faintly, frightened by what he was becoming. "I've never done this to anyone." His eyes went up to Sylar's, which were steady and unbothered by the surprising violence of Peter's passion. He seemed serene - utterly fulfilled by the use he was being put to.

"I'm glad," Sylar said in one of his customary plurisignifications.

XXX

"Tell me you hate me!" Peter snarled, ramming into Sylar from behind, one hand fisted in his hair while the other held him steady at the hip. Sylar made a guttural gasp at the force being used.

"I-I hate you," Sylar said insincerely, confused by the order.

"Tell me you wish I was dead."

"I wish you were dead," Sylar said with more emphasis.

"Tell me you're glad you killed Nathan."

"I …" Sylar shuddered.

Peter twisted his hair, arching him back as Sylar made a muffled sound of pain. "Say it!"

"I'm-I'm glad I killed Nathan."

"Now tell me you deserve this for everything you've done."

XXX

"Oh God! I love you. I love you doing this. Fucking me. God, fuck me, yeah! Sylar? Come- Ow!"

Sylar slapped him hard, leaving Peter blinking and wordless. A second later, Peter started to struggle away. Sylar grabbed him, long arms and strong hands, pinning him.

"Hey! Let go of me! Stop it!"

"Shut the fuck up! Shut up!"

Sylar shoved him up against the headboard, still deep inside of him, and managed to get his hands on both of Peter's wrists. He was tight enough between Peter's legs that he was impossible to kick. Peter squirmed, skewered on Sylar's shaft, feeling every inch of it sheathed so deeply inside of him, the
hands clasped firmly around his wrists, and the sting on his cheek. He wanted to fight. He ended up moaning.

"Fucking liar," Sylar snarled, and gave his ass the hammering of his life.

XXX

Peter pleaded, "What was it I said?"

"I told you I didn't want to talk about it!"

"Sylar …" Peter snatched the shirt out of the man's hands in frustration, momentarily thwarting Sylar's attempt to leave. "If you're going to run out on me, at least tell me why!"

Sylar tipped his head down, glaring and managing to be intimidating even half dressed. "I will fuck you, be fucked by you, talk dirty, whatever. But I will not be lied to!"

Peter blinked, affronted. "You think I was lying when I said I enjoyed it?"

Sylar crowded into his face, and his whisper was more frightening than any yelling would have been. "Tell me again how much you love me, Peter Petrelli."

XXX

Days passed in silence. Then finally …

A shy look.

A derisive snort.

Sidling closer.

Walking away.

Thock! A piece of gravel smacked Sylar between the shoulder blades.

An angry glare.

An impish mien; another small stone, bounced up and down in a palm.

Shoved against the wall, stone lost, Sylar's mouth crushed against Peter's.

A wanton moan; fingers curling into hair; hips grinding against the taller man.

Pants unfastened, whirling Peter so he faces the wall, hot breaths in the man's ear, followed by an unbearable tongue.

Lube snagged out of the pants pocket as they're shoved down. Peter hands it back to Sylar's bark of laughter.

A kiss, tender and sweet, gentle and lingering, at the join of Peter's shoulder and neck, from behind, as he's prepped. Inhaling his scent. It's been missed - oh so much!

A joining of bodies, out in the street. Release. Turning back to face Sylar, hugging him, cuddling, stroking with hesitant fingers. Mindful of the need to be careful with Sylar.

Combing his hair. Taking care of the little brat. Still amused that Peter had lube with him.
"I do. Love you."
"I think I overdosed you on the morphine."


Sylar leaned in close, looking beyond Peter's droopy lids. "Your eyes are really dilated."

Peter gave a relaxed, crooked smile and reached up with his free hand to surprisingly lay his palm against Sylar's cheek. Sylar froze. Peter patted. "Your face … izzo cloze. Good face. I like it."

"I like it, too, Peter," Sylar said guardedly, scanning and re-scanning Peter's face, looking for some sign that this was anything other than a spontaneous, drug-induced observation. He didn't see any indication of premeditated manipulation.

Since Sylar hadn't moved away, Peter kept smiling and turned his hand to stroke over the bristly cheek. "Mesclun," he said, which took Sylar a few moments to translate from 'salad greens' into 'masculine'. "Good face. Great lisps." He touched them and Sylar leaned forward a little, wondering how unethical it was to enjoy this unexpected intimacy. He knew Peter was suffering liberally from drug-induced lowered inhibitions. He'd never approve of this clean and sober. For a long, breathless moment, Peter's fingertips tickled against Sylar's lips like a lover's touch. "Kissing lisps." Peter smiled wider and let his hand fall. "Ein not makin any senz, am I?"

"Not much, no," Sylar said quietly, pulling in a deep breath and letting it out again. More than anything, he wanted that to continue.

"Feel good, though. Izza doze, you know? Notta ovadoze. Doze. Differnt."

"Of course." Sylar watched as Peter's lids drooped again and his face relaxed. Peter had fallen after some ill-advised climbing and untrained acrobatics, resulting in a nastily compound fracture of his arm, a hyper-extended knee and what seemed to be a twisted ankle. Details were hard to come by without doctors or x-ray machines. Sylar had gotten Peter to the hospital, empty and untended as it was, and struggled to follow Peter's irritable, pained directions on patching him up. When everything was as fixed as it was going to get without the passage of time, Peter had finally requested painkillers. By that point, Sylar was only too happy to give them. He had, perhaps, been too enthusiastic with the dosage (but with the best and most innocent of intentions). Without abilities, Peter had clearly been suffering badly. Just as clearly, now, he was not. In fact, he looked kind of like Sylar had imagined Peter would post-coital - damp locks, relaxed face, blissed out, glazed eyes. Sexy. Oh, so sexy!

Please forgive me, Sylar intoned mentally as he leaned forward and pressed his lips to Peter's, unable or unwilling to resist the temptation.
Peter made a surprised noise and hesitated for a long moment. Sylar ignored the pregnant pause and continued the kiss, shutting his eyes, fairly confident that Peter was too stoned to resist him. Peter exhaled and settled into the kiss, working his lips against Sylar's with envious skill despite his stoned condition.

Sylar knew he ought to pull away and leave it at just the one brief kiss. Maybe he could deny it later. But instead Sylar shifted closer to Peter's head, running one hand into Peter's hair as he opened his mouth and Peter, still so relaxed and highly, highly suggestible, slid his tongue wetly within to tease at Sylar's teeth and gums. Sylar moaned and he felt Peter's free hand brush at his cheek and then ear. He gripped Peter's hair, turning the man's head and bending it back so he could plunder Peter's mouth as deeply as possible. He'd wanted to do this for so long! Peter made a deep crooning sound in response. Finally, after what Sylar was sure was long minutes, he pulled away. His lips were swollen with arousal, as were Peter's. Poor Peter. He looked completely baked.

The thought that he could keep Peter drugged like this for as long as he wanted crossed his mind. A quick glance down Peter's bandaged, splinted body dissuaded any further thoughts of a sexual nature. Pumped full of enough opiates, it seemed that Peter was likely to cooperate, but Sylar found his willingness to further molest the unresisting man flagging. What he'd already done was bad enough. "How angry are you going to be at me for this?"

Peter licked his lips and looked confused, staring off to the side. Sylar tugged him back by his hair and kissed him deeply again. It was disturbing and gratifying that Peter returned it so passionately. When they parted, Peter said breathlessly, "We're not spoze be kissin, are we?"

Sylar smiled wanly at him. "No. But that's never stopped me in the past." With a great sigh, Sylar tore himself away from the source of his temptation. He stood and walked to the door. "I'm going to let you get some rest."

"Kay." Peter gave him a dismissive, unbothered wave, shut his eyes, and went to sleep. Sylar watched him as Peter's breathing slowed and deepened under the continuing effects of the drugs. Now he had to debate whether to try to convince Peter it was just a drug-induced hallucination, or to admit to taking advantage of the situation. There was so much worse he could have done, after all, and Peter knew Sylar had helped him. Wouldn't that count for something?
Novelty Value

Sylar's fingers skimmed ever-so-lightly over Peter's hair, reveling in how it felt to touch someone who was with him willingly, knowing who and what he was. He could barely believe the previous twelve hours had happened and that here he was, in bed with the man. Peter stirred finally at the continuing, slight caresses, blinking up sleepily at him. Sylar snatched his hand away and did his best to appear guiltless. That was tough - Peter had stripped away one defense after another until he felt more naked than he'd ever been. Sylar found himself being self-conscious at every turn and wildly insecure.

Peter gave him a long, wary gaze before looking away and, most surprisingly to Sylar, snuggling up closer. *How long until those looks fade?* Sylar wondered, tingling inside that despite his reservations, Peter accepted him as a source of comfort. *Will there come a day when he's not guarded against me?* Sylar could only hope, but the fact that he'd made it this far made it seem possible. Peter was too tense to have fallen back to sleep, so Sylar raised his hand to pet his head more openly. He hadn't been refused, after all. Peter made a small sound of pleasure and cuddled a bit tighter, relaxing *now* due solely to Sylar's touch.

That sound … it moved Sylar more than even their first kiss. His heart soared so much he felt light-headed. It was such a simple thing, but to have touched someone and had them show contentment instead of fear, solace instead of fright! He'd touched Peter's silky hair and instead of a flinch, gained a wriggle and squeeze. It took Sylar's breath away, which seemed like a very strange reaction to him. He wanted to pull Peter up and kiss him joyfully. He barely restrained himself, instead laying his hand to the side of Peter's head and hugging it to his chest as he shut his eyes, lashes wet.

Someone liked him, and it wasn't just for the sex, the abilities, or some arcane manipulative ploy – an experience so novel it was heart-breaking.
Peter stared him down, or at least tried to. Sylar's offer hung in the air between them and he wasn't about to look away first. He knew Peter wanted him; was willing; and all possible objections were dealt with. But none of that mattered if he couldn't seal the deal. Something was still wrong, because Peter snorted, lip curling a little, and turned his back to walk away.

Sylar could have cried with frustration. He'd been working on this for so long! No one else in the whole world and he still couldn't get a connection with the only other person here! "What do I need to do?" he asked in desperation before Peter could get too far from the building they'd been hanging out in front of.

Peter wheeled immediately. Sylar stiffened; Peter's haste made him worry about an attack – doubly so when Peter's hand came up, but at least it was open, fingers curling as though to grab, not strike. Sylar's eyes blazed and he pulled his head back, doing nothing otherwise. He wouldn't run or quail. Peter seized him by the hair and jerked on his head – not with the intent of inflicting pain, but apparently to position him. Pulled off balance, Sylar stumbled, not sure if Peter was trying to force him to his knees (for a blow job?), or something else. Peter managed to steer his head to where he wanted it, face tilted down, but still on his feet. Sylar didn't understand what was going on, so he went to his go-to and glared death at his assailant.

"Look down!" Peter bit out and Sylar did. He was still confused. The pavement was unremarkable. Their shoes were normal. He started to look up, but that was simultaneous with Peter shifting position to edge a few inches closer to him. A light bulb went off over Sylar's well-gripped head. It was the looking down itself that Peter wanted! Ah-hah! Sylar knew this game, much as he hadn't expected Peter to play it. His spine straightened and his neck relaxed as he assumed the position of a shame-faced child waiting for his lecture.

Peter's hand loosened. "That's what I want." The man was breathing harder, Sylar noted. "I want … some sign of … respect." Peter's voice thickened and strained. His hand slid free of Sylar's hair more slowly than it needed to. "At least the illusion of it. I don't expect it to be real." If Sylar didn't miss his guess, Peter almost choked up there at the end. Peter released him and strode away as before, back stiff, and frame coiled with tension.

No lecture, Sylar thought, relieved and disappointed at the same time. Peter had moved right up next to him there and he'd liked that. It was not the game Sylar had expected, but this one, too, was known. He wasn't sure what all of Peter's emotion was about. It was hardly an unusual requirement. The guy was a Petrelli – demanding obeisance was in his blood. So he needed a little sucking up to get off. Respect my ass. You want subservience. Sylar hurried after him, silent this time, and settled in a few steps behind and to the right, wondering if Peter wanted him to play the whole part of low,
unworthy creature – and unsure of how much of that he'd be able to swallow. Was it a connection if it was all one-way?

Peter glanced back and his strides slowed. Sylar paced him. Peter slowed again. Sylar let his longer strides move him next to Peter, who sped up so they were walking together. No 'two steps behind' BS - good sign. Peter looked over at him and Sylar dropped his eyes immediately. Peter gave a small shake of his head and stopped.

Am I doing it wrong? Sylar kept his eyes downcast, shoulders hunched and hands in pockets.

Peter came closer to him, right over to him, reaching out slowly to hook his fingers around Sylar's left forearm. Sylar could see, in his peripheral vision, that Peter was watching his face constantly. Don't blow this, Sylar cautioned himself. It seemed quite possible he'd only get one chance, especially with Peter as wound up as he seemed to be. It would at least be the only chance he got for a long while. Peter shifted closer, just as he had before when he'd managed to man-handle Sylar into a submissive posture. Sylar blinked repeatedly, dipping his head and relaxing. When a small motion of Peter's head indicated he was looking elsewhere (to Sylar's shoulder, which he was now caressing, much to Sylar's delight), Sylar risked a glance up.

This is all it took? All this time? Fuck, Peter! Why didn't you tell me? I train easily. Try me, please! He could smell Peter – a warm, inviting scent that disarmed and excited him at the same time. He assumed Peter could smell him, too. Peter's right hand curled behind Sylar's left shoulder and his left hand reached over to gently tug Sylar's right from his pocket. Sylar dropped his head a little lower, softening his stance and bringing his face closer to Peter's. Peter was holding his hand – it seemed sweet and weird, especially given Sylar's previous offer of himself for use.

Sylar tilted his head marginally, gratified when Peter echoed the motion, bringing their lips inches apart. Peter drew in breath and Sylar held very still, eyes switching between Peter's lips and the generic 'down'. Peter leaned in that last distance and pressed a small, chaste kiss to his lips. The sensation itself was nice beyond description, but it was the emotion that shot through Sylar that really did it – accomplishment, satisfaction, joy, self-esteem. He'd made it; he'd done it; he'd found the right buttons to push and levers to pull to get to this point. It had taken forever and endless hashing out of issues until nothing stood in his way except a trivial aping of a behavior Sylar was more than happy to provide.

Peter smiled and glanced down, as though shy now that he'd gotten what he wanted. Sylar whispered softly in his ear, "I'm yours."

Sylar's words gave everything; his body language denied it all. Peter glared, angry at the contradiction between the two, and angry that Sylar glared right back. It was like offering a gift with a sneer and a contemptuous look. Peter wanted none of it - no matter how attractively Sylar packaged it, the delivery was setting Peter off. He snorted, turned on his heel and walked away, fuming quietly to himself. What is Sylar getting at with these idiotic offers? If he wants me to take him up on something, then he needs to act like it's something other than a challenge to single combat!

Only a few steps into leaving, Sylar called out behind him, "What do I need to do?" His tone was still angry and defiant, but the words he chose had never been so plaintive.

For once, Peter ignored the body language and tone, going strictly off what was being said - a big departure for him, but he felt like he was banging his head against a brick wall here with Sylar's offers. He spun and walked back, grabbing at Sylar's head and getting it easily enough. Peter had half thought his intended action would start a fight, but he was riled enough not to care. He shoved
Sylar's head around until it pointed where he wanted, which was tough to do. The guy wasn't cooperating and from the look on Sylar's face, at any moment fists might fly.

Peter didn't care. He was tired of being told one thing while Sylar acted another way entirely. "Look down!" he snapped and Sylar did. Thank God. Peter took two panting breaths, relaxing a little, and shifted closer to Sylar. Sylar seemed to have finally gotten the message, because he didn't look up and he, too, relaxed his posture. Peter let go of the guy's hair.

"That's what I want," Peter said and the simple experience of being right next to the man, touching him, seeing Sylar contrite or at least looking like it did so much to defuse Peter. "I want … some sign of … respect." I count, right? Do I matter to you? I want to feel like I matter. Peter's throat constricted as his most naked of vulnerabilities came to the fore. His hand slid free of Sylar's hair, feeling how nice the strands were as they slipped through his fingers. "At least the illusion of it. I don't expect it to be real." He had to struggle for his voice not to crack on that last. Not with the way you look at me. Just … can I at least pretend I'm something other than the last man on Earth to you?

But Peter knew he wasn't going to get any of that. Even if he did, it was an illusion - fake. How long would that satisfy? Yearning and frustrated, Peter walked away as briskly as he could, trying to hold his head high. He wanted to lash out, but there was nothing and no one available but Sylar. He gnashed his teeth, but quit a moment later when he heard Sylar's steps hurry along behind him.

Fine. Great. So we're walking somewhere together now. I don't even know where the fuck I'm going. Sure, tag along with the guy who you have zilch respect for and who just admitted that he'd sleep with you if all you did was give it good face. Sylar didn't catch up, opting instead to walk several paces behind, like he understood how wound up Peter was.

Still, Peter wasn't going to stroll along with a fucking shadow. He adjusted his pace until Sylar figured it out and fell into step beside him. Peter glanced over and Sylar dropped his gaze to the ground with alacrity. What the fuck? Peter stopped immediately and shook his head. I traded the angry for the … this. He looked at Sylar, who studied his feet with bowed head, meek and accommodating in demeanor. That's ... not what I meant.

What made an impression, though, was that Sylar was trying to give Peter exactly what he had asked for. Peter realized that, along with the certainty that it wasn't actually fake. Well, yes, Sylar was acting, but he was doing it out of sincere desire to win Peter over. Peter stepped closer - intimately close - and Sylar didn't budge. Peter stroked the guy's nearer arm through the long-sleeved shirt Sylar wore, feeling the wrinkles in it and the warmth of flesh underneath. Sylar stood like a statue - a very respectful statue. Peter tried to tell himself he didn't require this sort of passivity, but it was working. The active, aggressive version of Sylar was pretty intimidating. It brought to mind so many moments of being hurt by this guy. Peter wasn't attracted to that. But this … well …

Peter eased one hand behind Sylar's shoulder while the other pulled one of Sylar's hands out of his pocket. Peter just held it, smiling a little at how oddly innocent it seemed. The times he'd imagined them doing something intimate, it had generally been violent - arousing in private, frightening in the flesh. He rubbed his thumb affectionately across the back of Sylar's hand. You're sincere, right? You really mean this? Is that what all the confusion has been about - too defensive to show your hand? The man sidled towards him with a lean and a turn of his torso. Peter could see what he was angling towards and matched him, drawing in a breath to fortify himself.

Lips softly puckered, he pressed them to Sylar's without pausing for thought, because he knew if he did, he'd probably chicken out. As kisses went, it was brief and mild, but very, very sweet. Peter's stomach somersaulted and he tingled all over as he leaned back. That one small act had changed everything. He knew it; could feel it. He'd accepted the gift Sylar had so persistently offered him. It
was the greatest gift Sylar had to give: himself. He had accepted … Sylar.

Peter smiled and looked down, still holding the man's hand, feeling deeply honored. As if able to read his thoughts, Sylar leaned close and breathed into Peter's ear, "I'm yours."
Dreams

Title: Dreams
Characters: Peter Petrelli, Sylar
Rating: R
Warnings: None
Word count: ~700
Summary: Sylar asks Peter about the sort of things most people have nightmares about. Turns out that Peter's reaction to one of those 'nightmare' situations isn't quite normal.

Peter jerked as he woke, coming upright in the chair, reaching out into the air to grasp at it. "Whah?" He looked around Sylar's apartment wildly. Sylar himself stood near the door of his refrigerator, juice bottle in hand. He looked back at Peter with an intent curiosity. He wasn't what Peter was looking for, though, so he got ignored. Instead, Peter levered himself out of the chair and went to the window, pulling back the curtains and staring out.

It was the same familiar landscape as always - trapped in Sylar's head. Peter felt a dying surge of desperation. "There wasn't a siren?" He looked over to Sylar, who had come to the entrance of the kitchen to see what Peter was doing.

A small smile played about Sylar's lips, recognizing Peter's misplaced hope. There was no life in this place but the two of them. "No."

Peter turned his back on the window, running a hand through his hair and shaking his head. "I was in the ambulance. Bad dream."

Wanting to know more of what demons plagued Peter's sleep, Sylar asked, "Were you driving?"

"No. I was in the back taking care of a patient, except I kept falling asleep." Peter made an exasperated 'what can you do' gesture with his arms and shoulders, pushing off the windowsill and heading towards Sylar, who faded back into the kitchen.

Sylar laughed a little. He'd asked about driving because he'd had bad dreams where he was driving and the brakes were out, or he couldn't steer. The dream would progress from one terrifying near-miss to the next. It was interesting that Peter's fear was in failing his patients, whereas Sylar's was in losing control. "You ever had one of those nightmares where you showed up somewhere naked?" he asked, slouching against the kitchen counter as Peter got out a glass and 'borrowed' the juice from him in a comfortable, familiar manner that made Sylar's heart sing every time it happened. It seemed so normal and friendly. He smiled softly at Peter, almost dreamy-eyed enough to miss Peter's lurch and bizarre reaction. But not too much. Sylar's brows pulled in a twitch.

Peter's reaction wasn't the breezy, meaningless, 'oh yeah, I've had that dream' answer Sylar expected. It was … guilty. And furtive. "Uh, nn." Peter poured his juice and handed back the container, which Sylar took with a title of his head at Peter's sudden inarticulateness.

Sylar could have waited him out, but that would give Peter more time to come up with a cover. So he pressed, "Is it usually at school or at work?"

"Um." Peter cleared his throat and took a sip and if Sylar didn't miss his mark, Peter was blushing. "Um, you know," Peter mumbled, "just social gatherings and stuff. Class. Yeah, sometimes class." Peter looked pointedly away.
One thing Sylar greatly, *vastly* appreciated about this world was that Peter couldn't (or at least didn't) dodge him very much. Neither of them had any other obligations to rush off to. There was no excuse of 'I need to go do X' to use to cut short a conversation you didn't want. Now being trapped with someone meant Sylar was having to learn all kinds of lessons on boundaries, but at the same time he gloried in getting to be with someone and not being *ignored*. Not as a general rule, at least.

"Tell me - what's the most embarrassing thing that happens in those dreams?" Because the 'naked in an inappropriate place' dream was so standard as to be a repeated trope of popular media. It shouldn't be triggering this reaction from Peter.

Very quietly, still looking away, Peter said, "That I'm, uh ... that I'm usually turned on by it."

Sylar's brows shot up. "They're not nightmares."

Peter didn't answer, but that was answer enough by itself.
Title: Given and Taken
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Handcuffs, graphic sexual content
Word Count: 3,600
Summary: In the Wall, Sylar tries something desperate to get Peter's attention.

Sylar clicked the handcuff into place when he heard Peter approaching. He had no idea if this plan was going to work. It seemed a bit risky even for him, a man who had long taken suicidal risks for a living. But he was getting desperate here in this lonely place. The anger and energy Peter had carried with him for the first months here had faded and then they’d settled into a boring, monotonous routine. Every advance Sylar made was politely rebuffed, so it was time to abandon polite and go straight for overt. It helped that Sylar knew Peter was into him. He’d seen the looks, heard the occasional sharp intake of breath and noisy swallows. Sometimes he could almost feel Peter's reciprocal lust, but until now, there'd always been some dodge Peter could use to deny it.

It would be impossible to deny this.

Peter came around the corner, headed towards the gym. Sylar couldn't see him, as he was facing away, but he could imagine. Despite how unnecessary it was, Peter came fully dressed to work out, carrying a gym bag. It was another of those ruts they'd sunk into. It was what he did every day, with the expectation of changing and showering here. What he saw had to jar those expectations.

Sylar was buck naked, standing face to the wall in the gym, hands cuffed over his head with the chain looped through a piece of iron piping that he'd already tested for strength. Next to him was a backless bench with a towel and a bottle of lube, should he be so lucky as to need it. He'd thought about adding implements for the infliction of pain, but he didn't want to look too eager for that.

Peter's footsteps had stopped. Now came the job of luring him in. Assuming, of course, Peter even wanted the bait. Before Peter had rounded that corner, Sylar had been so certain. Now that he knew that not only was his posterior on display, but he was trapped with no easy way out … doubt racked him. He shifted his weight uneasily as his breathing sped up.

"Sylar?" Peter's voice sounded choked. He was probably startled, maybe even flabbergasted. Sylar shifted again, chain clinking against the pipe. This might have been a monumentally bad idea. But Peter walked closer when Sylar didn't answer, his steps slow but undeniably closer. It was a good sign. Hopefully. Maybe. Because it was not lost on Sylar that Peter's anger about Nathan, about who Sylar had been before, was not entirely gone. He was making himself utterly helpless here, completely and literally exposed to whatever whim might strike the other man.

He could see Peter in his peripheral vision, off to the right.

"What is this?" Peter's voice was deeper, heading towards husky if Sylar didn't miss his mark. Oh yes, that was such a good sign.

"An offer," Sylar said quietly, struggling to keep his voice level.

Peter's bag hit the floor and a few more slow, cautious steps brought him closer. "Of what?" Peter was bending forward, trying to catch Sylar's eyes.

Gooseflesh pimpled Sylar's skin and to his own complete surprise, he blushed crimson, turning his
face away and pressing it against his left bicep. Peter had to be able to see that, because he was pretty sure that even the back of his neck turned red. "Me," he mumbled in a low, frightened tone. He couldn't have faked that much sincerity if he'd tried. The situation was still balanced on a razor's edge. Peter took another step nearer, ending more behind him than to his side. Sylar sensed more than felt some motion of air along his back. Peter was close enough to touch him, but there was no contact – just the tickling, otherworldly sensation of proximity, like Peter had slowly waved his hand close to Sylar's skin. He shivered, arching a little and pulling at the chain.

Peter's voice sounded too close, immediately on his right shoulder, carrying so well even though it was an inquiring whisper. "Where's the key?"

The idea that Peter might just uncuff him and walk away shot through Sylar. How humiliating that would be – to have offered everything, everything!, up to and including torture – and to be cast aside as unwanted, left to get dressed on his own and figure out how to face up to Peter later. That would be the worst. It threatened to throw him into panic, just the suspicion of it. Voice trembling, he answered, "Please."

Fingers touched him then, right at the top of his left hip. They skimmed down over hip bone and the subtle curve where hip gave way to tendon before it was sheathed by the muscles of the butt or thigh. They loitered briefly there, tracing a few small circles before returning to his waist and settling there. "You're cold."

"Not for long," Sylar said in his deepest, most seductive voice, finding his confidence in Peter's touch.

This time he could swear he could feel Peter's breath on his shoulder. "I need to know – where's the key?"

Sylar shut his eyes and hung his head. If he didn't comply, it wasn't going to gain him anything. Peter could always just walk away and leave him here, or perhaps worse yet, go on with his workout. No, that wouldn't be worse. The idea of Peter staring at him throughout his workout was hot, even if it denied Sylar the level of interaction he wanted. No, worst would be if he just left. "On the bench. Under the towel."

Conceivably, it was within Sylar's reach. That had been the idea. He could stretch out a foot and reach it, should things go bad. He didn't need to look to hear Peter retrieve it, but he did when Peter didn't return immediately. A furtive glance revealed Peter to be looking at the bottle of lube with a slightly cocked head, like he hadn't noticed it before. Well … he'd probably been distracted by Sylar's naked body. Sylar smirked faintly at the thought. Peter straightened and Sylar resumed his defeated pose as the other man returned to him. Peter's hand smoothed up his spine from the small of his back to his shoulders. It was certainly a possessive gesture, one that made Sylar's pulse race despite how undecided things still were.

Peter's hand moved up along his arm – triceps, elbow, and forearm, coming to rest at his wrist. Skilled fingers tested the metal ring and for a moment Sylar's fear that Peter would release him reigned supreme. Then another realization set in – no, Peter was just making absolutely sure Sylar couldn't get away.

Clever boy.

"Metal cuffs are going to bite into your wrists pretty bad," Peter said reasonably, his body so close to Sylar's back that he felt the faintest scuff of fabric on his rump and shoulder. "And your arms are going to cramp before very long. Are you sure this is how you want to be?"
“It’s the only way you’ll take me, Peter,” Sylar thought in frustrated desperation. It had taken him a lot longer than it should have to realize that Peter was afraid of him – months even. Peter was a brave man and he was willing to face his fears, but that didn’t make them less present. Sylar had hit upon the idea of making himself entirely vulnerable, completely at Peter’s mercy, as a way of evading that obstacle. Peter wouldn’t fear him if he made himself helpless. If it hurt a little along the way – well, Sylar was no stranger to enduring a little (or a lot) of pain to get what he wanted. It would be familiar. Maybe even fun. "I want," he rasped out, "to be taken."

He wanted to be valued. He wanted to be wanted. He had no fucking coin in this realm. Money was meaningless, powers were non-existent, and he didn't even have any useful reputation or status to buoy him. He had, and was, nothing unless Peter wanted him and it was clear that connection wouldn't be initiated by Peter. More days than Sylar wanted to count had shown him that.

Peter's hand traced back down his arm slowly, contemplatively, coming to rest on his shoulder. Sylar looked back now, eyes wide and uncertain. His fate, as it had for so long, rested in Peter's hands. Peter's expression was clouded by lust – lids heavy, lips parted, skin slightly flushed – but he was still warring inside. Sylar racked his brain for what would nudge Peter over the edge, struggling to think back through their hundreds of mundane, frequently impersonal encounters and tease out some key to Peter Petrelli's soul that would give him a tiny bit of leverage.

It occurred to him that what he, Sylar, was asking for was so selfish – pleasure me, I'm bored and horny – that it was a shock to him that Peter had even come this far. He'd just assumed that Peter wanted what was on offer and would provide what Sylar desired. Like it was fated, or chemistry, or an ability – something Sylar didn't have to work at. It was surely perverse that he was the bound and helpless victim here who was dictating the terms of the scene. That was when it came to him what he needed to do to win Peter's cooperation. "I want you," he whispered roughly.

That was it – so perfect and crystalline that Sylar wondered if his Intuitive Aptitude was still working, even here. He saw the shift in Peter's expression, the darkening of his eyes as pupils dilated, heard the heavier breathing. Peter's hand dropped, fingers ghosting across his back and dancing across ribs. Peter leaned forward, head tilting and coming up on his toes in an obvious invitation. Sylar arched and twisted awkwardly, meeting Peter's lips for their first kiss. It was clumsy and strained, but oh-so-real and sweet. So sweet, that even with his arch-enemy chained to a wall to do with as he pleased, Peter wanted to start things with a gentle press of lips.

When they parted, Peter nuzzled along his cheek as Sylar settled back into a less difficult position. He shivered at the unexpected intimacy and friendliness of that gesture. It was so unnecessary. Sylar had expected a fast, hard fuck and perhaps some abuse, or maybe no fuck at all and for Peter to vent his latent furies on him. Either was preferable to things continuing unchanged. He hadn't thought he'd actually be treated nicely.

What was Peter like in bed? It had been the subject of so many fantasies on Sylar's part. And Nathan's, too, that dirty-minded pervert. But regardless of what Peter was like with others, Sylar hadn't expected to rate that treatment. He'd just wanted to be something other than a nobody – someone special to Peter, someone other than his fellow prisoner in this screwed up empty world. Sylar wanted to have meaning.

Sylar whimpered. He knew he needed to give Peter cues and encouragement, not that it was difficult. Quite to the contrary. The uncertainty was fading fast and his own lust was rising, along with his
parts. He felt warmth flooding his entire frame. No, he wasn't still cold. He'd been right about that much, as well as what would finally break through Peter's resolve. That knowledge was rushing through his veins, thrilling and filling him. He sawed the chain back and forth a bit, rattling it. He wished he could use his hands on his partner, now that he thought Peter was willing, but he had to endure the conditions he himself had imposed.

_Patience._

Peter bit him on the shoulder, moving up directly behind him so Sylar could feel his clothed body chafing against his own bare one. The man's hands swept slowly around to his front, flowing along his abdomen and then climbing upward. Sylar breathed harder, sorry that Peter was skipping his main masculine attribute, but loving the tease. He was hugged against Peter's body and given a full press and rub.

Sylar spread his legs invitingly. "Take me," he ordered.

"No," Peter answered immediately.

"What?" Shock colored his voice as a pit of despair threatened to open in Sylar's gut.

"You don't get to tell me what to do." Sylar could hear the smile in Peter's voice. Peter's arms wrapped around him again, holding them tight together and forcing Sylar to take some of the weight on his wrists. He grimaced, shifting his grip to hold the chain itself. Then he was bitten again, Peter's teeth hard against the bunched muscle of his right deltoid. A moment later, Peter's left hand slid up into his hair, pulling his head back roughly so lips could tenderly caress his cheek in a strange juxtaposition of expectation and reality.

Sylar whined, getting it now (or so he imagined). He flexed back, pushing his ass into Peter's groin, feeling that his display was quite appreciated.

"Let me know if I'm hurting you," Peter breathed into his ear, "too much," he added with a nip. He sucked at the lobe and then ran his tongue around the outer edge, giving Sylar's skin gooseflesh again and making him come up on his toes. Peter only jerked him back down to finish the job and this time Sylar moaned. The hand not occupied with Sylar's hair drifted down his front, testing one nipple and then the other, scratching through the chest hair in between. Sylar twitched in response to each pinch and rotation. It was enough fun that Peter's hand lingered there while he buried his face against the back of Sylar's hair, doing some perverted thing where he moved his face back and forth to feel the hair against his skin.

Another bite was delivered to the opposite deltoid, and Peter's hand dropped lower, skimming around his navel where it was briefly joined by the other, before dropping the rest of the way. Sylar's cock was at full attention, the tip bumping into his lower abdomen to alert him in case he hadn't noticed the heaviness or the straining, eager fullness. "This is what I want," Peter whispered to him, kissing and laving the top of his shoulders as his fingers wrapped around a generous shaft.

Sylar's breath jerked at the touch and his hips followed suit almost immediately. Peter pressed him forward, closer to the wall so that Sylar rested his cheek against the mostly smooth, painted masonry of the gym wall. It gave him more leverage to push back with and let him take the weight of their bodies' motions on his forearms rather than his wrists. It was just a day for revelations – Sylar marveled how Peter knew this, how he knew what to do, how he knew what positions would strain and what sort of cuffs were best for this and how it would be better for Sylar if he was more flush with the wall. Had someone fucked Peter up against a wall like this before?

Nasty, dirty, filthy mental images flooded his brain as Peter's hand began to pump his cock, Peter's
groin gyrating against Sylar's ass in time. Not for the first time, Sylar wished he wasn't so damn helpless here, able to do nothing at all but experience having someone else pleasure him. He moaned again, wanton and desirous. He could at least indicate what he liked and this … this was incredible.

"I want to have you in the palm of my hand," Peter murmured to him. "I want to feel you responding to every, single, little, thing, I do," Peter said, punctuating his pauses with tweaks to Sylar's nipples, gaining tiny squeaks and wriggles. "I want to be in control. I want to have you do, what I want you, to do."

Sylar's mind flew to Peter's oft-repeated request about Emma and the carnival. Oddly, with his cock in Peter's talented hand, he couldn't imagine why he'd ever refused the guy anything – anything at all. Preventing some broad from killing the world or whatever was immaterial next to getting this again. Sure, I'll do whatever. Just keep fucking me. Sylar's brains had truly run out his ears.

"I don't have to bring you pleasure." Peter paused in his stroking, leaving Sylar shifting his hips fruitlessly, no resistance to thrust into. Peter's free hand came up to the bottom of Sylar's breastbone, where he drug his nails down Sylar's exposed and vulnerable belly hard enough to leave furrows and provoke a gasp and brief writhe from the unexpected pain.

"Fuck!" Sylar hissed.

Peter's hands left him entirely and Sylar regretted that single word. He regretted it so, so much. Come back! Peter?

"I don't have to bring you anything."

Sylar whipped his head around, staring back in desperation. Surely Peter wasn't going to quit now. Was that his game? To get Sylar hot and bothered and on the cusp and then leave him? Maybe to mock and torment later? Would torture start now?

Peter stepped away from him, turning his back. He picked up the bottle of lube from the bench, squirting some in his hand. The sudden tension in Sylar's chest eased. Peter returned, leaned in, and kissed him again, hand reclaiming its previous place. Cool, slick wetness coated him, vastly increasing the sensation. Sylar's hips bucked against the hand and he felt himself spiraling back up even faster than before. He groaned aloud as his face returned to rest against the wall. He jerked hard on the chain, letting himself go, letting himself forget about everything and just experience. He made guttural, bestial grunts as Peter's fist slipped up and down, squeezing and releasing. Sylar rose up on his toes, made restless by his impending climax. His fingers clenched and unclenched as the spasm built within him.

"So strong," Peter murmured, one hand moving faster on Sylar's cock while the other wrapped securely around his chest, holding him in place to take Peter's ministrations. Sylar yanked on the chain again, trapped, held, restrained, pleasured. His arms ached, fire creeping into the muscles and spreading faster now that he was fighting with his bonds in earnest. His legs splayed in some animal instinct of complete sexual submission. In the back of his mind, he knew he should be embarrassed as hell, but this was scorching hot. Ecstasy flooded through him. His eyelids fluttered and his ball sac tightened. A moment later, his load splattered against the wall, accompanied by a gasping groan.

He sagged, brain off-line as surely as if he'd been clobbered over the head. He felt, though didn't really understand, as Peter wiped his lube-smeared hand rapidly on his own jeans and then reached up along Sylar's arms. He felt Peter fumble at the device and then take one of Sylar's hands and put it over his opposite wrist. "Hold yourself here. Hang on to yourself for a sec." Too dazed to ask questions, Sylar complied. A moment later there was a metallic click and the handcuffs swung free
from one wrist. Peter's hands immediately covered his own, guiding them down slowly. Sylar's arms trembled. Sylar hadn't realized how much they'd started to suffer from the position.

Peter pulled him backwards a few feet and with a clatter of knocking the lube bottle out of the way, sat them both sideways on the bench with Peter spooned behind him.

He's going to fuck me now? It seemed both appropriate and incongruous. Sylar had submitted entirely; Peter had gotten his power trip or whatever the fuck it was he needed to break down his otherwise impenetrable wall of scruples. But on the other hand, why go to all that bother if he just wanted to get his dick wet? He'd had a much better opportunity while Sylar was chained down.

But Peter didn't do much of anything. He held Sylar. Hugged him. Rested his chin on his shoulder, made possible by the relaxed, satiated slouch Sylar was in. Peter breathed more slowly. He lost his erection. Every now and then, he'd give Sylar a small peck or his thumb would stroke back and forth across his chest. It was quiet and still and safe-seeming.

Sylar's heart slowed from the racing staccato it had been keeping up. His own breathing eased. He was given the luxury of staying relaxed, rather than worrying if someone might shoot at him or otherwise burst in. Hell, he didn't even have to look at Peter and worry what the other man made of Sylar's own expression. He just got to rest, gather himself, and recover. He had the weirdest fluttery feeling in his gut from how nice it was.

He shifted slightly, the first shreds of self-consciousness coming over him. Peter's hands strayed down Sylar's arms, rubbing his wrists and turning each of them so that Peter, peering over his shoulder, could see if they were all right. It was a proprietary interest, Sylar realized. He belonged, now. Peter had taken him at his word. Taken. It was exactly what Sylar had hoped for.
Feet, a Study

Title: Feet, a Study
Characters: Peter Petrelli, Sylar
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Word count: 1,100
Summary: Peter gets distracted by one of Sylar's body parts. Sylar reaches the wrong conclusion about that.

They were nice feet – long and narrow, but quite nicely arched. The soles looked soft. The whole form was pale with just a hint of yellow showing the thicker areas of callous at the heel and balls of the toes. The toes were straight – none turned in or twisted, and all a little longer than normal. Like most parts of Sylar, they were a bit elongated. Peter wondered if that applied to parts of the man he hadn't seen, but he didn't let his mind wander too far in that direction. No, the feet were safe. Safer, at least. He sighed, admiring them from where he leaned against the kitchen entry, looking at them propped up over the end of Sylar's couch. The man was too long for his own furniture, which Peter found amusing and sort of sad. If there was anywhere someone should fit, it was in their own abode.

He wondered what it would feel like to rub those feet – to touch them, maybe tickle them (was Sylar ticklish?) Not that Peter had a thing for feet, but he really hadn't had much in the way of physical contact. He hadn't thought he'd miss it as much as he had. Volunteering a foot rub was guaranteed to be taken the wrong way, to imply things Peter wasn't ready for. Feet were easier, maybe because they were so far from the face Peter still associated with danger, insult, and hate. Sylar's feet had perpetrated no crimes against him. There were only unfortunate accessories, innocent of intent. Peter smiled a little as the toes wiggled slightly. They looked dexterous, those shifting digits.

Nice circulation. Peter wondered if they'd be cool or warm given the room temperature. They moved again, curling decisively this time. Peter's gaze jerked up to find that Sylar's eyes, previously entirely hidden by his book, were peering at him over the top of it. No telling how long he'd been looking, either! Peter could only imagine, with horror, what sort of absorbed, vapid expression he'd been wearing for Sylar's observation, or what prurient thoughts Sylar must think he was entertaining. He blushed to his roots, face hot with shame. Mortified, he fled into the kitchen, but there was nowhere to go. A moment later, he emerged, heading to the door. "I'm going to go take a walk," he said brusquely, head down. He was out the door fast.

Sylar, still lying on the couch, wiggled his toes again, blinking between them and the shut door. "Huh."

XXX

The tack was a lance of pain as it penetrated the sole of Sylar's foot. "Ow!" he exclaimed without any need to act. Hopping on one foot, he helped himself to the couch.

Peter came to the kitchen entry, looking out in immediate concern. "What is it? What happened?"

"I stepped on something," Sylar said, although that much seemed obvious – at least to him. He held up his injured foot. "Can you see what it is?"

"Of course." Peter came over to the couch, taking up his foot and looking at it. "It's a thumb tack. Hold on. Don't pull it out." He went to get the first aid tote from under the bathroom sink.
"What would happen if I pulled it out?" Sylar asked when the other man returned.

Peter settled himself in, giving the foot a quick examination before opening the tote and getting out what he needed. "Well, nothing much would happen. It's just training. Any punctures are supposed to be left in place until you have a method for controlling the bleeding." Peter delicately and slowly removed the obstruction with one hand, the other immediately holding gauze over the wound. He set the tack on the arm of the couch.

Sylar nudged his foot into Peter's lap and was gratified when Peter cupped his heel with the other hand, still holding the gauze to him. It took an effort for Sylar not to look at him, but he suspected this was critical — the not looking, giving an illusion of privacy, or at least disinterest. Not that Sylar was disinterested at all. No, he wouldn't intentionally step on a thumb tack for just anyone. He could feel Peter brush the dust and dirt from his foot, his fingers warm and gentle against his skin. He took rather a bit longer at it than necessary, but Sylar gloried quietly in every touch. An adhesive bandage was applied. Before Peter could be done, Sylar interrupted, "Could you look at my toes? One of them was ingrown a while back."

"Sure," Peter said, low and subdued. Sylar swung his other foot up to rest on Peter's knee.

Peter looked at it blankly for a moment, before furtive eyes darted to Sylar. He colored again, obviously onto Sylar.

But Sylar had been steady in the face of worse. "It's the big one," he prompted seriously.

Peter was breathing a little too fast, but he looked down obediently, hands moving slowly to the toe in question. He relaxed as he examined it. "I don't see anything wrong with it."

"Okay," Sylar said, sounding perfectly casual, like nothing weird was going on. Guys always checked out each other's feet, right? "Do you mind if I just leave my feet there while I read?" His face was a study in innocence.

"Uh ..." Peter looked down at them for a long moment before shrugging a little with much-less-authentic-looking indifference. "No, sure, that's fine." His hands hovered over the feet uneasily. "But you know, if they're in my lap, I might ..."

"Sure, that's fine," Sylar said off-handedly, getting down his book from the shelf over the couch and situating himself. "Whatever you need. 'S fine." He opened his book, put his eyes on the page, and kept them there, letting Peter sort himself out at the other end of the couch.

What seemed like minutes later, one of Peter's hands came down to rest on the top of his foot. A shorter time after that, his other cupped the sole. That was all Peter did — just sit there holding him. Peter slouched in his seat, eyes shut, holding onto another human being like it was a lifeline he'd been too long denied. Sylar eyed him over the top of his book. He hadn't expected that. He'd thought he'd stumbled onto some hidden fetish — but no. It was something even more basic. Sylar smiled, settling in. He didn't care. Either way, he was getting the same thing.
"Nathan mattered to me," Peter said very seriously. "We're not going anywhere until you acknowledge that."

Sylar snorted derisively and rolled his eyes. It was a sign of their progress that they were even having this discussion, although the location was a bit odd. They each sat in the loose pea gravel of a playground, reclining against the two-high railroad ties that lined the play-pit. "Nathan was a dick, Peter. You have to admit that."

Peter shook his head staunchly. "This isn't quid pro quo. That has nothing to do with it. Nothing."

He glared at Sylar for a moment, who ignored him. "You act like I ought to be happy you killed him, like it was clearing the way for me to inherit the entire Petrelli fortune instead of just the half or whatever." He paused there, not sure if he was even in the inheritance any more. In one of Peter's arguments with his father about college, Arthur had threatened to disinherit him. Peter had told him to do it – he didn't want the money anyway. His father had replied, 'Fine,' and that was the end of it, never mentioned again by either of them. Peter had his trust fund, but when his father died, nothing else had come to him. He'd assumed everything went to his mother, but what would happen after she passed? Would it all go to Nathan? Or rather, his sons? Well, Peter didn't care much even now.

"It was a service to all specials everywhere."

Peter still wanted to deck Sylar for saying shit like that, but they'd moved past that. Mostly. Instead he growled in anger and looked at the sky. "He was special. How was that a service to him?"

"He was destroying his own life. He's better off dead."

"You don't get to decide that, Sylar!" The heat in Peter's voice was unmistakable.

"Seems like I did," the other man said bluntly.

Snarling, Peter threw a small handful of gravel at him, hard as he could. From an outsider's perspective (and even probably from Sylar's), that was hilarious in how harmless it was, but Sylar knew enough not to ignore stage 2 violence from Peter. Stage 1 was threats and maybe getting in his face. Stage 3 was blows. If he ignored stage 2 pushing, shoving, and throwing things, then stage 3 would swiftly follow until Peter was sure he'd made his point. Sylar recoiled a little, brushing off stray stones from his pants. He kept his eyes down and mouth shut, much as he wanted to say something snarky.

Peter slowly went from poised to get up off his rear end and pummel some sense into his companion to … well, calmer. He took several deep breaths and looked away. It was an emotionally charged topic. "You don't get to decide that," he reiterated through clenched teeth.

Sylar picked at the gravel, selecting an especially round piece. "Peter … I don't mean to be offensive with this," he started, flicking his eyes apologetically up at Peter, who turned at his words to eye him
suspiciously. Such a statement was usually followed by something patently insulting. "But of all people, I know better than anyone what kind of person Nathan was."

Peter backed off a little, relieved that Sylar hadn't turned up the tension in the discussion. "That's why we're arguing. You're not getting the point! This isn't about Nathan. It's about me!" Sylar stared at him, blinking slowly a few times. From someone else, Peter would have interpreted that as a 'you're stupid' look of condescension. With Sylar that was certainly still a possible meaning, but more on the money was 'I don't understand that', of which Peter was aware.

Growling with frustration, Peter got to his feet and stomped off, kicking rocks out of his way as he went. He heard the dry rustle of Sylar getting to his feet behind him. Peter stalked over to the swings and sat down in one of them, a band of hot plastic supporting him. Too tall by far, he sprawled his legs out so his knees wouldn't be so comically high. He felt like a kid and wondered if his upset was just an immature tantrum. Where was the line between authentic emotions that deserved recognition and juvenile fit-throwing that was best left ignored?

Sylar came over and leaned on the support beam, looking down at him. "I think I get it. You want … your feelings to matter." Sylar picked at the wood of the beam. "And this isn't about Nathan. Or rather, not just about Nathan. Is it?"

"No," he said sullenly, not sure how relevant it was to open the can of worms that made up Peter's past, where failure to acknowledge his opinion on things was routine.

"Okay," Sylar said softly. "I see that now. It's not just about you, either. Everyone … probably had feelings about the people I killed."

"Yeah?" Peter looked up at him, brows drawn together a bit as he processed why the admission wasn't easy for Sylar.

Sylar nodded slowly and then scratched the back of his neck. "Well, um, okay. Yeah. I agree that people … have feelings."

"Yeah, but do you recognize that they're legitimate? That it's okay for them to feel that way?"

A hopeless half smile lifted part of Sylar's mouth. He gave a hollow laugh. "They want to kill me, Peter." He gave Peter a guarded, haunted look. "So do you."

"You know, Sylar, sometimes what I want to kill you over is that you don't admit I have a right to be upset. That by itself is huge."

Sylar picked nervously at the wood some more, staring off into the distance with a sad, somewhat fearful expression.

Peter knew the other man had to be looking down the barrel of a gun, the horror of having to admit that everyone who was angry at him had a right to be that way. Sylar was right – it was a far bigger admission than just Nathan, and Peter hadn't seen it that way to start with. He stood up. This was too big an issue to demand an answer right away. "Hey. We're not going anywhere anyway, so how about you give me a hand on adjusting the chains on this swing so I can actually use the damn thing."

"Like a kid?" Sylar said with a short, nervous laugh. But regardless, he started appraising the situation with the chains, trying to see how to move it up.

"Yeah, like a little kid," Peter said. "Might as well. You won't tattle on me, will you?"
Sylar gave him a surprised stare, then smiled warmly, letting himself be distracted and appreciating the off-hand trust. "No, of course not."
Title: User Friendly, Friendly Use
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Allusions to coerced sex
Word count: 2,700
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Dual-POV. Sylar never imagined anyone could fall in love with him. / Peter never imagined he could fall in love with Sylar.

Sylar was happy with letting Peter use him; glad of it. Everyone he'd ever met had fallen neatly into two categories – those who didn't notice him and those who wanted to use him. It had taken a long time for Peter to notice him as anything other than the reviled and hated murderer of his brother. But loneliness had pressed down heavily on Peter Petrelli and Sylar's methodical, persistent efforts to seduce him had finally succeeded. This was what Sylar knew how to do – find a need that someone else had, and fill it. Or in this case, letting Peter fill him.

Peter was a good lover as far as Sylar could tell. He was attentive. He was gentle. He was passionate and vigorous with terrific stamina. Sylar didn't always know how Peter wanted him to respond to the exquisite stimulation he was given. He did his best. He didn't want to wear out his welcome in Peter's bed, which Sylar shared all the time now. That was how it started, but the chaste sleeping together after a liquor-fueled bender didn't last a night before Sylar pressed his lean body against Peter's warm one and made his availability and willingness known. Some lotion, a few amorous strokes, and some urging of his sleepy bed partner had been all it took. The sex wasn't as bad as he'd expected it to be.

Left to the frequency of Peter's desire (which Sylar did not disturb), Peter fucked him twice a day, morning and night. He liked beds, apparently. Sylar assumed it was due to their convenience. Peter came to be affectionate – that was something that had grown slowly over days and weeks. Increasingly, Peter would pepper him with kisses and nuzzle against him. He picked up the habit of stroking Sylar's skin and straightening the hairs on his forearms and brows. He started touching Sylar's face softly as he kissed him … the kissing had changed a lot. Initially it had been an achingly sweet pressing of lips on his shoulders as Sylar was taken from behind, but it had gradually changed to passionate probing in missionary as Peter thrust inside of him. Maybe it was a claiming. Because, Sylar thought, couldn't it be anything more, could it?

Sometimes, before one of their carnal episodes, but after Sylar would indicate his readiness with strokes and touches, Peter would hug him. That would be it – Peter's cheek to Sylar's, arms around him tightly, body pressed to his, in a single, firm embrace that would last for long seconds while Sylar lay still. Sylar wondered if it was some kind of emotional orgasm, or climax, or whatever. Because afterward, Peter would act a lot like he did after fucking – he'd snuggle and stroke and give him small pecking kisses and rub his nose on Sylar's. Sometimes he'd put his forehead against Sylar's and stare into his eyes … almost like Sylar was really important to him. Sylar would stare back and give enough kisses in return that Peter saw whatever signal he was looking for. Then Peter would fuck him.

They conducted the arrangement almost entirely without speaking of it. Peter had tried talking at first, with fumbling, embarrassed stutterings the morning of that first coupling, claiming he had been so asleep and possibly still drunk he hadn't realized who or what he was doing. It was grossly offensive.
Peter seemed to be trying to find some way of saying Sylar had taken advantage of him, but that was ridiculous – just another Petrelli excuse, probably fueled by shame for his lusts towards a kinslayer. Sylar didn't want to hear it and had shut him down viciously. It didn't stop Peter from accepting him into his bed that night, which cemented which category Peter fell into – just another user.

Yet Peter wasn't anything like the others. As time passed, Peter went out of his way to please him. He found the little things he could do to Sylar during sex that made him moan, call out, or shudder. Peter did more of those, repeating them endlessly with inventive variations that showed he was really thinking about Sylar's pleasure. Maybe Peter's ego couldn't be properly stroked until his partner was quivering in satisfaction. That was probably it. It probably also explained the craving Sylar was developing for the man and the strange feelings in his gut when he saw him. They were merely the product of endorphins, a simple, chemically-induced, conditioned response. Like the hard-on he sprouted at the most inappropriate times if he let his mind wander to what Peter might want to use him for that night. Just conditioning.

It was nice conditioning, though. Peter certainly seemed aware of it, because he started lacing their normal, day-to-day interactions with enough sexual innuendo that Sylar could barely wait for evening. It was like Peter got off on seeing Sylar in need. Sylar was tempted, teased, and tortured. Even though Peter would grant him deliverance at the end of the day, the long wait seemed cruel and unnecessary. After all, Peter knew Sylar would allow him at any time, no matter what. So why provoke him and not carry through? Cruelty. Meanness. Arrogance. He was being mistreated. It was all Sylar could imagine. His resentment grew.

Peter felt him up after lunch one day in his apartment, stroked him up and down and caressed his groin. Sylar's arousal was perfectly clear. Peter even remarked on it, then left him wanting with a taunt and a sigh about how long it was until night. Sylar threatened him. Peter laughed, which infuriated him, and told him he didn't have to wait if he didn't want to - the bedroom was only steps away. When Sylar grabbed him and shoved him into the room and onto the bed, Peter didn't resist. He even helped in getting off his clothes and had the foresight to grab at the lube.

Sylar thought it would have served the asshole right to have skipped lube altogether, but he'd never fucked anyone before and Peter always used it, so he assumed it was necessary. Apparently, he didn't use enough, because the sounds Peter made once Sylar rammed inside of him were pained. Peter had never done this sort of thing to him. Peter had never made sounds of hurting. On the other hand, Peter fucking him had never hurt. That twisting feeling in his gut came back and he eased his actions. He pulled out, used more lube, and rolled Peter over onto his back so Sylar could see his face. Peter was just as cooperative as before, but his expression was hesitant and wary, like things were out of his control and he was hoping this would turn out okay.

Sylar took him again, much more gently. Sylar kissed him, like Peter had kissed him when they used this position, and Peter kissed back. Peter wound his arms around him and pulled him close, legs wrapping around him in a hug just like the ones he'd given so much more platonically before. Sylar's stomach fluttered and lurched as he realized that similarity and the certainty – the complete and unmistakable certainty – that Peter was emotionally involved with him. All those little gestures and efforts and indications …

For the first time, Sylar realized he wasn't being used like he'd thought he was. He'd been … wrong. Something else was happening. Sylar didn't understand it, but he didn't deny it. He just left it unlabeled to surge around inside of him, a glowing, warm, tingling feeling that intensified with every pleased moan and helplessly happy whimper Peter made. He brought Peter off with his hand
between them just as Peter had serviced him so many times. Sylar came moments later, breathless and panting – but that feeling inside of him didn't fade. Peter stroked his hair out of his face and blew across his chest to cool him. Peter was happy, despite the rough start. He was … loving.

And there it was – the label Sylar had been looking for. Peter put his forehead to Sylar's, hugging him tight and staring into his eyes. In love with me, Sylar thought, his heart melting. Somewhere along the line, it had stopped being 'use' and started being love.

For a long time, Peter blamed himself. He should have never gotten into the habit of drinking with Sylar. It had started as a beer or two after dinner and progressed into mixed drinks. At the time, it seemed like 'why not?' They even joked about how there weren't any cars. Peter told Sylar things while loosened up with alcohol that he would have never been able to confess to with his defenses up. His defenses were never more down than when he came to himself to realize that he was back in his apartment, fucking Sylar.

Peter didn't finish, didn't give Sylar a reach around, nothing. He just stopped, a bit dumbfounded by the whole thing. He could remember coming home, Sylar in tow and vaguely remembered nonchalantly telling Sylar 'sure, go ahead' when the other man asked if he could sleep over. (It seemed like a harmless thing at the time …) But between sharing a bed with a friend and being intimately involved with them was a huge gulf, as huge as the gap in Peter's memory. Sylar seemed alert enough, which was disturbing and made Peter suspicious that he'd been set up.

They'd fought over it. Hungover and feeling like crap, Peter hadn't been able to defend himself – it had been his dick in Sylar's ass, after all. What stung the most was it wasn't like sex with Sylar wasn't something Peter had fantasized about, dreamed about, even sort of been trying to figure out a moral way that he could get away with it. Yet here it was, a done deal. There was no way he could un-fuck the situation, made all the worse by Sylar's insinuation that Peter was his first. Then Sylar wouldn't talk about it, getting harsh and mean about it. They parted ways, both angry at each other and no doubt both feeling quite entrenched in their positions.

By evening, the anger had faded a little and Peter was feeling guilty. When Sylar knocked, Peter opened the door and leaned on the frame, eyeing him. Sylar didn't look angry anymore, either. He looked needy, scared, and vulnerable. Peter thought about it from Sylar's point of view – he'd gotten drunk with a guy, been invited to sleep with him, fooled around and got badly sexed for what was (probably) his first time, then was rejected, accused of what looked a lot like rape, and kicked out. All in a situation where Sylar couldn't just get on with his life, where he had no other options, no life to get on with. Sylar could no more un-fuck things than Peter could. When they'd been drinking, Sylar had shared some of his life as well. So much of it was made of suck. Peter knew how that felt.

After what seemed like an entire minute, or maybe two, where they stood in absolute silence, Peter nudged the door the rest of the way open with his foot and gestured for Sylar to come inside. They hardly spoke at all, other than the most strained of small talk. Peter pointedly had water, having already poured out every drop of alcohol in the apartment. When he announced he was going to bed, he didn't accompany it with any mention that Sylar needed to go home. He was unsurprised when the man meekly followed him to bed. Peter tried to talk and was shushed. Instead, hands slid across his skin, an erotic contact that was more intoxicating than any liquor would ever be.

Maybe not everything in Sylar's life had to turn to blood and ashes. Peter kissed him softly, swallowed his misgivings, and gave it a chance. It was hard at first, to get over himself, get past the past and the thoughts of besmirching Nathan's memory, but Peter could feel himself winning through bit by bit, one touch at a time. He resolutely refused to turn Sylar away – morning and night, if Sylar showed interest, Peter returned it. Sylar was alive and here and could hurt. Every now and then,
Peter would hug him tightly and remember that—this man was human and fragile, he was being kind and generous; they needed each other.

Sylar became happy. He blossomed. Peter watched over the days and weeks as the man relaxed and opened up. The set of his shoulders eased and the glowers ended. He laughed more. He even dabbled in being playful. The deadly sarcasm transformed into a wicked sense of humor. And Sylar, ever the bad boy, stole Peter's heart. Peter didn't realize it until one day when Sylar made a happy twirl of the sort Peter had seen him do long ago in an impossible future. It took Peter's breath away, which seemed so silly that Peter stopped to think about how he was feeling. Yes—somehow, he'd fallen for his so-called enemy and found love in the unlikeliest places.

Now all he had to do was get Sylar to admit to wanting him. Because he did, of that Peter was confident, and wanting him might be the start of loving him back. He hatched a stupid plan, because Peter had never been good at planning. Peter took to teasing him, giving little reminders of their times and hoping Sylar would admit to his obvious desires. The anticipation made the man more assertive in bed, even though it seemed to be making him grouchy out of it. Then it very nearly went terribly wrong. What looked like it would be rough, passionate sex turned into Sylar breaching him, unprepared, and shoved him hard into the pillow Peter was trying to use to muffle himself. Peter hadn't resisted the positioning and didn't know what to do about what was happening…but Sylar stopped, as though it finally got through his head that this was not going well.

They changed position to face-to-face and this time it was tender love-making instead of being fucked much harder than Peter liked. They kissed passionately. Peter pulled him in, winding himself around the man and hugging him tight, trusting Sylar to treat him right. Powerful, flexing thrusts filled him over and over. They grappled as one until he came in an overflow of fulfilled desire. Peter stroked Sylar's face and cooled them both, tending to him with dutiful affection, charmed by his quirky and largely mute lover. They pressed foreheads, staring into one another's eyes for a long moment, truly in sync.

Peter didn't blame himself anymore. If anything, he gave his heart credit for seeing something that his brain had refused to believe existed. Speaking of things his brain had done badly—this 'plan' of his. Stupid. Why try to get Sylar to say something Peter himself had not yet voiced? "I love you," he said earnestly, smiling at the shocked expression that greeted his words.
"You feel safe here," Peter said, looking around Sylar's apartment.

As it wasn't a question, Sylar didn't answer.

Peter shrugged a shoulder. "I haven't felt safe anywhere since ... I don't know when." He looked around again, thinking of the level of vigilance Peter had had over the last several years and even then, he'd still been attacked in his apartment and at work both. 'Safe' had become a foreign concept, unable to trust even those he loved. "I suppose, all alone, there's no one to hurt you ..."

"Until recently," Sylar observed.

Peter swallowed, looking down unhappily. "Sorry, man."
Hello Sylar, my future friend
I've come to ask for help again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Emma's savior, is Sylar

In your restless dream I walked alone
Narrow streets of paving stones
Calling out as I looked for you
I hoped the dream I'd had was really true
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a brilliant light
And there you were
I'd found the soul of Sylar

But first this truth that I must face
All these acts that mean disgrace
People killed without remorse
People murdered without recourse
People like my brother who I'll never see
You took from me
Why would you help me, Sylar?

My heart is full of painful doubt
Maybe I shouldn't let you out
I hear your words of apology
And although they ring with sincerity
It is hard for me to believe you have changed
Cold revenge
It's not your fate, Sylar

And so I learned to forgive
The life that you had lived
The person that you used to be
Was not the person I now could see
And we turned our hammers to bringing down those high brick walls
Watch them fall
Heroes together, me and Sylar
It started with hanging out together. At first, upon finding himself equally trapped in the mental prison, Peter had gone off on his own, with no desire to keep company with the man he’d come here to rescue. Rescue was impossible, so there was no reason to interact further with his brother's killer. Peter kept to himself for a very long time, giving only passing greetings and being minimally polite.

Sylar tolerated that for a while, but it soon became apparent he was tracking Peter down and keeping him in sight even if he wasn't always watching. Peter could have avoided him, but that seemed childish, so he just ignored instead. Mere presence evolved quickly into proximity as Sylar would bring his book or project closer until they were in conversational range. Small talk was next – a few polite words that usually dead-ended in awkward silences, but that didn't keep Sylar from trying. Days passed and the silence retreated in the face of quiet talk.

Peter warmed to his companion over days and weeks. He had an audience. Sylar was a good listener. If the man avoided answering a lot of Peter's questions, it didn't bother Peter too much. A part of him didn't want to know what happened to make a person into the killer Sylar had become. It was strange enough to see him as friendly and to find himself used to seeing Sylar waiting for him outside his apartment building.

'Outside' – that didn't last either. One day, Peter needed to go upstairs to fetch something from his room and Sylar tagged along with him, continuing their conversation. Peter didn't want Sylar to know exactly which apartment he slept in, but he couldn't bring himself to be rude about it. It was no big deal, right?

A couple days later, Sylar knocked when Peter slept in, stating so innocently that he wasn't sure if Peter had already left and so he just wanted to check … Well, the cat was out of the bag as to where Peter slept, of course. But Peter probably shouldn't have invited him in for breakfast. They'd eaten together more than a hundred times by now so it seemed routine to ask him in – just like Sylar bringing breakfast to Peter's apartment became the new norm.

For evenings, sometimes they went to Sylar's, sometimes to Peter's, sometimes they parted ways out in the street but that became more and more rare. Sylar kept coming up with one thing after another as the hour grew late, prolonging their stays until Peter was drowsy and ready to drop. An offer of Sylar's couch was turned down and Peter would stagger back to his place. One day of especially hard play in the park was followed by a long evening in Peter's apartment recounting the camping trips of Peter's youth. When he finally turned in, he assumed Sylar would let himself out. The next morning, there the guy was, curled up on his couch under a freaking bath towel.

Sylar had spoken many times about his loneliness, his lack of friends, his desire for a connection.
Peter didn't have the heart to kick him out. One couch was much like another, Peter decided, and if Sylar wanted to crash here, it wasn't a problem. Weird, yes, but not worth making a fuss over.

It was only a matter of time until one of Sylar's nightmares disturbed Peter's sleep. Half-awake, Peter stumbled into the living room to see Sylar grappling with his demons, twitching and whimpering in distressed slumber. Peter woke him and Sylar clung to Peter's forearm, tearfully confessing that if he could just hear Peter breathing, that would be enough to keep the terrors away. He just needed to know someone was with him. Would Peter stay?

A tear-streaked face, sad and pitiable, looked up at him beseechingly in the half-light of the moon that leaked in from the living room window. Peter was tired, sleepy, and deeply affected by Sylar's plea. The man was stripped of his defenses in addition to his powers. He was as vulnerable as a child. But Peter didn't want to sit beside the couch to help him sleep. He had a king-sized bed, after all. Maybe if Peter's thinking hadn't been so muddled by sleep he could have suggested something different, but instead of Peter sitting up with him, Sylar was climbing into his bed a few minutes later.

The next morning, drawn by the warmth of another body and a desire for intimacy Peter hadn't had in what seemed like years, Peter woke to find himself on Sylar's side of the bed, snuggling up to the other man's back. It was alarming, but if Sylar minded, he didn't let on. Far as Peter knew, he didn't even wake. After that, a pillow wall was erected between them (because of course Sylar took it as a given that Peter's one-time exception was an open invitation to sleep with him).

Living together brought new closeness. They settled the order of who used the bathroom first and whether it was acceptable to leave out one's toothbrush on the side of the sink. Sylar brought over his hair products because he was particular and didn't care for Peter's. The arguments were never bitter and Peter usually won them. He had the hammer, after all - he could kick Sylar out of his life if he was too much of a pain in the ass. They both knew that, even if it wasn't mentioned.

Peter wouldn't admit to having had a change of heart, but the pillow wall was slowly crumbling. The bed was big enough that they both had plenty of space with it there, but he didn't like it. He'd roll over in the night and find it separating him from what he wanted, and roll back with frustration and anger at himself. Gradually, there were fewer pillows until finally, there was just one. It didn't surprise either of them that Peter woke up the next morning with his arm snuggled around Sylar's waist and his face burrowed against the other man's t-shirt-clad back. Peter removed himself carefully – super awkward. Sylar had never looked so pleased.

The next night, Peter resolutely put up the entire pillow barrier as Sylar set aside his house shoes on the other side of the bed. Sylar climbed in and with a grim, determined expression, tossed every one of them off the bed. He glared at Peter's shocked face, and then laid down, pulling the covers up and tucking himself in like he'd done nothing at all strange or defiant. Peter stared after the pillows, now heaped haphazardly near the door, then meekly slipped under the blankets himself. He didn't wait until morning to find Sylar in the big bed and hug him close, although he did at least wait until he could convince himself Sylar was probably asleep. A few nights later, he'd stopped doing even that.

Peter's usual sleep position was spooning behind the other man. Despite Sylar's height making him a better choice for big spoon, Peter claimed that for himself and would nudge Sylar to where he wanted him when the other man tried to sprawl some other way. Sylar didn't seem to mind. He'd been right about hearing Peter breathe – there were no more nightmares. It was Peter who woke him, not a bad dream, with Peter's erection pressed against his buttock and rocking slowly against him. Sylar turned to face him and when Peter woke, shushed his frantic apologies with a few words and a firm hand to his groin. Peter's tongue stilled; Sylar's hand did not.

They didn't speak of it in the morning, nor the next night when it happened again. The morning after
that, Peter was so hard and aching that he could barely stand it, guiding Sylar's hand to him and rutting against him noisily. When Sylar retired to the bathroom afterward, Peter waited until he heard the shower kick on before joining him. He went to his knees under the spray and returned the favor.

It was just a thing they did, but they did it a lot. For a while it was just in the bed, but then a flirty word and an invitation and they were doing it in a booth at an empty restaurant, against a post office box on the street, bent over a pool table with the billiard balls scattered to the sides … Peter had started with ass play early on, a few spit-slicked fingers probing gently while he swallowed Sylar's cock. It was on the pool table where he finally graduated to fucking Sylar's ass. Probably a poor choice of location and he should have talked about it more beforehand. Not that they ever talked much about what they were doing with each other.

There was a little blood; Peter had apparently gone too fast and Sylar hadn't known enough to tell him when to take it easy. Peter started to freak out; Sylar grabbed him and jerked him close, saying words that seared Peter's ears to hear them: "It's okay. I don't matter. You're happy. That's all that I care about. I'll be fine. It's okay, Peter. It's okay."

Peter pulled away, staring into Sylar's sad eyes, so vulnerable once more, but as a man and not a child. Numbly, he cleaned Sylar with paper towels. It was only a very small fissure and would be healed in a matter of days. Peter tidied up. They both righted their clothes just like normal. But unlike normal, Peter stepped over to Sylar and turned the man's elegant, expressive face to his own. He drew him in for something long overdue – their first kiss. Sylar whimpered, melting into it, and Peter wrapped his arms around him, holding him tight.

Subtly, their conversations turned and shifted. It was Peter listening to Sylar and now he didn't settle for evasions. He wanted to know. Difficult as the revelations were, Peter drank them in until he understood. He was the one following Sylar, asking the taller man where to go and what they should do for the afternoon. Sometimes Peter ended up sleeping on Sylar's couch until Sylar suggested they rearrange the furniture and get at least a double bed into his apartment. Happy days and satisfied nights blurred by until Sylar finally asked, "Why are you doing all of this? You don't have to."

Peter took a deep breath, feeling the butterflies riot in his stomach as he contemplated taking a plunge. The time was right. "Because you matter to me. I love you."

The wall never stood a chance. Peter still had that hammer, but he was never going to use it on Sylar.
Sylar rubbed his ass back and forth against Peter's groin from where they lay side-by-side in the bed. It didn't take long to get the sleeping man's attention. Peter's hands gripped his hips, holding him still for a moment while Peter oriented to what was going on. **Good,** Sylar thought. **I won't have to touch him this way.** He moved up and down slightly, shifting back and forward in a crude simulation of sex. He could feel Peter's erection hardening. The man was finally getting the message.

The first time Sylar had tried this, after wheedling his way into Peter's bed by a mix of persistence, stealth, and subterfuge, Peter hadn't reacted well. In fact, he'd been rather combative about the whole thing, despite Sylar's insistence that his body was available for Peter's needs whenever and however Peter might want it. That Peter had demurred just demonstrated that he needed to be shown, not told. Peter Petrelli was a man of action, after all, despite his attempts to put words to things that were so visceral as to be beyond articulation.

The second time had gone much better, even if Peter had acted like a scalded cat afterward – guilty and sullen by turns. He'd been asleep through a lot more of it that time, which probably had a lot to do with it. Sylar assumed Peter's act was due to the shock of dreaming of someone else and waking to find himself disappointed. But Peter had still finished, so it couldn't have been that bad.

Now, the third time, Peter was awake nearly from the start. That made it more dangerous and all the more sweet when Peter adjusted himself to line up with Sylar's crack and started moving with him. Penetration was a low risk. They were both wearing boxers and t-shirts – Peter because that was what he wore and Sylar because that was what Peter wore. He'd been working hard to adopt Peter's habits as his own, an effort that Peter seemed not to appreciate as much he should (the comment about being 'creepy' was especially uncalled for).

But Peter was adjusting. Lord knew he'd had to adjust to worse and stranger as a Petrelli. The mind games from the likes of Angela and Arthur made Sylar's honest desire to sate Peter's appetite seem like small potatoes. No, Sylar was showing Peter how much better it could be if he would only reach out and take what he wanted. It had always worked for Sylar, after all.

Peter's muscular thighs flexed, sliding his shaft along Sylar's crack, the thin material of the boxers doubled between them as a protection Sylar still felt he needed. Of course Peter could take whatever he wanted, but Sylar found comfort in how that barrier had yet to be stripped from him. Peter shifted down, his loins cupping Sylar's with such delicious warmth that Sylar made a slight noise of pleasure. He cut it off fast, biting his lip.

"No," Peter murmured. "Let me hear you. It helps me to know you're enjoying this."

**You're the one enjoying this. I'm just helping you. But fine, I'll help you enjoy it.** Sylar didn't answer in words, but let his mouth open to pant noisily against the pillow. Sylar canted his hips up, letting Peter's cock nudge deeper in his cleft. He let his eyes roll upward as he imagined what it would be like to have that fleshy rod pulsing inside of him, filling him up. It was going to happen, they just hadn't gotten there yet. Once Peter realized how much was on offer, he'd want that, too, Sylar knew. He groaned as he felt Peter's fingers clench into his hips to pull him back into each thrust. The man's cock was rock hard by now, leaving damp spots where precome was wetting the fabric.

"Oh yeah," Sylar purred, moving in rhythmic counterpoint. This was so good, to have someone touching him, playing with him, and enjoying being with him. It soothed something itchy deep inside him to know that Peter was getting off on him. He was pleasing to someone and that was such a rush.
Peter leaned forward to nip him over one shoulder blade, making Sylar's breath catch and his uppermost arm reach back to grab Peter's ass, fingers digging in like talons. Peter growled and responded to the touch, rolling him over slightly and pushing into him harder and faster, opening him up and topping him more literally. Sylar's whole body was being jogged by the power Peter packed into those pumping buttocks. He could hear Peter's breathing speeding up and shivered to feel bites and kisses delivered along his back. That was new – and very, very arousing.

Also new was the hand Peter slid under his shirt and around his waist, hugging him close as he changed tempo to unremitting, hard grinding. Fingers sifted through his belly hair and drifted downward, leaving Sylar squirming in ambivalent uncertainty. Peter had never touched him before – not awake and purposefully. His purpose was undeniable now. Fingers breached his boxers, letting in a bit of cool air and a questing hand. Sylar quivered, muscles drawing and flexing involuntarily. What flimsy protection he had was being bypassed. He breathed more shallowly, pressing his forehead into the pillow.

"Easy, easy," Peter crooned against his skin, still shoving slowly against his rear, rubbing his own dick up and down the valley of Sylar's glutes. Peter's hand found Sylar's penis aching in unrelieved need. He hadn't orgasmed either time before. The first was brought to an early halt; the second Peter had bailed as soon as he'd finished. Not that Sylar had expected any attention. Even now, with Peter beginning to stroke up and down him, it seemed unbelievable. Sylar's eyelids fluttered with the sensation of a foreign touch handling him so intimately and carefully. It felt incredible. He wasn't being hurt, either. He'd never had this. Ever. He'd fucked, but his partners did not get off on giving him a hand-job and so he'd never gotten one. Does Peter get off on this?

If his sounds and the renewed mouthiness were any indication, the answer was yes. Peter surged against him in time with the tugging and squeezing of his prick. Sylar felt orgasm rising through him faster than he'd thought possible, Peter's mere touch driving him wild. Mouth wide, he felt his limbs stiffen as his breathing became gasps. Sensing it, Peter pressed into him harder, pushing him into the mattress as he humped on top of him, biting his back hard enough to make Sylar arch upwards. That was going to leave a mark. Sylar's only regret was that it would be difficult to see it later. It felt like fire and light was sparking through him all at once, coiling into his groin to hang there, burning in his nuts before finally gushing outward in release.

Sylar whimpered, feeling completely and utterly whipped, dominated, something. He brought me off. He … he brought me off. Him. He did it. He touched me. He did that … why? Oh my God. Why? Why would he? Does he care? He … His mind whirled, sluggish now as aftershocks spread through him, endorphins clouding his thinking. Peter hugged him close with one hand while his other had shifted from Sylar's dick to his own, working himself with short, hard jerks punctuated by unashamed noises of pleasure. A few moments later, there was more than precome wetting his back.

Peter didn't seem to care in the least about the grossness of that. He settled in next to Sylar's side, pulling up the long-since dislodged blankets, and wrapping himself around Sylar as much as possible. He gave tender pecks to the middle of Sylar's back, then rested his forehead against the spot. Sylar, mind spinning at how incomprehensibly well this had gone, didn't dare to move as the other man drifted back into slumber. Peter had gotten the message, all right.
Title: Not Quite a Smack
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Word count: 375
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar tries to land an air-kiss on Peter's hair and almost gets his ass kicked for it.

The kiss popped in the air, a good inch from Sylar's target – the back Peter's head. Not only did he miss, but his lips smacked a lot more than he'd intended, something that didn't go unheard only inches from Peter's ears. Sylar jerked back, but he wasn't fast enough to dodge when Peter spun and lashed out, grabbing the front of his shirt just under his collarbone. Sylar didn't bother trying to put his hands up to surrender or block. He never tried that and he wasn't sure why he didn't have that so-basic instinct – he just didn't. Instead, he stiffened and stood taller, eyes widening just a little as he waited for the blow to fall.

Peter had probably seen Sylar's fear response often enough now to read it, not that it mattered. No, there just weren't many good excuses for kissing at another guy's hair when he said something cute and adorable and completely unintentionally so. He assumed Peter would take it as mocking. Sylar sure as hell would, were their positions reversed, and a beat-down would just as certainly be on the menu. The hand tightened, Peter's other swung back in a fist for wind-up. Sylar saw it happening in slow motion, but instead of things speeding up as they usually did, they went the other direction to stop at a moment of immobility for both of them. Peter's eyes flitted back and forth between Sylar's. He looked uncertain. Sylar lifted his brows slightly and gave a very small, nervous smile.

Peter's grip shifted again. Here it comes – the smile was stupid. Now he's sure you were making fun of him. But instead of swinging the other fist, a finger – index or middle, hard to tell – scratched back and forth across the side of his chest next to where Peter still held his shirt with the rest of his grip. Sylar swallowed and blinked. What the hell?

He was released, and without the expected shove that would force him to catch his balance and express Peter's disgust with him. Peter whisked and stalked off, leaving Sylar standing there unharmed, touching his chest speculatively. A roguish grin split his face a moment later.
Bedding Down

Peter settled into bed. *Christmas Day. What a weird one.* It had been strange enough to mostly keep his mind off the underlying perversity of where, how, and who he was spending it with. His mind wasn't racing nervously, but it was still firing along at a waking pace, refusing to stop thinking about things, even while he knew he ought to sleep.

He turned his attention to a game he liked to play with himself, where he thought about what he'd do with a particular ability. Not that he constrained himself to realistic endeavors – it was just daydreaming and mind-play without any of the stodgy strategic planning his father would have approved of. No, this was 'staring out the window', 'head lost in the clouds', 'rose-colored glasses' dreaming that hooked up with Peter's love of heroes and the heroic. *What would I do if I could fly? What if I had super-strength? What if I could turn invisible?* He paused on that one, thinking it over. *I think I'd go stop terrorists from making dirty bombs and blowing up New York City. Because it would be terrorists and not people like me who'd be blowing the place up. I'd eavesdrop on their plans and follow them back to their secret lair in some closed-off subway tunnel, then I'd race back to tell the cops and even lead them there. Everyone would cheer because I'd been the one to- Wait, what was that?*

He listened. *Is Sylar choking out there?* Peter threw off the blankets and levered himself out of bed to check on his flatmate. He padded to the door, cracking it quietly. Outside, in the main part of the apartment, it was silent. *But, you know, if he's really choking, he wouldn't necessarily be making any noise. He's probably just having another bad dream.* He slowly swept open the door and snuck over to Sylar's, which stood ajar.

There was enough light filtering dimly through the windows from the starry sky outside that he could make out where Sylar lay and some of the details of his hunched posture. *Must have been a dream. But do I wake him if it's over now?* Just then, Sylar's shoulders shook and a choked-off sob escaped him – the same sound Peter had heard earlier. That the guy was trying to keep himself from making any noise tore at Peter's heart, not to mention the crying itself.

He knew what it was about. Yeah, it could have been because of a dream, but Peter knew it wasn't. He knew with perfect certainty that the quiet grieving was because he'd refused to sleep in the same room with Sylar. It was such a stupid thing for a sane, mature adult to be fixated on. Peter had trouble even figuring out why Sylar was so desirous of the proximity. Yeah, he'd been lonely and being alone was his biggest fear, but sleeping in different rooms was pretty normal behavior for people who could barely stand each other. It was amazing enough that Sylar had managed to maneuver Peter into sharing an apartment when he had the whole rest of the world to be in. Yet when Peter had resolutely stalked off to the other bedroom earlier that evening, he'd caught a little of Sylar's expression. That was why he was sure of why the man was crying now.

Peter didn't feel guilty about it; he didn't see that he'd done anything wrong in asserting his own boundaries. Sylar did not have a right to his presence, attention, or snores. Even if granting that last was harmless and free, it was still something of Peter's to grant or not. A lack of guilt didn't mean, though, that he was unmoved by the man's stifled weeping. Peter understood disappointment and the bitterness of having something you treasured and wanted and hoped for taken away. He understood the aching need in Sylar's heart for some proof the world had not abandoned him, especially during sleep - the most vulnerable and defenseless period a person inevitably had. Peter had slept in a chair next to Sylar's bed the night before, giving him something of what he wanted, but it had been too cramped for Peter to do it again.
He straightened from his stealthy skulking and walked to the bed, hearing the sudden hitching gasp when Sylar heard his approach. Utter silence reigned after that as Sylar held his breath. Peter sat on the edge of the bed, extending his right hand to touch the man on the left shoulder. "Hey," Peter said very softly, almost tenderly. Asking if he was okay was asinine. Asking why he was crying seemed similarly pointless – the reason was glaringly obvious. Peter sighed and rubbed gently, offering, "Do you want a hug?"

He suspected his tone of voice had a lot to do with Sylar's reaction. It was quiet and low, the same inflection a mother might use to tell a bedtime story to a beloved child. Sylar didn't answer, but he did start breathing again, then turned to look at Peter warily, his features lost in faint shadow from the windows. "Come here," Peter soothed. "It's okay."

Sylar swallowed noisily, shifted and sat up. He gave Peter an incredibly awkward, shallow hug, as if afraid of imposing too much. Peter snaked his arms around the man in a slow, steady fashion, feeling along for any sign that what he was doing was unwelcome. Sylar shuddered, but it was a strangled sob of relief and not rejection. Peter wrapped himself around him and hugged him tight, not letting go as seconds and then minutes floated by, measured out by the ticking clock on the night stand – something Peter had gotten him, the only gift that had been given. Maybe it was a house-warming present; maybe it was just a formality. Peter wasn't able yet to do more; Sylar was still too damaged to even recognize the small gesture. But they were getting there. Slowly, gradually, as the sniffling breaths returned to normal, Sylar let his hands inch around Peter's back until they crossed the spine heading in different directions, letting his long limbs settle into a mirror image of Peter's. Peter thought about how Sylar wasn't even sure how to hug.

Peter stroked up and down Sylar's back, gently comforting the man who had taken his brother such a short time before. Sylar's humanity and fragility showed itself in a multitude of ways. Peter couldn't ignore them, murderer or not. At long last, Sylar quietly and meekly laid his head on Peter's shoulder, letting the tension flow out of him. He was very warm, hot from getting worked up, and had that aroma of sleep and restfulness that Peter adored on people. "It's going to be okay, Sylar," he murmured. "It's going to be okay." Sylar sniffed again, giving him a squeeze and the slightest shake of his head. But he didn't actually disagree.

"You want me to sleep with you?" Peter offered spontaneously because it was his to offer. Sylar wasn't expecting or demanding that Peter be with him; he was just sad that he wasn't. And that – that, made Peter want to help.

Another noisy swallow, a shallow breath, and Sylar whispered, "Yes," like he couldn't believe it might happen.

"Kay," Peter said, ego immensely stroked by Sylar's astonishment. "I'll be right back," Peter murmured, getting to his feet and going for the pillows off the guest room bed. When he returned, Sylar had scooted over. Even in the darkness, Peter could see the man's eyes were wide. Another wave of gratification passed over him – Sylar's appreciation was profound and that was everything Peter wanted. He was being heroic, in such a small way, being cheered and applauded by a grateful audience.

He put the pillows between them, because yeah, he was going to sleep with Sylar, but he wasn't going to 'sleep with Sylar'. (Although he had to admit to himself that if the guy would be this thankful if Peter made love with him then … it would be a lot harder to resist than Peter had thought.) He bypassed the chair, slid under the covers, smiled gently in Sylar's direction, and said, "Good night."
"You hate me," Sylar said softly, but his tone told of the victory he found in those words. He was important, enough at least to have gained Peter's hatred – Peter, who tried to find the good in everyone. How ironic. All the more humorous that Peter now had to put up with him regardless.

Peter glowered up at him for a moment and Sylar had to steel himself from flinching. Not at the gaze – of course not – but the unnerving feeling that he was about to get hit again. But then Peter looked away, dropping his eyes to the materials he'd laid out on his leg. He picked up the tube of ointment and began to fidget with it, unscrewing the cap. His head made jerky motions as his eyes darted around guiltily. A smug smile curved Sylar's mouth and he settled back a little more, relaxing. Peter wouldn't be hitting him any time soon. No, Peter was too busy flogging himself.

Peter put down the tube and reached out to take Sylar's hand. Sylar indulgently allowed it, having the feeling that he was being served rather than assisted and that made all the difference. If Peter noticed, he didn't say anything.

"Yeah, I hate you." He was silent a moment, dutifully applying ointment like he wasn't caretaking on someone he'd just admitted to hating. Sylar found the man so confusing at times, but right at the moment he was pleased to let his hand rest on the brace on Peter's right hand while his left was busy tending him. Peter put down the ointment and picked up one of the bandages, continuing, muttering out loud as if to himself, "Kind of stupid, really. 'Hey, come help me save these people, and oh, by the way, I hate your guts.' Ha. Like that's going to work. Don't know what I was thinking. No, I know. I thought …" He sighed and sagged, head dropping a little more over his work, "I thought it didn't matter – how I felt. People's lives are worth a lot more than my feelings. I fuck things up. Should have brought … I don't know. Someone you might have listened to. Not me. Why would you?"

Sylar grinned, taking a sadistic pleasure in rubbing it in. "Don't beat yourself up too much, Peter. It's not like fate should have expected any better from you."

Peter glowered up at him again, but only for a second before looking back to apply the last bandage. "Thanks," he said dully. "You certainly know how to make it hurt."
"I think I prefer older women," Peter professed. "They're kind of like men in that they know what they want. I think I'd be lost in bed with someone who didn't know what they wanted." He looked over at Sylar, who was staring at him with a little too much rapt, fixated attention, like he was trying to burn this information into his definitely off-kilter brain. Sometimes Peter had the impression that Sylar thought Peter's ramblings would unlock some great secret of how to be normal, which Peter thought was a laugh if it were true.

Peter had noticed, of course, that Sylar seemed to enjoy simply listening to him. It was weird, but so was Sylar. Among the many things they could be doing and different ways they could be interacting, this one seemed pretty harmless. And Peter liked it. It was an ego-stroke. Every. Single. Damn. Time. He felt guilty for liking it so much. In fact, he liked it so much he didn't even mind when Sylar not-so-innocently steered the conversations in really odd, personal directions. Like tonight.

These weren't things Peter would have told anyone else, but Sylar already had Nathan's memories. Peter assumed this included the changing of diapers and embarrassing toddler experiences along with a host of dumb kid moments. While Sylar relentlessly dug at a side of Peter's life he'd never shared with Nathan, Peter was willing to share it because, seriously, the guy already had all the humiliating and incriminating data he needed. It wasn't like Peter was giving him any ammunition he didn't already have. And anyway, Sylar paid so much attention when he talked about this stuff. Even if Nathan's memories weren't in the mix, Peter might have blurted out all kinds of things just for the intent regard he got in reward.

Peter could have swore Sylar's eyes widened just a tiny bit as though he just now realized Peter might be waiting for some form of feedback. In reality, Peter was wondering what Sylar was going to do with a collection of information on Peter's opinions on sex (and yes, he knew that Sylar apparently had intentions that 'just talking' about it would not be the eventual extent of their interactions … Peter didn't particularly care about Sylar's plans - what happened would happen). Sylar swallowed, cleared his throat a little and offered, "Oh, yeah. I can totally understand that."

Peter looked away and chuckled, oddly tickled that Sylar was so into him. Or … maybe it wasn't so odd after all. Grinning warmly, the corners of his eyes crinkled deeply in genuine amusement and appreciation, he looked back at Sylar, whose eyes definitely widened at Peter's open, welcoming expression. Oh yeah. Sylar's always known what he wanted. Peter looked away again, his cheeks heating. He sighed happily, still pleased, still guilty, wondering how long it was going to take before what was going to happen … happened.
Chapter Summary

This was a spin-off of More Between Us, Chapter 27ish. For those not familiar with that story - Peter and Sylar had a bad fight and although Sylar mostly won, he was badly concussed as a result. Peter was slightly concussed, but relatively okay. When Peter got Sylar back to Sylar's apartment and tried to examine his injuries, Sylar became paranoid that Peter was using this as a pretext to molest or otherwise take advantage of him.

Peter wasn't making any sense. He just wasn't. Sylar suspected that even if he were at full capacity, he still wouldn't be able to make sense of Petrelli's actions. He could recall that they hadn't made sense before the concussion, either. And right now, at his diminished ability, there was just no way of figuring the man out. Assuming, even, that Peter wasn't deliberately trying to confuse him.

At the moment, Peter was running his hands through Sylar's hair under pretense of … something. Sylar wasn't sure what. He'd said he was doing an examination, checking for injuries or something. Wasn't it perfectly clear Sylar was fucked up? It wasn't a secret; it wasn't a mystery. Why did Peter feel the need to "check" this? But here Peter was, fingers now probing around the hematoma caused when the man had hit him in the skull (what was he thinking with such a stupid blow? Knowing Peter - probably not much of anything) the week before.

Peter moved on, feeling and actually rubbing slightly at the musculature at the base of his neck, making Sylar wonder for a second if he was going to give him a massage. No. Peter moved on to the front of his neck, murmuring, "I'll get you some Tiger Balm after we're done." Sylar breathed a little faster as his exposed throat was caressed. He raised his chin at Peter's unspoken command, a minor push on his jaw, feeling like an animal at a show. Directly fighting this was still an option, but for the moment Sylar was playing for time, hoping he'd uncover motives and intentions. Peter found his pulse point with uncomfortably practiced ease, then grimaced at the non-functional watch he wore. He looked over at one of Sylar's many clocks, keeping time.

They sat there for long seconds while Sylar looked down on Peter through narrowed eyes. Maybe Peter had a doctor kink he wanted to play out. Maybe he wanted to know exactly how bad he'd hurt Sylar so he could gloat over the injuries, or so that if and when they fought again, Peter would know the weak spots to aim for. Maybe he thought Sylar was too weakened to resist him and this was Peter's way of pushing him around, getting off on Sylar's obedience and subservience under the guise of 'medical care'. Sylar's mind, sluggish as it was, continued to struggle through the options as Peter finished with his pulse and told him, "That's good. Real strong pulse. Let's get your shirt off."

Ah, yes. Disrobing. Take your clothes off and put on this gown. Turn around and cough. Whatever. So this is it, then? This is your pretext to getting me naked and even more defenseless than I already am?

"Come on, Sylar. I need to look at you."

Apparently just sitting there staring at Petrelli wasn't going to work. Sylar let his eyes wander across the floor and very slowly raised his hands to the buttons, mostly to make sure Peter didn't do it himself. Sylar sized himself up. He was concussed, easily confused, and had horrible balance. He was still strong, though, and coordinated enough to throw punches. So was Peter, and even if Peter
was handicapped by a broken hand, that was more than compensated by his superior balance, reflexes and mobility. Plus, annoying and disheartening as it was to admit, Peter had him firmly on reasoning and cognitive ability at the moment, so trying to pull something sneaky on him probably wouldn't work.

One button after another was unfastened. All Peter needed to do was land one or two hard blows to Sylar's head and that would be all she wrote, upgrading his moderate concussion to severe or worse yet, to death. With some people, Sylar would have expected that knowing this about his state, they would go out of their way to avoid actually killing him. Peter was not 'some people'. It seemed very likely, given Petrelli's conduct in the last two fights, and his somewhat fogged recollections of previous ones - whether as Nathan or Sylar he didn't know or care at the moment - that once Peter got going in a fight, that death blows were the order of business if he could land them. It was a stupid, idiotic tactic to take, but this was Peter.

Sylar parted his shirt and stiffly shrugged it off his shoulders, sliding it down his arms. He tried to do this part fast, because otherwise he'd be a sitting duck in front of Peter, hands tied up behind him. He pulled. He tugged. The cloth tightened around his wrists, bunched and wouldn't let go. He considered panicking, jerking and fighting free. His eyes widened for a moment and he stared at Peter, who was watching him calmly. Peter smirked a little, realizing the problem.

Yes, the problem is I have a fucking concussion and I didn't think to unbutton my cuffs first. I am so fucked up I can't even outthink my own shirt. There is no way I can fight Peter. All I have to do is survive this. Just do whatever I need to do to survive.

Sylar surrendered, leaning forward, panting from the brief surge of fear at being trapped, and because his sinuses were hopelessly clogged. His hair fell across his face and he looked up at Peter through it, putting as much vulnerability as possible in his features. Peter noticed. His face changed; he smiled nervously. Sylar rasped out, "I'll do whatever you need me to do, Peter."

Peter's brows raised just slightly. He didn't miss the invitation, the offer, the unconditional nature of what Sylar was putting on the table. Complete compliance would, Sylar hoped, minimize how much he was hurt, at least physically. Peter would not need to beat him or threaten him to get whatever it was Peter wanted. And maybe if he made the offer this baldly, Peter would finally clear up what, exactly, his intentions were.

"What … um …" Peter touched the bare point of his shoulder and Sylar dropped his head and his gaze. His hands were bound helplessly behind him. He sat before Peter, defeated by his own clothing. It was humiliating. Peter gave him a nudge. "Turn around and I'll help you out."

Tie me up tighter, no doubt, Sylar thought as he shifted and turned obediently, presenting his hands to his captor. As he expected, Peter didn't immediately move to release him. Instead, he twitched the cloth down and looked at Sylar's back. But then, surprisingly, he moved his hands to Sylar's wrists and started fumbling at them. Mostly one-handed as he was, it wasn't all that easy. "You have a pretty big bruise back here," Peter observed. "What's that from?"

Sylar took a deep breath and lowered his voice to a husky, velvet tone that intentionally conveyed a lot of things so far left unsaid between them. "You pushed me down on the bed, climbed on top of me and straddled me. Don't tell me you've forgotten?"

Peter was silent, working off one of the cuffs and then pushing the sleeve up so he could get at the other, even though he could have left the task to Sylar. "I didn't know it bruised you up so bad." His voice was a little tight, but with an effort towards being normal. Certainly he wasn't responding to the obvious invitation in Sylar's tone and so Sylar dropped it for the moment. Peter got the rest of his shirt off and distracted Sylar completely by moving his fingers down Sylar's spine, touching and
seeming to measure out the spaces between vertebrae. The sensation gave Sylar a shiver and he didn't bother to suppress it. *Let Peter see the effect he's having.*

Peter, for his part, was shocked at the size and discoloration of the bruise, but he recalled walking out to see Sylar stretching shortly after their first fight. He didn't think there was a broken rib and it was just a little too high to have hurt the kidney. He was pretty sure it was just a bad bruise. "I'm going to feel along your ribs, here." He traced the ones well above the injury, applying enough pressure to get a feel for how undamaged tissue responded - how much flex there was in the cartilage and how giving the muscle was. Sylar had excellent muscle tone. He dropped down to the next rib and repeated, skirting the edge of the blue-black skin and paying careful attention to Sylar's breathing as an indicator of pain. There was no change.

The next one down caused a more rapid intake of air than before. "Does that hurt sharply," Peter asked, "or is it just sore?"

Sylar hesitated, not sure what answer 'Dr. Petrelli' wanted. Peter repeated the touch, probing at him again as if he might need a repeat of the pain to better judge it, or maybe just motivation to answer. "It's mostly just sore," he said quietly, straining to tell if that was the answer Peter wanted.

Peter moved down without comment to the next one, which was also sore as hell, and used a similar pressure as before. "Is this the same, worse or better?"

Sylar considered Peter's voice - it was just the same, no more brusque or demanding, just asking. His touch was no rougher or harder, so Sylar guessed he was giving the right answer, or at least an acceptable one. "It's the same."

"Okay. I don't think there's anything broken, but it's something to think about for how you lie."

*You mean what position you put me in to service you?* Sylar didn't say that though. He knew his back hurt when he laid on it, but like hell was he going to lie on his stomach with Peter around. It would take that second or two extra to get up, or to even see the guy coming. Though now that he thought about it, maybe lying on his side would be okay.

"Go ahead and turn around so I can see your front." Peter pulled the shirt out of the way and tossed it on the chair.

Sylar's eyes looked after it. That was unsurprising, that Peter was putting his clothes where he couldn't get to them. He straightened so Peter could see what he was getting.

"Yeah, that's what I wanted to see," Peter murmured, which snapped Sylar's eyes rather painfully back to him. Peter was staring at the bruise and rash on his lower abdomen. About half of it was under his pants. And his underwear.

*An excellent pretext to have me undress - this 'examination' thing. I'll have to remember it for the next time you're hurt worse than I am, Petrelli.*

"Lie down, please," Peter said and Sylar complied, making himself as comfortable as he could. He felt very exposed - not as much as he expected to be later, though, so for now he just swallowed it down and put on a show of being unbothered. "How are your hands?" Peter asked.

"I thought what you wanted to see was a bit lower," Sylar purred. Peter glanced up at him, expression flat. Sylar quietly and lightly bit his tongue. *Wrong thing to say. He doesn't like that. I'm not doing right. If I don't want to be hurt, I have to do right. What does he want? For me to be totally passive?* He tried to think of the times when he'd gotten to Peter, when Peter had looked interested or
aroused, and correlate them with how active or passive Sylar had been at the time. His brain hurt too much for it. And Peter was talking to him anyway, which was distracting.

"I'm concerned about your stomach, yeah, but I don't want to get tunnel vision or I'll miss things like that bruise on your back. Your gut's not going anywhere. I want to check everything. How are your hands?"

Oh, everything. Sure, Dr. Petrelli. Prostate exam included in that full check-up? I promise you that I am fully functional. He didn't answer Peter's question, letting Peter pick up his hand and examine it, beginning to peel off the bandaging.

Peter spoke instead, saying, "From what I've seen you have full mobility. I'm going to take off the tape and stuff. If it's all scabbed up and sealed, then I'm going to leave them off. You're not doing anything to get your hands dirty, and they'll heal faster in the open air anyway."

Is that code for 'don't touch me, let me do all the touching'? I wish he'd just come out and say what he wants! Why does he do this and then get mad when I don't respond like he wants? It's … Peter didn't seem mad. Maybe I am doing what he wants? "Okay," he said, since it seemed like he should contribute something to the conversation. Peter had moved on to his other hand and was repeating the process of whatever it was he was doing. Sylar's back felt warm on the couch. It was nice just lying there, having someone play with his hands, touching them, tugging at them, turning them this way and that, doing whatever. He zoned out.

If Peter had stuck to fondling his hands, Sylar might have truly slipped off to sleep. But that wasn't Peter's script. Next thing Sylar knew, Peter was slipping his hand up Sylar's forearm and cupping his elbow, which startled him to more wakefulness than he wanted. He jumped and took a moment to orient himself, reviewing recent events and figuring out why he was lying on a couch shirtless with Peter Petrelli feeling up his arms.

Speaking of which, Peter rotated his forearm up and down, testing range of motion, Sylar assumed. He tried to relax again and get back into the compliant frame of mind that he suspected he needed to get through this. Peter probed at the back of his elbow. "Does this hurt?"

Peter moved his arm again and it did hurt where he was pressing, but once more Sylar was faced with the dilemma of what to say. This would be a lot easier if he knew what answer Peter wanted. "Uh … yes?"

Peter nodded and moved to the other arm, repeating the process and the question. "How about this?" But this time, even though his fingers were in the same place, he wasn't putting any pressure on it. It didn't hurt.

Sylar kept his face the same, realizing Peter was tricking him, or testing him. "No, that doesn't hurt at all," he said, letting his voice show an element of wonder. Peter nodded and Sylar could see he'd passed the test. It put him on guard. So he doesn't want a yes or no, but the truth? That's … strange. Why doesn't he already know what answer he wants?

Peter said, "That's just normal hyperextension of the joint after a fist fight. I've got it, too. It's not a big deal." He moved his hands to the center of Sylar's chest, feeling down the sternum, noting Sylar's intake of breath and then holding it tensely as Peter checked. "Everything seems firmly attached," he murmured, turning his head now to look at Sylar's face. Sylar started breathing again. Peter put his hands over the upper left quadrant of Sylar's abdomen, palpating carefully. He took his eyes away just long enough to shift down to lower left quadrant, then looked back to Sylar's face as he repeated.

Sylar wasn't sure what Peter was doing looking at him so much all of a sudden. He was squishing
around on his gut - which was pretty rude, but Peter hadn't asked and probably didn't care. Sylar hoped his internals were up to par. A prostate exam looked a lot more likely, even if it was stupid given his lack of injury to said area. But then, it's not about that, is it?

Peter shifted to the upper right of his stomach, feeling around thoroughly while watching Sylar's face like a hawk. Sylar frowned at the scrutiny. Peter's hands went to lower right, over the deep bruising and Sylar's eyes twitched and face stiffened. He saw in an instant how Peter's eyes darted around his features and Peter's touch lightened. That was Sylar's answer for what Peter had been looking for - any indication of pain or discomfort and he'd gotten it where he expected, but he'd also gotten a confirmation that there was none anywhere else.

"Tell me," Peter asked, "is this sharp pain or dull pain?"

"Dull," Sylar answered honestly. It felt like Peter was poking him with a single finger. He looked down to see it was actually three held close together. *I wonder if that's how he puts his hand when he puts it into someone else's* … Sylar jerked his thoughts away from that. Besides, Peter was repeating his question and moving his hand around, apparently feeling his way through all the organs that might lie under the area of bruising. Sylar reported to him a string of "dull"s until Peter seemed satisfied.

"All done?" Sylar asked as Peter straightened from where he'd been half-squatting next to the couch. *That has to be a really uncomfortable way to sit.* He watched as Peter grimaced, stood and stretched, confirming it. *Why would he do that? Why not just make me be the one in the uncomfortable position?*

"No. I need your pants off. I want to check the stability of your hips, look at your leg, and make sure I'm not missing anything."

"Er …* Sylar's mind locked up at the plethora of possible innuendo in that so-innocently-delivered sentence. "'Kay," Sylar said eventually, unzipping his pants, reminding himself that he was in no position to fight and Peter had proven that he was very determined about this, even if Sylar still hadn't worked out why. He pushed down his jeans a little, looking up at Peter with an open, guileless expression. "My underwear, too?"

Peter was looking at Sylar's feet and said distractedly, "No. I can just pull them aside a little for the hip. Do you have any other injuries there?"

Sylar wondered what he was supposed to answer to that. *Is that an invitation? Is he feeling out how cooperative I am? I'm being real cooperative. That's me - cooperative, passive patient; good patient; doing whatever Dr. Petrelli wants. Wouldn't want to make him hurt me. I might have to slap him with a malpractice suit and no one wants that.* "Um … you might need to check?" He pushed his pants down, leaving his underwear up.

Peter glanced back at him, wearing not the happiest of expressions.

*He doesn't want to see me,* Sylar thought. *Maybe he thinks I'm dirty or malformed?* His head hurt. *No … I just don't know what he thinks. Fine. I give up. Do what you want to me, Peter, because you're going to anyway.* Peter had taken a seat at the other end of the couch, derailing his thoughts. Peter was messing with his feet, taking off his shoes. Belatedly, Sylar realized he'd been in the process of repeating the same screw-up as with the shirt, pushing his pants down without taking his shoes off first would only result in said pants getting tangled around his ankles. Not as big a deal lying down as standing up, but apparently Peter wanted them all the way off.

Peter unlaced his shoes and slipped them off, then looked back and forth between his feet. They
were big feet. Sylar felt self-conscious about them. Peter hovered his hand over one and then the other, over the toes. He had sensed something, with whatever weird paramedic-sense he possessed. Brows pulled together, Peter began to feel of his toes.

Sylar twitched his foot out of Peter's grip. He'd forgotten about his stubbed toes. Peter reached slowly for the foot and pulled it back. Sylar shut his eyes and submitted, teeth locked as tightly as he could manage without making his head ache.

"What happened to your foot?" Peter asked, carefully rolling the sock off.

"I kicked a file cabinet." He couldn't remember why, exactly. It had something to do with Peter being an insufferable prick, he was sure, but the specifics eluded him. Luckily, Peter didn't ask any more about that.

Instead, Peter asked, "Do you think anything's broken here? Looks painful."

"I don't think anything is broken." Yes, of course it hurts, you dumbass! I kicked a fucking file cabinet! He scowled down the length of his body at Peter, who looked up at him a few times, but mostly examined his foot. It had to stink, but Peter didn't seem to care. It wasn't like the rest of Sylar probably smelled all that rosy. Peter moved one toe, then the next, feeling along them for angularity or deformation. Sylar sighed. Other than the occasional discomfort, the touching was nice and Peter was clearly being very careful. Just as clearly, he was going to do it whether Sylar wanted him to or not. This has got to be the weirdest foreplay on the planet.

Investigation done, Peter turned to the other foot. "How's the other foot?"

"Fine," Sylar said in a bored tone.

Peter checked it anyway, then pulled off Sylar's pants. Sylar suppressed an urge to cover himself or make more of an issue of his near-nakedness than he did. He watched Peter apprehensively, waiting for it (whatever it was) to happen. Surely it would be soon, right?

Peter went over his calves with a quick sweep, felt up his knees and looked at his good thigh. Then he looked at the one where Peter had tried to kneecap him, and had instead ended up kicking him really solidly in the muscle of his upper leg. Peter sighed and silently probed around at the swollen, discolored flesh, trying to discern exactly which muscles were affected. That would tell him how much of Sylar's limping was due to balance issues (though he now also had the toes to factor in) and how much due to concussion. When he was done, Peter tugged out the blanket Sylar had used earlier and covered his legs with it.

Considerate of him, Sylar thought, watching as Peter moved his area of interest to Sylar's groin. Whoa. Sylar's breathing sped up. Remarkably, he'd actually calmed down a lot while Peter was focused on his feet and legs. It was almost like this was a true and real physical exam, without any undertones or subtext.

Peter looked up at his face and said, "I'm going to put my hands on either of your hips and push a little. You might feel a little pressure. Let me know immediately if it hurts."

"Hip stability', he said. Like whether or not I'm safe to fuck? Then wouldn't he want my underwear off?

Peter did exactly what he'd said he'd do, his hands fitting around Sylar's hips and gripping him firmly in a way that made it impossible for Sylar to avoid thinking of Peter doing that while engaged in more … penetrative … activities. Then Peter looked up at him intently just like he had when feeling
about on his stomach. Sylar decided to let his feelings show - maybe that would help - vulnerable, uncertain, scared, and kind of turned on because hey, he'd never had anyone grab him there … like that. Peter squeezed and pressed, then rocked his hips to one side, then the other, all while looking at Sylar's face, right into his eyes.

*Jesus, Peter. How am I not supposed to think of sex at a time like this?*

Peter, though, let go. "That didn't hurt?" he asked, all-business.

"No," Sylar answered, his voice small.

Peter nodded and slipped a finger under Sylar's waistband, making him jump. "I'm going to pull this aside and look at your hip. There's an abrasion that goes under your underwear. I need to make sure it didn't break the skin."

*Now! Now it's going to happen!* Sylar nodded too fast and held perfectly still as another man pulled his underwear down and to the side. He swallowed and his hands made fists on the couch cushions as he felt Peter's finger, hooked under the fabric, dig into his pubic hair. *Oh my God, he's touching me!* Not his penis itself, but … it was definitely in that area. Peter's hand was in that area. Sylar felt like he was about to crawl out of his skin, breathing hard and fast while Peter just … looked at his hip. Like it was no big deal. Sylar noted that Peter gave one deviation to that as his eyes glanced up to take in Sylar's white-knuckled grip on the cushion, but that was it.

Peter moved Sylar's clothes, such as they were, back to rights and pulled the blanket the rest of the way over him. He said, "Tell me where you keep your clean clothes and I'll get you a new set."

"That's … all?"

Peter looked down at Sylar with an expression of warmth and sympathy that Sylar didn't like. "Yeah, pretty much." Peter's expression went back to normal for him and he repeated, "Tell me where your other clothes are," as he moved off towards the obvious areas to look near Sylar's bed. "We'll get some Tiger Balm on you before you get dressed, but I don't see any problems you have that I can do much about directly. You need bed rest; you're getting it. You need constant supervision; you're getting it."

Peter found Sylar's boxes of extra clothes without assistance, picking out what he needed. He brought them over and set them on the chair, dragging over the first aid tote next. He produced the mentioned warming product for strains and sprains. Sylar took it from him, regretting it a moment later because that left it to him to smear it across his skin. *I probably could have gotten him to do it. Seriously, though, that's everything? Not even going to feel me up and … whatever else, while he has the chance?*

Peter remained at his side to make sure Sylar stayed on task enough to get the tiger balm on the affected parts. Then he wandered off to the kitchen so Sylar could dress in 'privacy'. Sylar almost didn't want to bother. He was tired. All the stress and excitement had worn him out. He was confused. After all that build-up, nothing had happened. Despite being a Petrelli, Peter didn't seem inclined to go through all that just for a mind-fuck. All Sylar was sure of was that Peter still didn't make a lick of sense.
"I wouldn't mind waking up next to you for the rest of my life," Sylar said, voice raw and unguarded.

Peter blinked, lifting his eyes from where he'd been watching his hand idly stroke Sylar's forearm. They'd both woke a few minutes before, but neither was in any hurry to leave the bed. Peter looked at the other man, considering what it might be like to be able to rely on someone to be at his side for that long. What devotion that took, and Peter didn't doubt for a second that Sylar meant it as completely as it sounded.

"I'd like that," Peter whispered in reply, chest tightenning as he realized how much what Sylar had said sounded like a proposal and how much his answer, like acceptance. Sylar obviously heard it the same. Eyes watering, Peter scooted over and drew the man to him. The happy embrace seemed to go on forever.
"Don't worry yourself too much about it, Sweetie."

Peter rolled his eyes and sighed. The endearments had become a staple of Sylar's recent language. "Don't call me names when you don't mean it."

He felt Sylar's full attention fix on him, but Peter looked away. A head tilt later, Sylar asked, "When I don't mean it?"

"Yes. Don't call me names."

"Unless I mean them."

Peter turned, fists balling up for a fight he didn't want. "Yes. You're not my sweetie."

Peter couldn't tell if he was joking or not when Sylar responded with: "That doesn't mean you're not mine."

Peter sputtered. "I'm not yours! I'm not your anything!"

Sylar gave a deep, velvety chuckle. He'd expected nothing less than complete rejection, but it still stung. His manner of showing it was to up the ante, moving to loom over Peter. "Yes, you are. You're my enemy. You're my …" His eyes stroked up and down Peter's form suggestively, "companion. I get to think of you whatever way I want and there's nothing you can do about it." His lips mimed a kiss before he said, "Sweetie."

Well, it had been a while since he'd been socked in the face.
Peter danced back and forth, displaying some pretty good footwork as he punched and jabbed playfully at Sylar's arms and chest. "Come on! Fight me!"

Sylar drew himself up. Cool, disinterested-looking eyes regarded his antagonist from the elevation, keeping close watch. He knew guys mock-fought a lot. It was a sign of affectionate approval, but he wasn't sure how to reciprocate without getting hurt.

"Fine." Peter stopped, shoulders slumping, and turned away to sulk. "You're no fu-" Sylar whapped him on the back of the head, lightning-quick.

Peter made a surprised cry and wheeled, jumping directly at Sylar so unexpectedly that the taller man could do nothing about being tackled (painfully) to the ground. Air driven out of him, he was powerless as Peter scrambled up, straddled him, and grabbed his throat with an exultant grin.

Sylar slapped a hand over Peter's wrist and froze there, because Peter wasn't choking him. And in fact, as the shock cleared from his brain, he realized this was incredibly sexy – Peter crouching above him, groin inches from his own, panting and flushed from the sudden assault, while Sylar still had adrenaline coursing through him and making everything super-sharp. A faltering, uncertain expression graced Peter's face. Sylar slowly rubbed the wrist in his hand, keeping his features neutral. He hoped Peter wouldn't decide the best way to show this wasn't the rough foreplay it looked like was to move things along to bloody violence.

A half-smile bloomed, then shuttered, then bloomed again on Peter's face. He blushed, stammered something unintelligible, and tugged his hand away, swinging himself up to his feet. He reached down to help Sylar stand, bringing him up, whether intentionally or not, a bit too close to himself. Sylar could have put his arms around him in embrace without either of them having to take a step. Peter's eyes rested on Sylar's lips for a very long beat, before Peter rolled his shoulders and inhaled deeply. "Maybe we can spar some other time." Peter reached out and slapped him on the outside of his shoulder as he moved away.

"I'd love to." Getting hurt looked like it might be worth it.
What I Like About You

Chapter Summary

This isn't a story so much as a list – five points for each of them.

Peter's turn

Sylar was hot. Peter felt horrible for that being the first reason, but he was very human and no one with eyes and an appreciation for the male form could see Sylar and overlook the fact that he was scorching. While Peter prided himself on seeing the inside of a person as well as the out, that didn't mean, at all, that he was blind to that outside. Eyes, mouth, strong features without being too rugged, hair (glorious hair, all over), lean, strong, tough, healthy, athletic … oh yes!

He wanted to make Peter happy. Again, Peter wanted to crawl under a rock for how selfish his reasons were. But to have a partner who idolized him? Swoon! He wanted to be looked up to, seen as a hero, appreciated and understood. Or at least appreciated. No kind word or gesture to Sylar went unnoticed and the guy was grateful for every one. Peter suspected that was deeply unhealthy of Sylar (or at least a powerful marker of the effects of past trauma still lingering in the present), but it attracted Peter like a moth to flame.

He needed Peter's help. Peter liked to pretend this was his big, unselfish reason, but deep inside, he knew he wanted the ego boost of knowing he had done something good for someone. It validated him to see people benefit from his efforts. And Sylar – Sylar needed a lot of effort. Peter knew it wouldn't be easy; he didn't want it to be easy. He wanted to be the one who had confounded everyone's expectations by helping someone no one else would bother with. He wanted people to look at what he was doing and talk about how noble he was – and not because it just looked noble, but because it was. Peter wanted to be able to wake up in the morning and feel good about what he was doing in the world. He wanted there to be at least one person whom he made a difference to, every day.

Sylar wanted to be with Peter. For some reason – hero worship, Nathan, self-defense, wanting to be a Petrelli-by-proxy, the most special, whatever – Sylar wanted to be in Peter's life and for Peter to be in his. And he was obviously willing to put up with a lot of shit to have that. Which was good, because Peter was aware he was, in his own way, very high maintenance. He was driven, prone to tunnel-vision, not a good team player, aggressive, moody, reactionary, fiery, abrupt … yeah, Peter was at times hyper-aware of his own flaws, but that didn't stop him from having them. They'd driven away so many potential lovers over the years. He was so grateful to have found someone who didn't act like they'd leave him as soon as the slightest other thing in their life changed.

Speaking of change, Sylar was willing to. Not only willing, but Sylar wanted to change who he was. In that thirst for self-empowerment, Peter saw an echo of his own overpowering drive to be what other people wanted. He knew that desperation to be found worthy, an inadequacy so deep that you were willing to sacrifice your very life to live up to the standards of others, to win fifteen minutes, not of fame, but of approval. Except Sylar did Peter one better and was willing to lose his soul for it.

And he had, which was why he needed so much help. No one else in Peter's life had ever bothered
to be a better person. When confronted with adversity, Nathan, Angela, Arthur, all of them and more, had simply doubled-down on being villains. Sylar was trying to be something else and Peter wanted to be right there supporting him in it.

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**Sylar's turn**

Peter was kind. He was generous with attention and loving in his manner. He didn't stint on physical affection; he was a good lover. He was (usually) patient and tried to understand. He went out of his way to make sure Sylar enjoyed most of their interactions and that Sylar had what Peter thought he needed to thrive. Peter wasn't always correct in this, but his heart was in the right place and that was what Sylar valued the most.

Peter was true. He was honest and didn't try to deceive. He wore his heart on his sleeve. He wasn't trying to manipulate Sylar for his own ends and in fact, the idea never seemed to occur to Peter. Sure, Peter was fine with trying to get Sylar to do things for himself or for others, but when he did, he would just ask. It was always right out in the open and never the sort of thing where Sylar would do something and later discover Peter had arranged it so he'd gain some secret benefit.

Peter was … interesting. He was emotional. He was impetuous. He was complex and yet simple. He had dumb ideas and sometimes brilliant ones and he was perfectly willing to blurt them out (at least to Sylar; he tended to keep his mouth shut around people he didn't trust, which made Sylar so pleased that he was in Peter's inner circle). He was playful and childish at times in ways Sylar envied but felt he could never do himself. He was sensitive for all his obliviousness. Sylar liked that Peter was so easy to provoke or soothe, to turn this way and that to get the reaction he desired. He liked that Peter was reliable in his responses, yet not predictable, if you could see the difference.

Peter was respectable. He was from a good family, or at least one with a good name. If Virginia had been alive, and she hadn't died of shock at Sylar's lover being a man, then she would have been thrilled to have Peter as a son-in-law. His family was rich and high status, politicians and lawyers! He was handsome (which would have mattered a lot to Virginia, although to Sylar it was just a nice benefit). He was polite and could be proper when necessary. He was even visibly compassionate as a nurse and paramedic. Oh yes, Virginia would be ecstatic that her Gabriel had landed such a prize. He might have finally done something good enough for her.

Peter didn't seem to mind him too much and was willing to put up with living with him. He'd carved out a space in his life for Sylar to fit into, even taking him as a lover. Amazingly, he seemed satisfied with Sylar as a person, even if he objected at times to various behaviors. Behaviors could be fixed, Sylar knew (not that he always bothered, and sometimes it was more fun to watch Peter jump around in agitation). He had the feeling Peter wasn't going to turn on him some day and declare him a monster. (Now, he might come after him for something he did, but that was different.) It was … Damn! It was as if Peter actually liked him.
"What is a stock?"

Peter blinked at him from across the small table in the ice cream parlor. A waffle cone of green, pistachio-almond ice cream was in one hand. "Where'd that come from?"

"You said in that dream you recounted yesterday that you told Charles you knew how to pick a stock. So … what is a stock?" Sylar had a bowl before him with a small scoop of orange sherbet and a matching scoop of vanilla. He had been methodically taking a spoonful of one and then the other, intermittently watching how Peter used his tongue on his cone. Talking would draw out the process.

Peter's brows drew together in puzzlement. "Nathan didn't know?"

Sylar paused in the middle of acquiring another spoonful of vanilla. "I get to talk about what Nathan knew?"

"Uh ..."

Sylar shrugged and jumped in with an answer before Peter retracted the implied permission. "He joined the Navy, went to law school, started a family, and went into politics. He never had to think about money. His parents bankrolled him, bought his house and car for him, everything. As long as he did what he was told, money would never be an object for him." Sylar huffed slightly. "I'm not Nathan. Money matters. What's a stock?" He ate his latest spoonful, pinning Peter down with his gaze.

"Okay." Peter took a few more licks of his cone and ordered his thoughts. "A stock is a share of company. Like … a person has a business, selling flowers or pizza or making cars, and they want more money to expand their business or maybe they're just selling it so they can retire. They'll offer it for public sale through a financial institution, offering people shares of it, like percentages of the value of the company."
"So that's what the '51% ownership' stuff I've heard about means? That they sell 49% of the company and keep 51% for themselves?"

"Exactly. That's if they want to keep running the company. And people buy it because they think the company will be worth more in the future. So they buy a thousand dollars worth of the flower shop thinking that after the owner (who after selling shares is called the president because he's no longer the sole owner) expands the company, then their thousand dollar share will be worth two thousand dollars."

"Shares are all equal?"

"They're all equal in the same company, but as far as the shares of one company versus the value of shares of a different company go, those are always different. Because shares can be resold later, if you want your money back or you decide to invest somewhere else, you'll offer your share for sale and it sells for whatever other people are willing to pay for it." Peter paused to swipe off the melting skein of green ice cream from the bottom of his cone. "That might be less than you bought it for, but hopefully it's more. And whatever the current market rate is for your share indicates the average market rate for everyone else's shares of the same company."

"So they're … tokens … in representation of money."

"In representation of portions of ownership of companies, who are hopefully doing things that make money. Picking a stock means trying to guess which companies are going to do well and be worth more tomorrow or next year or ten years from now, and avoiding companies that are going to do badly because their management sucks, or they're in a sector of the economy that isn't going to do well."

"You know a lot about this." Sylar leaned forward and put down his spoon, intent and fascinated. "I've heard them on the news make stock reports about the Dow Jones and S&P 500. What are those? They aren't companies, are they?"

"No, the things they're reporting on aren't companies. They're indexes. An index is an attempt to figure out which direction the economy is going, how the average business is doing in a certain field of business. So people pick a certain number of companies, like for the S&P (that's Standard and Poor's, by the way), they pick five hundred companies they think represent the economy, then they add together the dollar value of a percentage worth of each business, and the sum of all five hundred is a number they call the S&P 500. Then they track how that value changes, up and down, and announce it as a sort of barometer of how the economy is doing."

"And the same for the Dow Jones?"

"Yeah, but there's a bunch of different Dow Jones indexes. I think it's the industrial one that gets all the press, but I might be wrong. Companies like Sears and … uh, Ford and 3M and stuff are in it. Every now and then the people at Dow Jones decide that a particular company no longer represents the market share they picked it for and they'll delist it and pick something else. Like maybe Wal-Mart's on there now instead of Sears. I don't know."

"But following one of these indexes doesn't tell you how your particular company is doing, does it?"

"No." Peter made a round of nibbling out all the exposed nuts from his ice cream. Sylar took a bite of his own to pass the time, waiting for Peter's eventual continuation. "Most people don't buy shares of individual companies, because that's really risky. If the company gets a bad manager or they have a fire or get sued, then you'll lose all your money. So most of the money that gets invested gets invested in money market funds."
Sylar's brows twitched upwards and he gestured for Peter to continue, a warm, growing smile on his face at having unexpectedly discovered some gem like this within his companion. It was better than watching him lick frozen dairy products!

"A mutual fund is where they take your money and pool it with money from other investors, and then use that pool of money to buy … well, like they'd take the S&P 500 and buy one share of each company on it. Or maybe they buy a thousand dollars worth of each company. I'm not sure about the details, but you get the point?" Sylar nodded. "So that way, risk is spread out over a bunch of companies. If the economy goes up, your fund value goes up, too."

"But you don't get any of that increase unless you sell your stocks, right?"

"Sort of." Peter made an ambivalent shrug and head tilt, with something of a wince on his face. "You see, if you invest a thousand dollars and after a year it's worth twelve hundred, you could sell it all and have twelve hundred dollars. Then you could turn right back around and buy another thousand dollars worth of the same fund or stock, and you'd have the two hundred dollars leftover to invest somewhere else. Or go out to dinner or whatever."

"You have to pay taxes on it, right? Because that's income? Is that why people don't sell it and just keep cash all the time?"

"No, not exactly." Peter gave another uncertain roll of his shoulders and facial tic. "You see, the theory is that to have that thousand dollars to invest, you had to earn it somehow and you paid income taxes on it then. So like if you went out and earned a thousand dollars, you'd have to pay two or three hundred of that in taxes. If you decided to invest what was leftover, then you've already paid your dues. There's still capital gains taxes, which you have to pay if you cash out, but there's a lot of ways to get around that."

Sylar studied Peter's face. He'd seen that expression before. Peter did not approve of something. "So what's wrong with it?" He had to wait through another round of licking and nut-nibbling, beginning to wish he'd picked a time when Peter wasn't doing something so distracting to have this conversation. On the good side, Peter was nearly done.

"Most of the money that's out there being invested isn't 'earned'. No one had to go out and work for it, so taxes were never paid on it. Not that I think people should have to pay taxes, but it supports the public good and everyone who has a lot of wealth manages to avoid doing that through this whole investment loophole."

"If the money isn't earned, then how do they …?"

"The usual way is inheriting it. Look at Nathan. Or me. But let's go back to that issue of investing a thousand dollars – which maybe was earned normally through work, sure – and getting twelve hundred back. You re-invest that thousand and now you have two hundred dollars of untaxed profit. Or if it is taxed, it's more like a few percent than twenty or thirty. But there's ways around that and reinvestment is one of them. Pretty soon, you have a lot of money that was never earned at all. At least not the way most people think of 'earned'."

"But you're still having to leave it invested in all these companies, so it's money you can't use, right?"

Peter chuckled and started in on eating off the edges of the waffle cone along with bites of softened ice cream. "Yeah, but, you know, you can invest it in a company whose job is to pay you a salary and buy you a house."

"You can?"
Peter laughed now, gesturing jauntily with what was left of his cone. "I don't know, but what I do know is that there's a whole lot of dodges and loopholes. The reason why people with any wealth do this sort of stuff is because it pays off. It's unfair. It's the people who happen to have more, due to birth or accident, using their power to aggrandize and profit themselves, refusing to help others."

"Maybe they just picked good stocks."

"Maybe. But that's pretty much accidental. Monkeys can pick good stocks. In fact, chimps regularly outperform money market fund managers, but there's other reasons for that."

"You said you could pick a good stock!"

Peter chuckled again. "Right. As good as any monkey." He popped the last bit of cone in his mouth and munched happily on it.

Sylar frowned. He still had a lot of ice cream left. Even though Peter had been doing most of the talking, he'd been listening and thinking rather than eating. Well, and watching Peter eat, which was the whole point of coming to the ice cream parlor. "Okay, so what are the other reasons why chimps outperform money market fund managers?"

"Well, for one thing, fund managers aren't paid a commission of your profits. Instead, they're usually paid a percentage of each transaction. For another, there's no inside track of secret information that lets you know how the economy is going to go in the next year or whatever. These people can't time travel and they don't have precognition, so they have no idea. But back to that first point – you see, you invest your money with them and they get paid, but then they won't get paid again until you sell and reinvest. But it's not really to your advantage to sell and reinvest, so the fund managers will set it up where they force you to do it by occasionally declaring a particular fund to be unprofitable or a poor investment, and they'll close it down and direct everyone to reinvest in a new fund that they say will be a lot better. Or, as often happens, they'll do this automatically because you gave them permission to handle your money as they saw fit."

"Isn't that illegal? They can't just make up reasons to charge you!" He remembered Virginia urging him to apply for a job as a 'nice banker', but the way Peter talked about them, some of them were corrupt. But what did Virginia know?

"Yeah, it is. It's called 'churning'. But the thing is, it's really hard to prove because the fund managers will pick funds that aren't performing well and they'll have as good a reason as any other. No one really knows what going to happen in the future, so you can't criticize based on saying they have poor judgment. Of course, if they churn too much, their clients will leave them."

"Why does anyone use them at all?"

"Because most people don't want to spend their time actively managing a fund and making that many stock transactions. The people with lots and lots of money hire someone to do it for them." Peter's voice trailed off into introspection. He wadded up his napkin and scrubbed at a spot on the table that was no dirtier or cleaner than any other spot.

"How do you know all of this?"

"There was a rally at college, talking about how unfair the wealth distribution was in the US. Of course, they were kind of preaching to the choir, but the kids of a bunch of really rich people are the ones most able to do something about it. We had some meetings about it, some of the social rights groups, talked about it a lot. And then at the end of every college year, in the spring, they'd have these seminars given by the financial groups, talking to people about how to manage money and
invest it. I went to a series by … um, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter? I think that was it. Anyway, it was like six or seven sessions for free. I think they were hoping people would use them as a money manager afterward, but I just wanted to know how it all worked."

"Curiosity? You?"

"Heh. Money's like a power, Sylar, an ability. And it was one I had. I wanted to know how to use it to make a difference." Peter wandered off behind the counter to help himself to a glass of water, using the semi-clear plastic courtesy cup out of an adherence to social mores that was weird considering they were the only two people in the world. Just as politely, he brought a similar cup back for Sylar, unasked. "So of course, like an idiot, I came home and started asking way too many questions. Dad wasn't there at first, so I went through his study and called his financial manager, Mr. Wilson. Even though he didn't tell me much of anything, Dad still fired him and made sure I knew it was my fault. That just asking too many questions had ruined this other guy's life. Or rather, led to my dad trying to punish me by ruining someone else's life. That's all it was to him – someone else's life was just a tool to try to intimidate me."

"That's when-" Sylar paused, evaluating the wisdom of blurting out something he knew only from Nathan's memories, but Peter seemed okay with it at the moment. It wasn't like Sylar was claiming them as his own, which was when Peter reacted the worst. "That was when you had the big fight with him, about Linderman."

"Yeah. He was laundering mob money. That's what it all came down to. It started in Vegas, went through waves of investment and reinvestment, and came out as untraceable, cleaned cash."

"Which bought my house."

Peter glared at him, nose wrinkling slightly as his fingers curled into fists. Sylar leaned back, mouth opening in slack-jawed confusion at the sudden change in mood. Peter drew in a deep, carefully controlled breath, pushed himself off from the table stiffly, and stalked away.

Sylar exhaled as the glass door shut behind Peter with an incongruously cheery tinkle from the bell over it. He was glad the slip hadn't resulted in anything worse, but sorry the conversation was over. He frowned at his half-eaten ice cream, then tossed it into the trash unfinished. So, *How a person gains their money means a lot to him. That's useful to know. I don't think he'd approve of me making gold, but I bet he'd be fine with me restoring timepieces.*
"Tell me about watchmaking, clock repair, all of that," Peter said. "Did you go to college for it, vo-tech or something like that?"

"My father was a watchmaker," Sylar answered, as if that explained everything.

Peter snorted. "My father was a lawyer; didn't make me one."

Sylar gave Peter a long, penetrating look. "No … no, he didn't," he said with soft wonder. Peter tilted his head in curiosity at how Sylar had taken that, but Sylar went on, "It was on the job training. Those of us in the trade tend to call it 'timepiece restoration' or 'chronograph repair'."
Good Morning

Quiet steps padded back from the bathroom. Sylar lay on the bed, breathing deep and regular, feigning sleep out of deep-seated habit of deception. He'd been lying there enjoying listening to Peter shower and go about his morning routine, noises at the sink muffled by the shut door. After so long alone in the silence of a world without end, even the sound of someone brushing their teeth was a symphony beyond measure.

The steps hesitated next to the bed, making Sylar wonder what expression graced Peter's features. What face did he wear when he thought Sylar couldn't see him? Did he regret putting aside his vengeance and taking his brother's killer to his bed? There was a motion; he heard a slight rustle of clothes. Peter's breath stirred a few hairs on his forehead and Sylar strained not to react to the ticklish sensation. Soft lips laid the most gentle, tender kiss on his temple. Peter inhaled a generous draught of his scent and drew away.

Sylar's heart soared as the steps faded off towards the kitchen, quietly closing the bedroom door behind him. So that was what Peter did when no one was watching. Sylar stretched, luxuriating in the distant sounds of Peter tinkering with the coffee pot and then moving on to fixing breakfast. He didn't stop the smile from lighting up his face. Peter made him feel so special and lucky – more than any ability ever would.
Dare Kiss

Chapter Summary

This is a spinoff of More Between Us chapter 65ish. The guys get drunk and play Truth or Dare on their first New Year's Eve behind the Wall, but the kiss scene didn't turn out to be part of the actual story, so I recycled it here as a Brick chapter.

"I dare you to kiss me." Sylar tried to keep his face relaxed, features blank. There were too many emotions struggling underneath; Peter didn't need to know about any of them. Hope was the most sickening, but self-loathing gave it a run for its money. A kiss was a small thing, easy, almost insignificant, but would Peter do it? Was he willing to get that close?

After a long beat, Peter shrugged and leaned forward. "Sure." He put his elbows on the desk between them and extended his hands. "Stick out your hand."

Sylar snorted disdainfully. "I meant a real kiss. Not my hand, moron. Angry, on edge, already anticipating being turned down, Sylar's lips pressed into a thin line despite his best efforts to hide his expression. He watched as Peter thought it over. Amazingly, Peter was thinking it over and not dismissing out of hand. Of course, dismissing would mean he'd lose the game and Peter was more competitive than he liked to admit.

Peter made a sharp exhale, really studying Sylar's face, eyes going over every part of it. Sylar wondered if he was picking where to plant his lips, or deciding if it was a face comely enough to do it with. Was he reading how badly Sylar wanted this? The long pause left Sylar desperate to fidget, feeling he was being inspected, weighed, and- Peter got up, coming around the desk. Obviously, a decision had been reached.

Sylar tilted his head up as he approached. He's going to do it? His mouth relaxed, tension dialing back as relief rose inside of him and hope started to win out.

He's definitely doing it. Sylar's eyes widened dramatically as the reality and immediacy of it hit him. Peter's scent wafted ahead of him, an air so delicious he wanted to drink it in. Mere lungfuls didn't do it justice; he wanted it distilled in liquid form. Peter paused in front of him, head tilted, only an inch or two away. While Sylar wanted to lunge forward and take what was on offer, he held his place. He wanted no question of who initiated and he didn't want to look as ridiculously eager as he really was. It was only going to be a peck, he knew.

Peter's lips moved, loosening, protruding more; he was puckering up. His left hand glided up the
slope of Sylar's shoulder to the back of his neck, fingers shifting to cup his head. The right settled slightly, bearing a tiny bit of weight. Peter Petrelli closed that last distance between them, eyes sliding shut as his lips pressed gently into Sylar's. Sylar inhaled deeply, keeping his own eyes open. He wanted to see this, start to finish, no matter how brief it was.

It wasn't brief. Peter's lips pulsed against his, warm and soft and human. Erotic energy flowed all up and down Sylar's spine; he felt his cock throb. His heart was pounded all of a sudden. Peter wasn't making this a fleeting thing; he was actually, really kissing him. Peter's lips made one full motion against Sylar's still ones, then he repeated it once, twice, then thrice – taking his time about it. Both of his hands moved – a slight stroking of his scalp; small circles on his inner thigh.

Peter pulled away only enough to part them, eyes opening before he came back for one last kiss. There was not a hint of revulsion, hesitance, or regret on his features. Sylar's, on the contrary, were stunned. He'd sat there unmoving, not participating, hardly even breathing the whole time. Floored was an understatement. That was everything he wanted and he'd just been given the tiniest sample. Hunger, lust, and desire roared to full life as Peter pulled away, leaving behind only a hot puff of breath to caress Sylar's lips. MORE! his brain screamed at him.

Sylar's fingers scrabbled at Peter's arm, halting his departure. Peter looked back at him and smiled, smug at the degree of reaction he'd engendered. "That was a real kiss." As he pulled himself free of Sylar's grip and returned to the other side of the desk, self-loathing loomed larger than every other emotion Sylar had at the moment. Peter knew what he was denying him; it was a punishment, and one that he thoroughly deserved. That small taste of heaven reminded him this really was hell.
Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

Chapter Summary

Peter and Sylar, in the Wall, are drunk and have been playing Truth or Dare. Sylar winds up the evening by fondling Peter's hair. This was a spinoff of MBU chapter 66ish.

Peter sat in the middle of the couch, a blanket draped over his bare shoulders. Sylar still wouldn't give him his shirt back, not that he cared too much at this point. It was late; he'd lost track of how many of the high-alcohol beers they'd downed. Sylar flopped next to him, close by necessity – if Peter was in the middle of the couch, Sylar couldn't be all that far away and still be on the same piece of furniture. Peter could have moved, he supposed, but he didn't bother.

"You're okay." Sylar reached out and tousled his hair. It was a friendly, brotherly gesture that had Peter's head snapping around despite the mild compliment, which was one of the few nice things Sylar had ever said about him. He stared at Sylar, eyes intent as his mind derailed from objecting to the familiarity and into trying to remember anything else like that Sylar had said about him. Surely there'd been something. His eyes dropped and expression loosened as he thought. He didn't notice that Sylar hadn't stopped touching him.

Fingers slid along his forehead, gently carding hair back from his face. Peter twitched a little in realization, looking up with wide eyes to see Sylar's face. He looked absorbed and pleased, gaze dipping to Peter's for a brief moment to acknowledge the awareness, before going back to what he was doing – running his hands through Peter's hair, one after another. It felt sublime.

Peter blinked. Oh. Um … He tried to cast his inebriated mind around to figure out what he was supposed to do about that. He didn't feel molested or violated, just weird. They'd never done this before. Sure, Sylar had asked to do it during Truth or Dare and Peter had let him, but this was just Sylar doing it without any reason. Well, any reason aside from wanting to do it. It felt fantastic, now just as it had earlier during the game. It seemed like a comforting way to wind down from the high tension that had run between them as they'd asked uncomfortable questions and coerced one another into questionable acts.

Peter turned his face down and to the side, tilting so the crown of his head was presented to Sylar's attentions. Sylar moved on to combing it back and then playing with the longest part of it at the back of Peter's head. He was fluffing it, Peter assumed, maybe raising it and letting it fall. Something. The contact was soothing, relaxing, proof that he didn't need to be on guard at all points in time. His shoulders sagged and the blanket slipped. He could feel the ends of his hair shifting against the bare skin. It gave him goose bumps and a shiver.

Sylar scooted closer, turning so that his shin was pressed against Peter's thigh and hip. The heel of his hand brushed across the top of Peter's shoulder and Peter found himself making a small noise, breathing faster. Hm? He took stock of his reactions. He was aroused – not exactly bursting at the seams yet, but his skin felt tight and warm, nipples erect, other parts getting there. He could feel Sylar's breath on his upper back and hear the man … sniffing?

"Are you smelling of me?"
He'd expected denial or dissembling. Instead, Sylar answered simply, "Yes."

Peter sat there dumbly, a lot of static in his brain where he was sure he should be thinking coherently and rationally about what was going on. *Shouldn't have had so many damn beers.* Sylar had his hair in both hands and now was unmistakably rubbing his face in it. His forearms nudged against Peter's upper back as he fondled his hair.

"That's, uh, kinda erotic, don't you think?" Peter said conversationally.

"Yeesss." Separate from the drawn-out, charged word, Sylar purred. He goddamn *purred* into the back of Peter's head.

"Unn." Peter shivered again at the barest brush of hot lips against the nape of his neck. That was one of the sexiest things he'd ever had done to him. He wanted, more than almost anything else, to turn around and respond, participate, engage and kiss and caress and … He stood up, abandoning the blanket and pulling away. There was one thing he wanted more than even this, and that was his integrity. Sylar was not an option, no matter how much he purred into Peter's scalp and made the hairs on the back of his neck stand at attention. "I gotta go." He went for his jacket, not about to stop and argue with Sylar about the stolen shirt.

Sylar looked bereft, stricken, and immensely frustrated. Mouth gaping, he looked like he was trying to find words. Peter didn't wait for that to happen. Jacket on but still unbuttoned, he was out the door before Sylar could do more than call his name and order him not to leave. The order made the departure easier. Peter rattled down the stairs, rapidly waking up from the alcoholic fugue he'd fallen into. The cold air outside snapped him to his senses even more. What would Nathan think if he knew about what had just happened?

The scalding thought was followed by one quite different – Claude telling him, 'Your friends, your mother, your brother. No wonder your head's all clogged … You still see yourself through their eyes, is that it? *But what if I didn't?* It was radical enough that Peter stopped, turned, and looked back at Sylar's lit window. The idea of casting aside the past and taking Sylar as he was today, free of the baggage, ran through his mind. It would be a true, genuine second chance for the man. Maybe that was what Sylar needed …

Peter shook his head and resumed walking. Claude had been wrong about almost everything.
Regret #1

Sylar was watching with equal parts fascination and revulsion as Peter beat the crap out of the punching bag. Taped hands hammered against the polymer surface, pummeling it mercilessly. Repeated, shocking blows left it creaking and swaying, Peter's body jerking with the force he was channeling into his fists. Sylar knew Peter was imagining that was him receiving the beat down, Sylar's face being pulped and left bloody – or maybe worse. His eyes fell and shoulders sagged that someone felt that way about him. Sylar's hands twisted helplessly at the towel he held. There was no way to bring back Nathan or undo what he'd done. The slamming sounds and guttural grunts continued. Peter hardly ever hit him; never gave him the torture he so thoroughly deserved for all the deaths and misery he'd caused. The few times he had been struck, Sylar had felt a flash of vindication, followed by a sick twist in his gut at how much he wanted to take the easy way out. Living with what he'd done, no way to expiate it, was a worse punishment than enduring any amount of abuse Peter might want to dish out. It left him feeling two inches tall. Even if Peter hurt him worse by leaving Sylar to wallow in his regret, unforgiven and unworthy, it didn't mean Peter was free of the impulse to tear him apart – an impulse he was still venting on the innocent punching bag.

Peter was finally winding down from his … fit. Rough, sobbing breaths were torn from his throat as he hugged the bag for balance, arms and shoulders shaking. Sylar rose, padding over with deliberate noise to his steps despite how much he wanted to be quiet and go unnoticed, or maybe crawl off under a rock and die there. Peter's head pulled to the side, expression raw, mouth agape, eyes, nose, and cheeks reddened. Tears and sweat mingled on his face. A faint stamp of fury and disgust stained his features – just to see Sylar brought that look, like he was a bug Peter would gladly step on. Sylar gave a brittle smile and reached up to towel off Peter's face. Peter pulled away from the touch, putting his forehead against the bag, but he didn't pull away further than that and for that Sylar was grateful.

He still frowned at being denied that opportunity to give the comfort he wanted to provide. Instead, he wiped down the back of Peter's neck and over his arms. Peter's shoulders shook a few more times, but he didn't try to shake off Sylar's touch. He finally straightened, turning to stare at Sylar with an anger as deep as the Nathan-shaped hole in his heart. Sylar, who knew how to fix so much, felt useless in the face of this. He'd taken away the man's brother and by Sylar's mere identity, he took away even the facsimile Peter might have had. "I'm sorry." He was sorry for his whole existence.

Peter shook his head, lips pursed, teeth set against one another. "That doesn't even begin." Still breathing hard, he walked around Sylar and headed for the showers.

Sylar's fist closed and opened over and over on the towel as he stood still facing the slightly swinging punching bag. "I know," he said softly.
I see this as happening about a year after Peter entered the Wall world. You can read this as something that happens a few days after the first 'Regret' story, or as a stand-alone. They're different ways of me working out the same concept, which is Sylar making a small step from being less self-absorbed.

"I wanna know how it happened – Nathan's death."

Sylar paused, ham and cheese sandwich halfway to his mouth. Peter had been avoiding him for the last couple days, although this time the parting of ways wasn't due to an argument. Sylar assumed it had been a bad move to tell him it was the one-year anniversary of Nathan's demise. Peter seemed determined to be oblivious to the passage of time. "Good afternoon to you, too," he snarked.

Peter slid out the chair on the opposite side of the table, plopping himself down as if he'd been invited. "Tell me."

Sylar raised his brows at the rude demand. "Right now?"

Peter opened his mouth, then closed it as he looked at the untouched sandwich still midway to being Sylar's lunch. He sighed. "No, fine. Finish eating. Sorry. I'll wait." He looked away and crossed his arms, fingers moving restlessly as nervous energy ran through his frame.

Sylar looked from his sandwich to where Peter's fingers were clenching erratically against his bicep. There was no way he could eat like this, with Peter hovering impatiently. He set the sandwich down. "I'm not that hungry at the moment," he said dryly. "What did you want to know?"

Peter turned back to face him, sparing the sandwich a glance, but accepting Sylar's offer to talk instead of eat. "I want to know how Nathan died."

"I killed him." Sylar straightened, stiffening, waiting for the expected fury or even physical altercation that usually followed the bald reminder of Sylar's role in the world. He refused to sugarcoat it and he'd refused for all of the last year. Sometimes he'd thrown it in Peter's face, other times it just slipped out. It was his life, his identity, his past – and he'd talk about it whether Peter hit him for it or not.

Peter breathed in deeply, then expelled the air. No attack was launched. "I know. I want to know … how it happened."

Sylar tilted his head to one side in curiosity. Peter had seen the corpse. It didn't take a nurse or a paramedic to know a person didn't do well with their veins severed. (Sylar would have done arteries, but he'd learned the hard way that they were more messy.) But if Peter wanted it blurted out, then Sylar would oblige. "He knocked me out the window and dropped me. I caught myself after a few floors and tried to slam him into the building. He had more control over his course than I expected, and he went through a window." He paused then. Peter was watching, leaning forward with
narrowed, intent eyes as he listened with every part of his being. Sylar didn't (yet) regret what he'd done – it had been simple self defense, after all, maybe with a little self-indulgence tossed in but Nathan deserved it for being such a stupid, arrogant prick (and if they were willing to strip his identity after, then it made his sins equal at the least) – he still recognized what effect this might have on Peter. By way of affecting Peter, it affected Sylar and this roundabout concern for his own welfare gave him an unprecedented interest in that of someone else. If he hurt Peter's feelings, then Sylar would, in turn, suffer – maybe not physically, but at least in Peter's willingness to talk with him and tolerate his presence. Perhaps it was better to be gentle, if he could figure out what that was.

"What happened next?"

Sylar leaned back, asking quietly, "Why do you want to know this, Peter? You know how it ends."

Peter sighed, pursing his lips, and leaned back in mirror to Sylar's body language. "Because … things … so many things that I've believed haven't turned out to be true. I think I know what happened, but I want to know. I want to know for real. You were there. You know what you did and why. I need to know that."

Sylar's face stilled, becoming an expressionless mask. "I'm evil, he got in my way, so I killed him."

Peter shook his head, brushing that aside like it was unimportant. He leaned forward again. "Tell me what happened."

Now Sylar sighed, looking away and then back. He had no idea how to relate 'gently' to someone that you killed their brother on a whim, when it would have been just as easy to incapacitate him in any number of other ways. Peter was looking at him, expecting an answer, demanding one. Buckling under the unfamiliar social pressure, Sylar reverted to 'blunt'. He knew blunt. Maybe 'blunt' would make Peter quit looking at him like that. "I followed him in. He got to his feet. I cut his throat. That's it."

"With telekinesis?"

Sylar nodded, brows drawing together as he stared at the table and hunched his shoulders a little. The whole conversation made him unhappy, but mostly it was the realization that his mode of communication was all wrong for this sort of thing. He prided himself on being able to play roles and be what people wanted him to be, but that wasn't going to work here. It just wasn't. Peter didn't want an act. He wanted the truth. But the truth was going to hurt him, and it wasn't in Sylar's interest to hurt him, so how was he supposed to handle this?

Peter wasn't done yet. "What was he doing when you did that?"

Sylar shrugged and looked off to the side guiltily. Once Sylar stopped looking at it from his own point of view, with consequences and ex post facto justifications, it started to look pretty indefensible. He could see how this had to look to Peter and he could even, now, see why Peter wanted to know. Nathan … hadn't been doing much of anything. "He … he took a step towards me." It was a really flimsy reason to unleash lethal force on someone, especially when you were able to regenerate.

"Then you cut his throat. And that was," Peter swallowed roughly, "all you did?"

It took Sylar a moment to realize Peter was asking if he'd tortured him somehow. He shook his head in answer to the unspoken, then realized what it looked like given Peter's specific question. "Yes, that's all I did. It was … it was quick." At least he had that much. He hadn't tortured or molested or done anything sick and perverted. He wondered if Peter had ever asked Claire about the time he'd
had her alone in the hotel room before the Petrelli brothers had shown up. He hunched in on himself even more determinedly. He felt so worthless. He knew he’d failed.

Peter gave one nod. Voice clipped, he said, "Okay. That's what I wanted to know," and rose to leave.

"Peter, I ..." He didn't know what to say. He felt … sorry, in a different way than he had before. Before, he'd been sorry that killing Nathan was clearly coming back to affect him, Sylar, negatively. His concern was selfishly motivated. Now he was thinking through how Peter had to feel about it, thinking about how that was going to affect them both in future. It was definitely going to affect it. In the past he'd just walked away from the people he'd hurt, or he'd killed them. That wasn't applicable here. If he wanted a connection, then this … his past, and how Peter was affected by it, how he saw him as a result … it was a problem and not one Sylar knew how to solve.

"No. You were right. But I needed to know for sure." Peter stalked off stiffly, the diner door swinging shut behind him.

Sylar pushed the uneaten sandwich away, stomach churning as the meaning of Peter's parting words sunk in. He was evil. He didn't want to be.
A Good Death

Title: A Good Death
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Rating: PG
Words: 400
Summary: Sylar contemplates the role Peter fills in his life.

As a jailor, a torturer, or just a companion, Peter was better than the others Sylar had had. As a jailor, he was consistent and he didn't abuse his privileges, the main one of which was the freedom to leave. If he couldn't leave, that was pretty funny, but Sylar preferred to believe Peter couldn't leave with him. It meant any continuation of Peter's presence was on Sylar's behalf. Probably wishful thinking and he knew it, but he liked to think Peter was stubborn enough to imprison himself with Sylar if he couldn't bring Sylar out with him. It was possible. After all, Peter was stubborn (and stupid) enough to put himself here in the first place without making sure ahead of time he'd be able to get out.

As a torturer, he was lousy, which was just as Sylar liked it. Most of the physical damage Peter dished out was while they were both alert, aware, and combative, able to respond in a mutual fashion. The only exception was the occasional surprise attack, or if Sylar really pissed him off, Peter would occasionally hit him a few more times even if Sylar wasn't fighting back – both happened less often as time passed, and both required Sylar to first antagonize his keeper. Sylar had had far worse, tormentors prone to drugging him to unconsciousness, strapping him down, and mutilating his brain. A few of Peter's fists to his face were regular love taps in comparison.

While Peter did not (yet) put out, Sylar would have to rank him as a more enjoyable person to spend time with than even Elle. They had more things in common. Were it ever possible for him to regain powers, Sylar was sure he'd pick up Peter's in a heartbeat – empathizing with him was easy. Peter was a better conversationalist, having led a much more normal life than Elle had ever been allowed. His personality was better – steadier, less given to malice and caprice. He wasn't trying to turn Sylar evil, although his desire for Sylar to be a decent person was clear. Sylar didn't mind that too much. Peter's motivations were known and had been from the start. The honesty was refreshing.

At times, he was even sorry he'd killed Nathan. Not for Nathan's sake, but for Peter's. But most of the time he was glad. Killing Nathan had gotten rid of Nathan (definitely a good thing) and kicked off the sequence of events that brought Peter to him. That made it completely worthwhile.
Peter roused himself from the post-coital bliss, rolling and lifting himself slowly onto hands and knees so he could crawl closer to his new lover. Sylar, more-or-less spread-eagled in careless relaxation, pulled his limbs in a little in mild defensiveness, eyes scanning over Peter's face. Peter gave him a gentle smile for reassurance, then propped himself with one hand on the bed next to Sylar's pillow, the other taking Sylar's chin and holding him in place. Sylar stayed perfectly still for that, not even stiffening; it was something Peter had noticed – most people jumped when surprised, but Sylar stilled. Sylar had given him free rein to use him as he would. Peter expected he'd like this.

He leaned in slowly, tongue moving out to flick at the skin between chin and lower lip, tasting the salt and mild residue of the many reckless, passionate kisses they'd already shared. Sylar sighed, lids drooping and hands moving slightly as he broke from the artificial immobility. Peter moved in slightly more, guided by instinct and desire rather than any conscious thought, and sucked a bit of Sylar's luscious lower lip into his mouth. He kneaded it between lips and with tongue four or five times before dragging over it with his teeth, accompanied by a growl.

Sylar moaned in delighted pleasure, his hands finding the bare skin of Peter's sides and touching. Peter straddled him, adjusting to holding himself up with both arms so he could take as long as he wanted at this. He leaned in again like a push-up, taking the left side of Sylar's lower lip and repeating the process. Breathy, faint whines were music to his ears, encouraging him to move on to the right and then the upper lip. Sylar's mouth gaped open for him, hands cupping his sides and hips shifting in response. Peter made a circuit, sucking and nipping at every portion of the lips before him, treated to a deep, huffing exhalation of appreciation on Sylar's part.

Peter lifted and gave him a lazy, crooked smile, something of a smirk – too relaxed and full of himself to put the extra work in to straighten his face. He'd seen people stoned out of their skulls with pupils less dilated than Sylar's were now. He dipped back to give a lingering, sucking kiss to Sylar's left cheek, nudging him with his nose to get him to turn his face. Sylar was so eager, so willing to receive affection. He was practically squirming like a happy puppy. It made Peter ecstatic, heady with second-hand joy. He savored the difference between the smooth skin higher up on Sylar's cheek and the stubble below. It wasn't long, as Sylar had shaved only that morning, but the busy growth stiffened and thickened the skin, making the surface already rough against Peter's lips and tongue. He tasted all the way to Sylar's ear, sucking in the lobe to a louder, less-inhibited groan from Sylar.

"Ha," Peter puffed directly into his ear, provoking an unexpected, unsexy clutching and Sylar to turn his head, eyes wide and uncertain again, to look at him. "Easy," Peter crooned. "I won't do it again."

Sylar's eyes cast over him uncertainly, but the trust reappeared faster this time. Peter leaned in to give the earlobe a tiny, sedate peck before lifting and looking at Sylar again, this time getting the acquiescence he wanted as Sylar's eyes slid mostly shut and he turned his face to make his ear more accessible even though Peter was willing to move elsewhere entirely if that was what Sylar wanted.
It didn't seem to be what he wanted. "Yeah," Peter breathed next to it, running the tip of his nose up and down the outer rim as he stayed tuned to Sylar's responses with hyper-alertness. "You don't like people blowing in your ear?"

Sylar shrugged with a tension that hadn't been there a moment before. "I don't know," he said, his voice small and frustrated. But this was leagues ahead of where their communication had been a few days ago. It was all such a careful, high-stakes dance.

Peter ran his nose up and down a few more times, then turned and rubbed lightly with his cheek. The tension drained out of his lover and the hands that had become motionless on his sides started moving again. Peter put his face parallel with Sylar's and simply breathed – not into his ear, just next to it, scouting out the territory that Sylar wanted to mark 'keep out'.

Sylar chuckled, wrapping his arms around Peter and pulling them close, skin to skin from head to groin. "I know what you're doing, Peter. You're checking. My ears aren't like yours. It was just … a lot at once."

Peter burrowed his face against the side of Sylar's head, reveling in the scent, the texture of the fine hairs, the warmth against him, strong arms around him, a nearly erect cock between them – Sylar was ready for round two, Peter wasn't there yet, but he would be soon. "Don't be afraid to tell me your limits."
Sylar gathered the bit of detritus from the bathroom trash, carrying it into the kitchen where he placed it in a waiting saucer of water. It was a wad of hairs Peter had thoughtfully removed from the bathtub drain after his shower (convincing him to shower at Sylar's place had been more difficult than expected, but it had been accomplished). Now Sylar leaned over his odd prize, rinsing it gently from one saucer to another, changing the water patiently until he was sure he'd removed all contaminating residue of soap and shampoo. That done, he sorted them using the delicacy that served him well as a watchmaker. He arranged the fragile filaments on a paper towel, one next to the other, stretched out to dry. An even thirty head hairs he recovered, along with one he believed to be a pubic hair. Two of the longer hairs looked suspicious – a little too light. They caught the sunlight with a golden sheen rather than the dark gloss of Peter's. Those, and the short, kinked hair, went back in the trash. Once dried, the twenty-eight remaining were carefully stacked across a pair of waxed threads. When they were all arranged, he tied off the threads to bundle them into one tiny lock of silky fibers.

With a pleased, close-mouthed smile, Sylar moved his treasure to his work desk. There, he dug through a jar of watch parts until he found what he was looking for – a pocket watch that had had its internal mechanisms removed. Into this empty case, he carefully spooled the strands, looping them to fit within their new home. Taking care not to catch any of the hairs in the closure, he snapped the case shut and slid the watch under his pillow for safe-keeping. This way, even if Peter disappeared tomorrow, he'd still have a part of him, something to prove he'd been here … something to prove Sylar wasn't crazy, or alone, after all.
Simple Questions

Chapter Summary

Prompted by Peter's questions, Sylar makes a journey to self-acceptance and beyond.

It was the gentle pleadings that broke Sylar - Peter begging him for answers when he had none. The recriminations, accusations, and silent treatment had been easier to take, but eventually Peter just wanted to know the truth. Sylar had thought the worst torture of this hell was the oppressive, relentless loneliness of three, long years, but Peter showed him he'd been mistaken. At times, Sylar almost wished for a return of the quiet, measured out by the steady ticking of the clocks. They demanded nothing of him ... unlike Peter.

In Peter's defense, there was nothing else in the world to distract him from the subject of his inquiry. It was his whole point here and sometimes Sylar wondered if Peter really existed, or if he was some demon sent to carry out the next stage of torment. Peter had no friends or family or even complete strangers here who could capture part or all of his attention, so he fixed it entirely on Sylar. His only project was getting closure.

And so: Why? The question was asked over and over in endless variations. It was profoundly irritating in both its simplicity and difficulty. Sylar understood better than he wanted to how annoyed parents became at curious toddlers who learned that cursed word. Like a child, Peter wanted to understand. He was trying to wrap his mind around why a person – any person, but Sylar in particular – would kill another (and in Sylar's case, another and another and another ...) He understood anger and a desire to hurt, but a desire to end, to terminate? It was foreign and so he asked.

At first, Sylar fended him off with anger and sarcasm, his sword and shield against the emotional assault. Peter would retire to nurse his wounds, but he never gave up. It was like he could sense the weakness underneath Sylar's armor of indifference and was determined to expose it. Enduring the questioning wasn't the price of admission to sharing Peter's company. If it had been, Sylar might have stayed away entirely. Instead, it was the requirement for a different sort of proximity, a more emotional one, something Sylar wanted more than mere presence. Actually, at the bottom of it all, Sylar did want to be understood; he just didn't want to answer for what he'd done. Yet despite his desire to writhe and twist away from responsibility, he couldn't figure out how to get the openness without exposing himself.

The real hell began when he genuinely started trying to find the truth Peter wanted. Neither of them was satisfied with glib answers. As much as Sylar would have liked to avoid the subject entirely, if he was going to give an answer, then he was going to give an honest one. But the truth wasn't simply a matter of speaking it, or as simple as identifying a warped gear within a watch. He couldn't just pick out an isolated thing that had gone wrong and caused the past; there was no stepped-on butterfly he could point to. It was more complicated by far. There were so many times where he hadn't examined why he'd chosen one act over another. While yes, the exigencies of circumstance favored one path more than the others, there were deeper reasons. His own mind framed his choices and that limited his possible solutions. Why was he comfortable with violence to the level that he had...
performed? Where did the uncaring come from? How deep did it run? What other aspects of his being did it affect? In the end, was he … salvageable?

The worst were the questions softly spoken, breathed out in cautious whispers like Peter was afraid to speak them too loudly. The answers were often ugly and increasingly, Sylar couldn't divorce himself from them or pretend that anyone would have done the same in his place. He was special, bitter pill though that was to swallow. His actions had defined the person he was. If they were menacing and evil, then so must he be as well. It wasn't how he wanted to be and he mourned to be faced with it. He didn't want to be the kind of person that no one in the world wanted to be near. He tried to fight it, but he was trapped by things that had already happened, impossible to undo. He didn't want to be … bad, a lost cause, unworthy of everything. He wanted to be good and Peter's questioning of his soul made him so angry he contemplated murder yet again. Yet he couldn't lash out without proving the very thing he was trying to disprove about himself. It was his helplessness, the futility of it all, that broke him.

"I don't know!" Sylar burst out, but the high emotion sounding through his words was desperation and grief, not rage. His hands shook and his shoulders threatened to. He felt so impotent and incompetent, so stupid and dense and uninformed about his own inner workings. He felt like he was crumbling, like a wall that had been battered on for too long, finally giving way at the masonry seams. He was so lost in his own misery that Peter settling next to him on the couch was startling. The cushion dipped and by natural law of gravity, he tilted towards Peter. They were touching all down the thigh and briefly at the shoulder … and then Peter was twisting towards him, not done yet with the Petrelli space invasion. Peter raised his arms and slid them over Sylar's shoulders, ignoring his stiffness as he guided Sylar to turn to match him, and then wrapping around to pull him close. Sylar stopped breathing entirely for long seconds and when he resumed, his breaths were shallow. What is he doing?! his mind squeaked about the sudden, unprecedented, and unasked-for-but-wonderful contact. What was happening seemed clear enough, though. It was a hug. A simple hug. Or maybe a complex one, Sylar didn't know. What he knew was that he could feel the warmth of Peter's body through his shirt and smell the oil of his skin in a much more concentrated nasal draught than he was usually gifted by in the closest passage he might make. The reality of Peter's nearness was enough to shock him out of most of his wretched thoughts. He's hugging me. Why would he hug me? Is he attracted to me? Am I sexy this way, almost in tears? Is that it? No, I don't think it is. I must look like a child, like a little boy he wants to comfort. Is that so he can lord it over me and be more powerful?

"It's okay," Peter murmured. "It's okay. You're not alone. I'm here, I'm listening, I'm paying attention. We can figure it out. No hurry." Peter's words were always so soft when Sylar was upset – soft on the outside, but still hard on the inside. Peter wasn't going to let him off the hook for a few tears. Taking a break wasn't the same thing as quitting. Sylar knew that and it made him respect Peter all the more for it.

He brought his own hands up to Peter's sides, fingers twiddling senselessly with the seams of Peter's jacket. What the man said was soothing, reminding him of what a relief it was that he had someone who would listen to him at all, despite the frustrating nature of the inquiries. The embrace certainly wasn't brief, either. Peter was stroking his back with firm, steady sweeps of his right hand, the left exerting pressure and letting him know he was right where Peter wanted him to be. Sylar drew in a deep breath and let it out. It's like he's petting me, like a dog. Sylar relaxed. I can play this role. If that's what he wants … if that's what gets me this. He swallowed and leaned into the posture, turning his head and laying it on Peter's shoulder.

In the choice of which direction to face, he opted for maximum intimacy just like the rest of his life
was marked with extremes. He put his nose against Peter's neck, facing him rather than the more usual facing away. He could feel the tension that went through Peter at his position – the stroking on his back interrupted for a moment - and Sylar felt a spasm of fear that Peter would shove him away for taking the liberty. Regardless of what Peter did, it sure as hell felt good to be held. It felt nice. It thumped through his bones and made his heart rattle his chest with all the heavy thumping it was doing. The angles were awkward and his spine was twinging from leaning weird, but it was completely worth it. He sighed, knowing that some of his breath blew hot against Peter's skin. Strangely, that seemed to calm Peter, who tightened his hold and shifted his hips a little to face him more directly, resuming the comforting stroking.

A moment later, they were swaying slightly as Peter rocked him slowly. Sylar snuggled in, all too aware that he might never get another chance at this. He'd been this close to other people, but the truth that Peter was trying to be kind to him was finally filtering through his formidable defenses. He could try to pretend to himself that Peter was dominance-tripping or treating him like a pet or child, but his logical mind had sifting through the probable motivations and kept coming back to one very core to Peter's being – he wanted to help. He was over here hugging Sylar because he wanted to help him.

Peter tolerated the hug far longer than Sylar would have expected. Long minutes, more than a quarter hour. It felt like an eternity to spend arm-locked with someone on the couch. And because he didn't think he'd ever get this again and he might as well go for everything, seizing every experience possible and claiming it for his own, when Peter shrugged his shoulder and went to gently push Sylar away, Sylar lifted his head and swooped in to kiss. Peter was not so slow that he couldn’t have reacted. Sylar knew that. He was gambling, going for the long shot, pushing the limits like he always did. He was forcing Peter to choose between shoving him away brusquely or … what Peter did. At the last second, he did nothing. Peter sat there and allowed Sylar plant his lips over his own, for one brief kiss that Peter ended with a more definitive, but still not rough, push.

It had been years since Sylar had had a kiss. It wasn't like it was something he required for survival, but it was something he hungered for – to be close to someone, to be accepted, to have a connection that was real and honest. He'd never had that, not in the way he wanted, not in the way he could almost taste from Peter. All their talking had created this tenuous link between them that was just waiting to become reality. His fingers bunched the fabric at Peter's sides, not wanting to let him get away while knowing he had to eventually.

Peter eyed Sylar warily and stood, forcing Sylar to loose his fingers and let the man slide out of his grip. Peter gave him a parting pat on the shoulder that was nothing like the stern slap of rejection Sylar would have expected. He … he let me! Let me? Jesus, he even started it! What does that mean? Does it mean he wants me? Or just that he doesn't think I'm beyond help? More importantly, can I make him do that again? Yearning eyes followed Peter across the room, hyper-alert to the smallest nuance, not that it helped.

There followed the rest of the afternoon, the evening, and the next morning as Sylar struggled to figure out how to replicate the situation where Peter would hug on him and hold still for kissing. He hungered for that shred of approval, that teasing glimpse of acceptance, the hint that his explanations were satisfactory. He tried being forward, imagining things had changed between them and touching was welcome now. It was not; Peter shut him down. He tried being persistent; Peter threatened to leave. Sylar submitted completely and Peter stayed. He tried offering more information about himself, but they'd already covered what came to him easily. The rest was harder. He tried more tears, but they were fake and Peter was on to him. As a result of that last stunt, he was left alone for the night, hoping his bout of acting hadn't ruined his chances. He hoped Peter understood why he was suddenly all over him. He was an empath, after all, and that was supposed to mean something even if Sylar hadn't been able to puzzle out what.
It was a miserable night, which was fucked up because he'd had more mutual friendliness in that one long hug than he'd had ever. He thought he ought to be happy. He ought to be grateful. He ought to be satisfied. But he wasn't. He tossed and turned and felt his aloneness more keenly than he ever had while Peter was in this world with him. He obsessed over every detail of the day, trying to figure out exactly what he'd done and when, that he could do it again to get the same result, or even anything close to it. It wasn't like Peter ever stayed the night, but he couldn't help but think that Peter's departure had gone badly and that he'd pushed it too far with the false sorrow.

The morning found him itchy-eyed and sweaty-skinned, but the dawn light gave him an excuse to get out of bed and stop wallowing. Peter was often in a better mood after getting away from him for a while (sad commentary though that was, all by itself; Sylar still looked forward to exploiting it). Sylar sought him out at breakfast, nearly falling all over himself to ingratiate himself. His nocturnal cogitations had convinced him that Peter wanted to be in charge, he wanted Sylar submissive and … vulnerable. Not that he wanted Sylar to be weak, but when Sylar was, Peter was most apt to get close to him, lend a helping hand, gentle his words, and handle him carefully. His brain was working feverishly to concoct whatever scheme was necessary to win him a place in the ranks of human beings worthy of friendly association.

"Stop. Stop, Sylar."

He pulled up short from trying to bus Peter's side of the table. Was Peter not done eating?

"Is this about the hug yesterday?"

Sylar looked away, trying to think of whether he should agree or not. Peter's voice was level enough, if a little exasperated, so there wasn't much clue there about how he felt towards Sylar's obsession with the embrace. The kiss wasn't being mentioned at all. His eyes darted back to Peter and fixed on him attentively, opting to say nothing and thus reduce his chance of incriminating himself.

Peter stood, pushed his chair in properly, and stepped close. He took the washcloth from Sylar's hand and dropped it on the table, sliding his hand between Sylar's side and arm – first the right, then the left. "Come here." Sylar hugged him back immediately, tucking his head in close to the side of Peter's, feeling the fine, dark, silky hair bunch and shift under his cheek, the faint smell of shampoo in his nostrils. He trembled and squeezed briefly, feeling a profound sense of relief wash through him as Peter sighed and relaxed against him in turn. He was so solid, like a rock supporting the lighthouse which shone its beacon over turbulent waters and through shroud of fog, guiding those who had wandered astray to safe harbor. His strength seeped into Sylar and showed him peace.

"Hey," Peter said softly, speaking into his shoulder, "I know you've been working really hard, doing a lot of soul-searching. Just want you to know, I'm right here with you. We'll figure it out." Sylar squeezed again, wishing he could pull Peter inside of himself, envelope the guy completely so he'd never leave. But too soon, Peter pulled away, gave him a friendly pat, and directed them on to morning errands.

Twice within twenty-four hours, though – that wasn't coincidence. Sylar stalked Peter all morning, crowding too close and trying to touch him. Sometimes he covered it as happenstance; sometimes he didn't bother. Peter gave him a few shy smiles at first, but they faded as Sylar continued to push for as much as he could get. It wasn't until they returned to the apartment for lunch, well past noon, that he realized he'd taken it a bit too far. Peter stepped to the side and refused to go up the stairs first. Scandalized and concerned that he was ruining the best thing he had going for him, Sylar backed off with an effort. He needed to quit looking at Peter and start looking at himself. It was his change that had drawn Peter near, after all. If he wanted that again, he needed to change more. Lunch was awkward and quiet as Sylar ruminated on the new topic.
After the dishes were cleared away, he returned to his seat and brought up the subject himself, rather than waiting for Peter to ask the usual questions. "I know we've gone over this before. A lot. I did it because I could; because I could get away with it. And I know now that's not the real answer. I thought anyone would do it, everyone wanted to, it was natural selection. None of that is the answer, because the real answer is underneath: why would I think that?

"I can point to stories of bullies in middle school and high school teachers playing favorites – anybody but me; I was ignored by everyone but the bullies. I can talk about the very essence of some of us having extraordinary powers and everyone else not – how it seemed like so many didn't deserve what they'd been gifted with. I could even argue that by virtue of having abilities, we have a moral imperative to use them to their fullest, even if that means abusing other people."

He looked up at Peter, his patient, attentive audience, for a long moment, then away again. "I know. We've been through this already. All that and more – dissected my motivations, cracked open my past, ruptured every flimsy rationalization I've used to defend actions that are indefensible. No matter what I say, there are still people dead and others hurt."

He sighed, shoulders sagging in defeat. "If I squinted, I was the archetypical hero, right down to the wise, old mentor who dies in the course of the story, but not after imparting to me the path I was to take – in this case, in the shape of a list. Fate had written everything out already, literally. It was all excused because it was ‘destiny’. It's easier to take when you let me slap a coat of heroic paint on it and call it good. Hell, easier to talk about if you'd just admit that I'm evil."

"You're not evil."

Sylar looked up at Peter, meeting steadfast eyes that didn't give an inch on this. Not anymore. At first, Peter had entertained the idea, but even then it had seemed half-hearted. It wasn't long before he rejected it entirely and refused to countenance it. Sylar was not a bad guy in Peter's eyes and how he'd made that transformation was a mystery to Sylar. Peter had judged him human and possessed of all human faculties, both the frailties and the strengths. It hadn't meant the questioning had changed much. Peter still wanted to know why.

"Killing … wasn't something rare or exotic to my mind. I thought it was something that happened between people no matter how they felt about each other. My earliest memory was of murder – one person I had loved killing another." He laughed hollowly. "They say that kids always see things as being about them – 'Mommy and Daddy got divorced because I got bad marks in Math' – it was about me. That was inescapable. Everyone I cared about was dead or gone. Then it repeated twenty years later – Mommy dead, Daddy gone."

"Why would I care about these people, Peter, when the people who were supposed to love me turned on me like that?" His voice was pleading, looking for a reason, but Peter wasn't there to give him answers. He couldn't, anyway. This was Sylar's trial to endure. He stared at the floor, looking for an answer, stumbling through the dark. "I loved them – my parents. I wanted to love … others, anyone, really. I wanted … to love, to be … loved." Tears threatened again and he pressed the heel of his hand into one eye socket. "But there was no one there who cared. I was meaningless and therefore I thought everyone else was, too. For once in my life, I'd show them that they couldn't ignore me. I was angry at all those people who had things I wanted – more than just the abilities, they had lives and loved ones and jobs and meaning," he spat out viciously, because that was the core of it. "They thought they were important and I was so sure I wasn't. I thought killing them made me important. It showed them how powerful I was and how wrong and insignificant they were. I didn't care about options or alternatives. I didn't look for any other way to get their powers because the bloody way served all my interests. All I cared about was lashing out and getting away with it. I was going to make everyone hurt for ignoring me and that's the most selfish, stupid, and callous thing
imaginable." He shook his head. "I see that now, but it doesn't matter. I've done what I've done. I
deserve what I …" He shook his head again, pressing thumbs into tearing eyes. "Someone else in my
position would have done something different. They would have tried harder. They wouldn't have
killed. They would have stopped themselves." He made a dry chuckle. "But it wasn't someone else;
it was me."

He looked up at Peter, realizing something and wondering why he hadn't seen it before. "You're not
going to get the answer you want," he said bleakly. "There's no explanation, no cause and effect. I
was there and someone else wasn't; I'm the sort of person who turns into a killer under those
pressures and other people aren't." He looked down and gave a brief lift of his brows, thinking of his
biological father, of Arthur Petrelli, Noah Bennet, and various others. "Well, some other people are,
too, but that's just how we are. There's no 'why' to this, Peter. The 'why' is … because I am who I
am." He sniffled. "I can apologize for that forever, but it doesn't change anything. Nothing changes."
His shoulders sagged in resignation. This really was hell.

Long moments ticked by in stalemate. There was nothing left to do, no apology left to make, Sylar
realized, and that realization finally lifted the burden from his heart. He'd done everything possible,
everything within his power, to explain himself and satisfy his judge. He was sorry for being who he
was, but there was nothing he could do to rewrite his past. He blinked at the table, tears clearing, as
he realized, too, that acceptance wasn't something Peter could give him. The only place it could
come from was within and somehow in his monologue, he'd come to terms with the motivating
forces in his life. Not that he was happy with the events, but he understood them himself, finally,
simple and human as they were, stripped bare of rationalizations and justifications. Some people
were taller than others; some shorter; some more prone to violence than others; some less. He was
both tall and prone to violence. Put in a situation that rewarded that tendency and discouraged other
solutions, he'd done things many people (but not all) wouldn't do. There was no emotion or regret
that would make the past right – only the open-eyed acceptance of the past as having happened
exactly as it had, for the reasons that it had. If he didn't want it to happen again, then he had to accept
why it had happened in the first place and work to make sure the future didn't repeat the pattern. That
seemed … doable.

The dreamlike quality of the place had never been so strong as when Peter's voice, even softer and
more gentle than he'd ever heard it before, invited, "Come out to the couch with me." Sylar did,
watching as Peter sat to one end of the furniture and gestured for him to join him rather than sit on
the opposite end. In the same tone, Peter continued, "Things can change, Sylar. You have." He took
a long, breathless pause, "I have." Peter leaned to the side, lifted his arm, and made an unmistakeable
gesture of 'come here'. "You are who you are … and … I think that's okay. Lie with me?"

Sylar blinked in astonishment at what was being offered. He wasn't sure what to call it, but he laid
down, the side of his body against Peter's, one arm folded underneath him and the other moving
tentatively and unrepulsed around Peter's stomach. His head ended up on Peter's chest with Peter's
arm laid over his back. He snuggled up like a little boy even though he was longer-limbed than Peter
was. Some other time he would work out fine points of geometry. For now, he contact, the gesture,
the offer – he didn't lust for it like he had just hours earlier, but he appreciated it no less. More, even,
because now it was something freely given rather than something he'd manipulated Peter into
providing. He didn't know why Peter was offering this now, but Sylar hadn't exactly been paying
attention as he laid the last of his soul bare. For once, the response of another hadn't mattered as
much as his own opinion of himself. He sighed and accepted what Peter gave him, eyes sliding shut
in unanticipated bliss.

He could hear Peter being alive. The thrumming thump of Peter's heart wasn't that different from the
ticking of a watch. After his ability manifested, people's hearts had bothered Sylar. They unsettled
him with their messiness and their irregularity. They raced; they slowed; they skipped beats. It had
gotten under his skin and was always there, in the back of his head when dealing with someone, quite a bit worse after getting enhanced hearing. Hearts weren't quite right – a flimsy, unreliable mechanism that begged to be fixed or scrapped altogether. But he'd never taken the time to listen as closely as he was doing now. He'd never focused on that organ the way he had on the brain. He could hear the rushing whoosh of blood being pumped with more mechanical precision than any other part of the body. Properly stimulated, the heart would continue beating even after removal from the host. It was one of the most durable parts of the body, reliable from cradle to grave even if occasionally erratic. If he could learn to appreciate the brain, Sylar thought, he should be able to comprehend the workings of the heart.

Hundreds of beats passed, Sylar's mind keeping itself busy with the puzzle. He heard the heartbeat trip faster for a fraction of a second before Peter's free hand rose. Intention – the heart knows what the body will do before the mind even fathoms it. It's in there, an intuition, guiding the mind about what's possible and not. You can't have one without the other – no brain without the heart to sustain it. Peter moved his hand to Sylar's cheek, stroking slowly with his thumb rather than his fingertips. He's ... letting me stay with him. Is this ... is this the connection I was supposed to find? Sylar rolled his head to look up at Peter. He didn't look dry-eyed either, no less touched by what was happening between them.

"It's going to be okay," Peter told him. "Between us."

Sylar looked at him wonderingly for a moment, then lifted himself slowly. Pushing forward, he brought his face to Peter's, gaze flickering uncertainly between eyes and lips. With Maya, Elle, and Lydia, he'd taken what he wanted just like with every other part of his life – he'd seized it for himself before it could be taken away. This time, he stopped a few inches away and waited, his expression imploring Peter to prove the promise of his words with actions. Peter waited for that pause and when it came, he raised his hand to under Sylar's chin, drawing him in as he tilted his head, lips sliding into place over Sylar's, mouth moving definitely and securely against his own.

Energy shot through Sylar – and apparently through Peter, as well, because in an instant they were hurrying to change positions. Sylar broke away to raise himself as Peter rearranged to be directly beneath him, then Peter's hand curled around the back of his neck and pulled him close for a second kiss. Sylar melted over him, easing down on top of him. He felt himself stiffen almost instantly as Peter's thighs rose on either side of him, Peter's lips parting for his tongue to slip out and tease along Sylar's. It was ticklish and made him jerk, an all-over twitch that came with a hitch in his breathing and a widening of his eyes. Oh my God … That was as far as Sylar's thoughts could go, but his body knew what came next. His heart hammered against his ribs, a better instrument than any clock, pounding out a message more important than the passage of time – it was the existence of life.

"I want you," Peter whispered huskily in his ear. It was verbal ambrosia. What followed was less palatable. "I don't know if we're ready for this. Are you?"

Sylar wanted to agree immediately; he wanted to insist he was ready for anything Peter would allow him and the erection Peter was sporting implied Peter's body, at least, was ready for quite a bit. But the question by itself was sort of staggering. That he was even being asked his desires … It was …
respectful, he realized – something he’d had very little of in his life. He was being acknowledged. His opinion, his feelings, mattered. He lifted himself up and off a few inches, getting the distance he needed to give it all of his attention. Were they, truly, ready for this level of intimacy? They were rushing into it; Sylar knew that. He’d rushed with Elle; presumably Peter had with others (Nathan believed as much). Being in a hurry didn’t doom a relationship, but it could complicate it. Yet there was no one else here to make things difficult and no reason to wait until a better time. They’d already covered so much ground between them. Sylar wanted to finalize this, to do something clear and unequivocal that showed the connection between them. He didn’t expect Peter to deny it, but this act would put fears to rest that hadn’t even had a chance to grow yet.

Peter trusted him to know his own mind. That brought a genuine, affectionate smile to Sylar's lips and a softening around his eyes. Options considered, he answered with firm resolve, "Yes. I'm ready. Are you?"

Peter shifted slightly, eyes skimming up and down Sylar's frame. He nodded shallowly, "Yeah," and then wrapped his legs tighter around Sylar's waist, pulling them back together. Fingers curled into his flesh and thighs clamped around him securely. Peter buried his face against Sylar's neck, breath hot against sensitive skin. A shiver of rapidly building desire ran through them both. It was really going to happen! The walls around their hearts were torn asunder, light streaming through both of them and setting their souls dancing in the air, spinning away from one another in a strange, reality-twisting vertigo.

Sylar blinked and jolted as he found himself in the dark, nose full of the smell of drying masonry instead of Peter's delicious scent. His abilities, all of them, stirred to life in the back of his mind as the rest of his consciousness swiftly reorganized its grip on reality. One thing was for sure – he wasn't on his couch, making out with Peter Petrelli, with a warm, sexy, and very willing body pressed to his own. The loss and change was shocking, but it was hardly the first harsh bait-and-switch he'd endured. He felt like he could actually sense his spirit shrinking. The memory of being loved seemed as unreal as anything else in the bizarre dream. Matt Parkman's ability trapped me, just like Candace's did. I must have found the way out. How much of that did I make up along the way? Anger surged up inside of him, along with an uncertainty as to what to do about Parkman's trick. Playing with his heart like that was one of the cruelest things he'd ever had done to him. Before he'd had his enforced siesta, he would have punished Matt in kind. But now? It felt wrong.

There was a noise outside, a faint scuffling. Sylar welcomed the excuse to act. He exerted his powers, channeling a telekinetic blast straight forward. And there was Peter, staggering back from the explosion, then moving forward to look at him as Sylar stepped out. Peter's expression showed no fear of him, regarding him in a familiar manner. Instantly, his rage died as he realized Peter's presence in the dream hadn't been a figment of his imagination. Peter was no demon conjured by an overactive mind to flog a confession out of him. He'd come to save him – could it all be true? His heart leapt to his throat and his spirit rebounded. He didn't dare push for answers, fearing it might all fall apart if he questioned it too much. What he knew for sure was that Peter had come for him, wasn't leaving him, and a few minutes later, he supported him when Matt threatened him. Peter was there, a hand on his back and a presence at his side. Sylar clung to that, remembering dimly that Peter had had a purpose beyond saving Sylar's soul. He had a mission to fulfill and if Sylar knew anything about Peter, it was that the mission would come first.

It was easily enough accomplished. The evening drew to a close without any new demand on their attention. The carnies were safe; Claire had left with the reporters. After one last, vigilant look over the dispersing crowd, Peter sidled closer and slipped his hand into Sylar's. Looking down at their joined hands, Peter rubbed his index finger back and forth. "Do you want to come back to my place?" He glanced up at Sylar then, all dark lashes and darker eyes. Peter looked away when he
didn't get an immediate answer; Sylar was literally wordless at the moment. Peter shrugged with affected nonchalance, giving his hand a squeeze and adding, "It's probably best to get you out of here, in case Noah or …"

"Yes." Sylar managed to blurt. He didn't think Peter was seriously considering his safety as the reason for finding some privacy. His heart soared. He could have flown back to Peter's apartment and if he'd been able to teleport, they would have been there already. Peter squeezed his hand again and off they set. They'd held hands while flying, too, but talking while supersonic was impossible. Even though Peter had tried a few bits of sign language, neither of them knew enough to hold a conversation. Watching Peter smile shyly and finger-spell his name as they'd rushed through the sky had soothed Sylar's insecurities and charmed him. It allowed him to be patient and stay focused on what he needed to do rather than what he wanted. For there to even be a difference between those two was an exotically new flavor of candy.

With the apartment door finally shut behind them, a few worries surfaced. It was possible, after all, that Peter had just invited him up for coffee or to talk and maybe not for a continuation of where the dream had left off. Sylar supposed those were … okay. They'd still sort of be together, after all. Peter had so many other choices now that they were back. He was a fool to think that wouldn't play a part in things. There would be other missions, he knew, but he didn't know where he'd fit into any of that, if he'd fit at all. To distract himself from any possible disappointment, he looked around the oddly barren apartment, thinking about the various times he or Nathan had been here in the last few years – violence, strangeness, and betrayal came to mind. No wonder he wanted answers. Things have been as fucked up for him as they were for me.

He didn't get to think more before Peter was in his arms, pinning him to the door, pulling him down for an ardent kiss. It obliterated all his doubts and reminded him acutely of how inside-of-his-own-head he'd been living recently and how little regard he'd been giving to Peter. Peter, who wanted him and was expressing that very clearly at the moment – but why? Something about solving his own internal problems had lit a fire of curiosity within Sylar to know more about others. He'd been so focused on his own journey that he'd missed the one Peter had been making parallel to him – how over the years, hatred had cooled to dislike, and then had come the questions – first as interrogation, but then becoming gentle and probing though no less persistent. And while Peter's tone softened, so too had his heart. Somewhere along the line, sympathy had become empathy which had morphed into affection – and maybe even into something more. Sylar cursed himself briefly for not having paid more attention to that ultimate transformation, though he'd been a bit busy with his own.

Peter parted from him just enough to whisper huskily against his lips, "You still want this?"

"All of it," Sylar growled without hesitation this time, kissing back and pushing Peter backwards from the door towards the bed. A flick of his fingers threw the French doors open wide. Peter scrambled onto the bed, pulling off his shirt with enthusiastic abandon. Sylar's shirt followed, the two garments landing atop one another in the corner.

Sylar paused at the bedside and took in the incredible sight of someone eagerly awaiting intimacy with him. Peter was so beautiful and perfect that it seemed almost too good to be true. Peter had had his dramatic rescue of Emma. He had to know Sylar wasn't going to go back to the life he'd had before (any of the various walks of life he'd trodden). And so Sylar found himself contemplating once more the same question Peter had pestered him with so much in the nightmare world, the same one that was already echoing around in his own skull: Why? But rather than torment Peter with years of questions, he had a short cut. He sat on the edge of the bed, eyes intent on Peter. "I have an ability from Lydia. It helps me understand people. I want to understand you. Will you let me use it?"

Wide-eyed, Peter blinked at the interruption in the moment, but took the quick de-escalation in stride.
"Okay." He nodded slowly as he took in what that meant. "I want you to understand me, so … yeah."

Sylar nodded back, turning to crawl onto the mattress and sit cross-legged before Peter, who was on his knees. Sylar reached out to cup Peter's face with a hand on each handsomely-stubbled cheek. "Using her ability has its perks." He smiled and leaned in, pressing a soft, sweet kiss to Peter's lips. He felt Peter stiffen at the foreign tingle of the ability, but he showed his trust by not pulling away. A moment later, Sylar had all the answers he needed — all the mechanisms and complications of Peter's soul were laid bare, every damaged part clear. There were a lot more of them than he'd expected. Leaning back, he observed, "You need a connection as badly as I do."

Peter defiantly pulled his face from Sylar's grasp, leaving Sylar smiling slightly at the display of 'I'm not weak' or perhaps an even more childish, 'I don't need nothing!' But Peter recognized the reaction as well as Sylar did. "Maybe," he allowed and then warned, "Things haven't been good for the people I've fallen for. Think you're up for it?"

A challenge. Peter was not at all as confident and purposeful as he acted. The passionate, pinned-to-the-door kiss of earlier and the scrambling on the bed weren't the indicators Sylar had thought they were. They were still indicators, but instead of a thoroughly thought-out course of action, it was a reckless plunge accompanied by a 'hope for the best'. It was winsome and adorable in that sweet, naïve way of Peter's. He'd take a risk on anyone, even Sylar, and he'd been battered so badly by that openness that his whole life had come apart. Sylar knew how to put it together, and that would start with building him up. "I've taken falls for worse." Sylar cocked his head philosophically, his gaze falling into Peter's. "But not for better."

Peter chuckled uncertainly, wanting to take that as an authentic compliment, but thinking it was so much more likely that Sylar was joking. He didn't look like he was joking. As always, Peter dealt with uncertainty with action and started to pull Sylar down over him to repeat their arrangement on the couch. Sylar stopped him, pulling him right back up. "I want you inside of me," Sylar said seriously, taking Peter's chin and giving him a quick smooch, then backing off a few inches. This was far more important than he suspected Peter knew.

Sylar knew it wasn't enough for Peter to have the anticlimactic non-answer he'd gained in the dream world, that Sylar was as he was. It had been enough for Sylar, but he'd seen in Peter's heart that it wasn't enough for him — not really, not completely. Ultimately, that wouldn't satisfy someone who had so determinedly peeled back every layer of Sylar's being, trying to metaphorically get inside him. To have Peter accept him entirely, forever, Sylar had to let him get inside him physically, to know him in every way, and to claim him. And Sylar so badly wanted to be claimed. It would finalize that connection, just as he'd wanted to do in the dream world.

For a long, dangling moment, Sylar wondered if he'd misread the signs he'd divined with Lydia's ability. Peter's gorgeous, liquid eyes were inches from his own, taking him in and sizing him up. Then with a sudden, decisive huff of breath, Peter pushed forward and kissed him hard and lustily, guiding him over backwards, heads towards the foot of the bed. Sylar squirmed to unfold his legs and then raised his knees around Peter's hips just as Peter had done to him on the couch. He'd never been in this position with a male: face to face. His hands wrapped around the bare skin of Peter's sides, fingers skating across the moving planes of muscle on his back. Peter bent to Sylar's neck, kissing and working his way up in separate applications of lips and teeth. Sylar groaned at the riveting feeling of Peter's breath alternating hot and cool against him. Peter rolled his pelvis in a slow rocking motion, rubbing them together and bringing yet another dimension of pleasure to bear.

A desperate urge to hurry passed through Sylar. He wanted this to happen. He wanted it to be real. He didn't want to get interrupted by dreams or gunshots or Peter's mother calling on the phone at the
exact wrong time. He stopped gripping the valley of Peter's spine and instead scrambled at their pants. Peter let him, but moved up distractingly to kiss his mouth, all tongue and pulsing lips, one kiss after another, hard and soft and all over and then just sucking in one lip at a time. Sylar couldn't take it - his eyes rolled back in their sockets as his hands gave up their task only half done and seized Peter's still fully-clothed hips. Even aside from drowning in sensation, he could hardly breathe with the oral assault Peter was laying on him. His own pants were open, his erection straining for release as Peter's matching hardness ground against him.

"Ugh." Sylar tried to pull himself together, vague thoughts about telekinesis and pulling his jeans off getting repeatedly disrupted by Peter's hums and smooches and being awash in the experience of the man being right up in his face and staying there. He finally put his hand on Peter's chest and pushed him away. It took more resolve than he'd expected, but it was the only way he was going to get any more of his clothes off.

Peter took the opportunity to follow his example, ending naked and on his knees between Sylar's legs. As Sylar settled back into his former position, Peter licked his finger and ran it daringly from the tip of Sylar's erect cock to the base, a glowing golden light sparking between the two of them. What the hell is that? Sylar's eyes widened. He was okay with abilities, obviously as he'd just used one to toss his pants over on the growing pile in the corner, but having something completely unknown applied without warning (to his penis of all things) was startling. Everything felt okay, though.

Peter smiled smugly at him and put that hand out to the side, a focused expression passing over his face. Lotion flew to his hand a moment later and Sylar supposed Peter could be forgiven for showing off his single ability when Sylar had more than a dozen. "It's been a while for me," Peter said hesitantly, explaining his lack of prober sexual lubricant as he popped the cap on the bottle. It was unscented at least. "I don't have condoms, either. I'm tested at work; I'm clean. If you'd rather do other things, I'm okay with that …"

Sylar shook his head, crooking an elbow to put his hand behind his head, watching Peter let a little vulnerability show through. "I want you in me," Sylar repeated his objective firmly. He had no idea of his own 'status', but of all his various problems, he'd never had symptoms of that issue. He had regeneration and Peter could acquire that ability from him. STDs were not a realistic concern, but he was glad Peter brought it up. He was thinking, at least – thinking about Sylar and his safety.

Peter nodded, setting aside the bottle as he leaned over Sylar, one hand coming down on the edge of the mattress near his head while the other, slick and searching, moved up between Sylar's legs. Peter kissed him, gentler, slower kisses now than they had been earlier. The back of his thumb found the bottom of Sylar's testicles and stroked back and forth across them, causing his scrotum to involuntarily tighten and draw up. Peter smiled, feeling the tender skin he'd been rubbing go from smooth to wrinkled in a few heartbeats. Wet, lotion-heavy fingers began to probe lower down. Sylar's legs pulled up further, knees high as his gut clenched and anxious butterflies took flight in his stomach. He worried about being too hairy or dirty or having some physical trait previously unbeknownst to him that might make him unsuitable for the act. His hands stroked nervously up and down Peter's wonderfully smooth chest and abdomen. He tried to fight off the feeling of possible inadequacy, but the strongest blow against that was how Peter didn't pause or flinch or turn away. Peter used his skilled digits to smear Sylar thoroughly, the slick, sliding sensation on his anus titillating and tantalizing with the promise/threat of more.

Sylar pulled Peter down for a longer kiss, hands on each side of his face as he called on Lydia's power again. He needed the reassurance it offered. Peter wasn't going to hurt him; Peter's motives were pure (or, well, as pure as you could expect for someone currently overcome with the desire to fuck your brains out). It was what Sylar needed to know – no hidden agenda, no manipulation, no reservations. Peter wanted him, might even love him although he wasn't quite to verbalizing that yet.
He was still a lot closer to it than Sylar was, which blew Sylar away that anyone could feel that way towards him at all. He let go the last of his reservations and tried to relax all the right muscles to make this work the way he'd heard it did between people who wanted the pleasure to be mutual.

A single finger breached him and he jerked, wondering, realizing, that Peter had felt what he'd done in using Lydia's power, but hadn't let it interrupt this time. His hips bucked as Peter hooked his finger up and brushed over sensitive, internal parts. Peter showered kisses in a trail across Sylar's cheek and then back along his jawline as he probed and opened him.

"You want me," Sylar whispered to him as earnestly as if it were a profession of his own attraction.

"Don't need an ability to find that out," Peter made a rough chuckle, turning his head to work his way down Sylar's throat. His fingers, plural now, pistoned in and out slowly.

Sylar tipped his head back, baring himself eagerly. Mindful of the dangers of his Adam's apple bobbing around under the circumstances, he took the risk anyway and said, "I didn't hurt anyone for that one. It's special."

Peter lifted and looked at him, hand stilling for a moment before he leaned in to kiss his mouth tenderly and slowly. "You're special no matter what." He eased his hand out, lotioned himself heavily, and moved into position after tucking a pillow under Sylar's rump. Sylar canted his hips up, trying to visualize how the angles were going to work and wishing he'd watched more gay porn in his rather sheltered and limited sexual life. Peter knew what he was doing, though, and he could feel the hot, rounded head of Peter's cock pressing against him, one hand on it to guide it in, the other bracing Peter's upper body as he mounted his partner.

Sylar reached up to pet his face, watching the expressions of concentration and desire play out across Peter's features. He had enough of an idea of what was about to happen to bear down at the right point, feeling the gradual stretching as Peter pressed inside of him bit by careful bit. The feeling went from odd to uncomfortable to something Sylar could only describe as 'hungry' in a far shorter order than he expected. His breathing turned to gasps. He moved his hand from Peter's cheek to slip it behind his neck, holding on as Peter began to flex back and forth, adding a whole new magnitude to the experience. That was new, different, and good. "Oh!" popped out of his mouth unintentionally as Peter prodded his way deeper, the delicate, nerve-filled skin of his ass being pulled and pushed, the muscles of his sphincters being gently coaxed even further open.

Peter stooped to kiss him – long, slow, and unbearably sweet. Finding himself surprisingly impatient, Sylar started moving his hips himself and Peter let him fuck himself on him for a while before taking over with one final push, socketing them together as deep as he could go. Sylar gave up any illusion of dignity and moaned, clenching his hands on Peter's shoulders, then he growled possessively as he tightened his legs around Peter's buttocks. This was his – it was finally his! Peter pushed him down and started riding him harder, tirelessly filling and refilling Sylar's body with his cock. He was taking him, pounding himself into him, and making them one. Sylar offered himself up, giving a loose, smug smirk of immense satisfaction as Peter worked and sweated and pumped away at him.

Sylar's dick was hard between them, bobbing and slapping against his stomach in time with Peter's thrusts. Sylar touched himself occasionally, but mostly he was just along for the ride, thrilled at what was happening. It was so fucking unbelievable. Everything about it made his head spin. He tried to stay focused on Peter and on how much Peter wanted him. He felt loved … and damned if he didn't feel what he imagined love to be, swelling to life inside of him.

Peter stopped for a moment, shifting his weight and displacing Sylar's half-hearted tugging at himself. "I want to feel you come … around me," Peter murmured as he leaned in what was an impressive one-handed push-up, kissing Sylar deeply. Mouth, dick, ass all being stimulated at once
by a lover, Sylar was overwhelmed by this growing, glowing, tingling limerent feeling of being high burning inside of him. When the kiss ended, he flopped back, his head dipping off the end of the bed, as Peter wasn't quite as good at keeping them on the furniture while one of his hands was busy. Sylar thought about trying to give them leverage with telekinesis, but … fuck it. He didn't care if they fucked on the floor or hanging from the ceiling. He was getting stroked and pounded in sync and wasn't going to last long enough anyway, although the real reason was that in all of that huge brain of his, he couldn't spare the brain cells. Every one of them was too busy with the experience just as it was.

After a few more seconds, Peter repeated his athleticism of earlier, bending to bite and nip at Sylar's exposed throat. It was so easy for that particular maneuver to be brutal, life-ending even, yet Peter was so delicate, so careful. Sylar felt himself losing it - arousal lit him up even brighter from inside, warming and spreading, coiling through his form until it settled in his balls, a hot, building pressure desperate for release. Nothing else existed but the urge to come, Peter's hand working him, and Peter's shaft filling him. He was wanted, taken, and used – everything he wanted, all at once. He burst out, ejaculating across Peter's hand, his asshole tightening and squeezing around Peter's cock.

"Ha," Peter puffed out triumphantly, moved to speak even if he was lacking a bit in articulation at the moment. "Oh yeah. Baby. Yeah. Fuck. Yeah!" He went back to both hands, bracing himself through his own climax a few moments later. This time, Sylar finally used telekinesis to keep him from taking a fall for Peter in a very literal fashion. It would be exactly the wrong moment for Peter's needs, as the man was grunting and vigorously slamming himself home, shoving into him as hard as flesh would bear. Sylar knew he was being well and thoroughly fucked. Peter's breath caught and his thrusts shuddered to an erratic stop as his cock pulsed, spilling his seed. Finally spent, Peter sank over Sylar and held them together as his hips started moving again, making a few last, parting rolls out of instinct or just indulgence. "Oh … yeah. Fuck me," he muttered. A second later, as sense finally penetrated the fog of lust Peter was in, he noticed there was nothing but empty air beyond Sylar's shoulders. "Uh?"

"Hold onto me." Sylar lifted them both and reoriented them back on the mattress. "There. Safe now."

"Hm. Yeah." Peter nuzzled him, lifting his weight off and slowly extracting himself before returning for more nuzzling and pecking at Sylar's face. The endorphin rush left them both affectionate and cuddling. Sylar's muscles felt watery and bone-deep sore in a few places. For the moment, he elected to leave his regeneration off-line. The feeling was fantastic – like nothing else he'd ever had. To be on the receiving end of a partner who was so attentive to his pleasure was mind-blowing. He felt so vulnerable, yet safe. Peter rubbed his nose against his cheek, asking, "Is this … what you want? Someone to love? Can … Could I be …"

Sylar smiled wanly as Peter tried to pick his way to a declaration he'd made so easily to many people before. It was always easier when you'd just met someone and had little on the line. It was tougher when someone already meant a lot to you, when you were invested, when you felt like you'd lived with them for years and knew them inside and out. That was when there was more to lose, but Peter was still trying gamely to say it, and he was enough of a romantic to think they needed to talk about it, right now. Silly man, Sylar thought, and rescued Peter from his struggle. "Yes. This is what I wanted: someone to-" He paused for a moment, wondering if Peter had intentionally tricked him into saying it first. Even if it wasn't the classic, three-word formula, the meaning was the same. From the sly little smile tickling the corner of Peter's mouth, Sylar knew the answer. Well. So he's not an entirely open book after all. That's good. Clever, clever. Sylar's smile broadened and he finished, "Someone to love, someone to love me."
Drabble. Peter innocently considers an alternate pronunciation of Sylar's name. Sylar, though, is not so innocent.

Peter's mouth moved slightly, then he spoke. "Your name … Sy-lar …" His next pronunciation was even more off. "Sayler … that sounds like sailor."

"And your name sounds like dick, Peter," Sylar snapped immediately.

Peter stared at him for a moment, then grinned, then laughed out loud. "It sounds like dick? That's … Hahaha!" He teased, "Is that what you think about when you say my name?"

Sylar frowned reproachfully. "Who's got the dirtier mind, Petrelli? You're the one who said my name reminded you of seamen."

Peter shook his head "There's no question who has the dirtier mind."
Chapter Summary

Peter and Sylar, sitting on a rooftop talking, when Peter's loneliness gets the better of him.

It started as no more than a pat on the forearm as they reclined on the rooftop, watching the sunset. Romantic in other situations, but for the most part, they were simply bored and indulging Peter's interest (or in Sylar's opinion, obsession) with high places.

"Yeah, it certainly did," Peter stated, wrapping up his opinion on the lousy moral conduct shown by the Company and how it had screwed both of them up.

Pat, pat, pat – Peter reached out and administered the usual consoling gesture, which was just as usually followed by lifting away one's hand because that was the entire gesture. At the close of the third pat, however, Peter's hand didn't lift away. It just rested there like Sylar's forearm was his new arm rest. Even Peter glanced over, like his hand had done something surprising and on its own. He looked at it. Sylar looked at it. Peter settled a little in his chair and shut his eyes, hand still in place. Sylar looked from Peter's face to his hand, very much appreciating the contact, but full of questions nonetheless. It was nice to be touched, even if he wondered if the shut eyes meant Peter was thinking of someone else. Peter wasn't – he wasn't thinking of anyone or anything but the feel of warm, human skin under his own, ignoring entirely who it belonged to. There was nothing sexual in this – he was just lonely and tempted.

Peter sighed. Eventually, there was no way to justify what he was doing. Reluctantly, he lifted his hand away. A moment later, Sylar sat up, reached across with his other hand, and wrapped thumb and forefinger around Peter's wrist, drawing him back. Peter stiffened, eyes flying between Sylar's hand and face, 'What's the meaning of this?' writ on his features. He jerked his hand back an inch. Sylar's grip was loose. Instead of tightening, he let Peter pull free, then followed and gently, persistently, led Peter back. Not being forced to it, Peter let him, though he stayed at alert.

Hardly much to be alert about. Sylar replaced Peter's hand on his arm and shot Peter a hopeful, questioning glance before putting his hand over Peter's and squeezing lightly. Then he let go and leaned back, waiting to see what would happen. Peter looked at where his hand had been put. A moment later, he flexed his fingers around the lean limb, fingertips pressing in and releasing. He sighed again, settling back down and accepting the positioning.

Most of a minute passed just like that without further movement, but then Peter began to pet Sylar just a little, then more. He slid his hand from Sylar's elbow to wrist, palm down at first and then with the backs of his knuckles. Sylar watched him, eyes large with a faint expression of either supplication or gratitude. In either case, he liked it … a lot. Peter's fingers played briefly across the back of Sylar's hand before returning to give a few more slow strokes to his forearm, ordering the sometimes unruly dark hairs.

"You like this?" Peter asked.

"Yes."
Peter drew in a deep breath and let it out. "I don't know what I'm doing."

Sylar had nothing to say to that. He didn't know either, but he liked that Peter was doing it.

Peter's forefinger teased along the top edge of Sylar's thumb, making Sylar wonder if he should rotate his arm to expose the softer, more sensitive skin underneath. "Will you ever like me?" Peter blurted, looking up at Sylar with a brief expression that was both raw and desperate.

Sylar felt a twist in his chest, remembering Peter's words linking intimacy to … liking. Or affection. And the question itself: did he like Peter? Could he? Not just Peter's touch or what Peter could do for or to him, but Peter as a person?

Before he could answer such a deceptively simple-seeming question, Peter was pulling away, muttering brusquely as he rose, "I shouldn't have said that." Sylar's mouth opened to call after him, but he couldn't even get Peter's name out, mind still locked up with the conundrum that he wanted to like Peter, wasn't sure he did, sure as hell couldn't admit it if it were true, and so what to say? Sylar wanted to be touched, yearned for it, but he wasn't going to ruin it with a facile lie. The door to the roof swung shut behind Peter and Sylar slumped back in his chair, looking out into the gathering darkness.
Physical Training

Chapter Summary

Peter talks Sylar into joining him in the weight room. Two scenes – one from Sylar's 
POV and the next from Peter's.

"No, no. You need to lock your wrists." Peter left the weight bench he'd just finished setting up to 
his satisfaction and returned to Sylar, who froze in place at his approach. Peter's hands were gentle, 
though, moving across Sylar's hands and forearms as he positioned the weight. "Like that. Keep your 
wrists straight." Peter went through the motion of an upright row to demonstrate.

Sylar exhaled, mentally reviewed what Peter wanted him to do, and repeated the motion. He had 
hand weights in each hand – lighter than he thought he needed, but the bit about his wrists was 
hardly Peter's first piece of unsolicited assistance. He stood erect, pulling the weight from waist level 
to mid-chest, his elbow bending to the side. He paused at the apex of the lift. "I can raise this higher."

"Don't. You can pinch nerves in your shoulders. That right there is good." He touched Sylar's wrists 
again – ever so touchy, Sylar thought, appreciating that quality of Peter – and said, "Just like I don't 
want you spraining your wrists. Don't bend them. You're not trying to work your wrist muscles 
here." Peter stepped back and assessed his form for a few moments. "Don't lock your knees, just 
your wrists."

Sylar snorted an exhale at the constant corrections and flexed his knees slightly. Peter had mentioned 
that right at first, but Sylar had straightened at some point in the exercise. "Why do you care?"

"What?" Peter turned around from where he'd begun to go back to his own equipment.

"I asked why you care if I get sprained muscles. I'm working out with you either way. Is it that you 
don't want to see it being done wrong?"

"No." Peter's brows knit. "I care if you get hurt, Sylar."

Sylar gave Peter a level look, although he continued to do the exercises Peter had directed. "Why 
does that matter to you?" As much as Sylar wouldn't mind having ice packs prepared for him and 
Peter doting on him (and Sylar knew Peter would, which was adorable and unsettling at the same 
time), he couldn't see what Peter got out of it whether he did it right or wrong.

Peter sputtered at a loss for words momentarily. "Well, I just do!" His embarrassment morphed into a 
scowl and Peter growled at him, "You've locked your knees again. Quit that."

"Yes, Peter," he said with a singsong voice suited for 'yes, dear'. Sylar smiled slightly, amused by 
Peter's irritation, but even more taken by the idea the man cared about his safety and comfort for no 
reason other than … well, because he was Peter and Sylar was Sylar. Sylar couldn't think of anyone 
who knew him at all who had ever cared for him like that. It was charming and very attractive.
Panting heavily, Peter toppled onto the bench next to Sylar. Although they'd both been doing cardio exercises for the same length of time, Sylar seemed almost perfectly composed. As he caught his breath, Peter carded the sweaty, lanky hair out of his own face to better regard his companion. Sylar looked only the slightest bit winded. "You know," Peter puffed, "that friend of mine who worked as my trainer," he paused for a couple more deep breaths, "had a saying, 'If you can talk while you're doing cardio, you're not working hard enough.'"

Sylar raised a brow at him. "That's not much of a saying. 'No pain, no gain' has a much better ring to it."

Peter snorted. "My point is that you're not pushing yourself hard enough to get any improvement."

"Maybe I'm already perfect."

Peter leaned back against the wall behind them, chuckling. "You keep telling yourself that, buddy."

Sylar gave him a very brief, softer smile. Peter'd noticed he did that a lot when called 'buddy'. And they were buddies as far as Peter was concerned. He placed the term as less emotionally-laden than 'friend', but they were obviously more than just associates. Then Sylar looked away, silent.

Peter didn't think it was his imagination that Sylar had tensed a little. He did that, too, a lot – he froze up when Peter approached him, stiffened sometimes in a sort of abbreviated flinch, and fell silent when words might betray something he was concerned about. Without thinking it through, a conclusion formed in Peter's mind and came out in words. "You're afraid to get tired around me. You think I might do something to you if you were too exhausted to fight me off."

It definitely wasn't Peter's imagination – he saw muscles flex in Sylar's legs, bare other than shorts, and in his forearms. His hands and face stayed impassive through sheer will. "I am not afraid of you."

Peter eyed him perceptively, seeing the lie for what it was but deciding to leave it alone for the sake of Sylar's ego. "Okay. But you're holding back. You're not going to accomplish anything if you keep doing that. You're going to have to commit if you want any development here."

Sylar's head snapped back to him and after a focused examination of Peter's face, the man said, "If it were anyone else who said that, I'd think that had to be subtext. But with you," Sylar faced forward again, "I'm sure you're only talking about my cardiovascular health."

Peter frowned, thinking over his words. Seeing what Sylar was getting at, Peter got to his weary feet and planted his hand briefly on Sylar's shoulder. "Well, you're not going to get any other development, either, as long as you're making me do all the work." He headed off to the showers, mulling over the possibility of 'developments' between them.
Chapter Summary

Peter floats a theory past Sylar about how Peter might get his powers back.

There's a word for that. Huh. Peter watched him, wondering if Sylar had some insight on Peter's current interest. It wouldn't hurt to see what the other man thought. "I was thinking maybe I still had my abilities." That got Sylar's attention, immediately. Peter pursed his lips, going on, "When I got them, it was a change to my DNA. I got sick for a while – after I met you, after I got so many at once. Getting new abilities was always a little bit of a shock to my system because it changed me. It changed who and what I was." He swallowed. "So I was thinking when my father did what he did, it would have been easier to turn everything off instead of take them all away and have to change everything back."

Sylar's brows rose and he looked away introspectively for a moment, considering that.

Peter asked, "What if they're still there and I just have to learn how to turn them on again?"

Slyly, Sylar said, "That's possible. I don't know how your father's ability worked."

"Yeah. I know. Me neither. But a lot less possible things have happened. Sometimes we just have to keep trying until something works, you know? I thought I'd start with drawing and try to remember how it made me feel, how Isaac made me feel." He paused, watching Sylar's slight nod, taking it as a sign of approval. "Portentous," Peter pronounced carefully.

"Hm," Sylar said softly as he turned back to his book.

Peter pulled out a red pencil, then put it back and pulled out black. Changing his mind again, he settled on grey, which would be a good one to use to outline whatever it was he was going to draw. At that, his mind was blank. He looked around the apartment for inspiration. There was sure to be something around here he could use as a model. His eyes settled on Sylar and a small, sly smile
creased Peter's features. He flipped open the sketch pad, adjusted its position on the desk, and went to work.
"It goes without saying that you can touch me any way you want – you already do, after all." Sylar sank into the mustard-yellow, leather-clad easy chair across from Peter, a tiny, glass table between them in the cozy little retro coffee shop. He pressed his lips together after his words and regarded Peter, who was blinking at him in surprise at this odd way to start a conversation. Sylar knew it was weird as hell and maybe it was a little early in the morning for this, but he didn't know how else to broach the subject. "What I want to know is what is allowed for touching you."

"Me?" A squawk.

"Yes. You are the only other person in the world, as far as I know."

Peter's brows pulled together, but thankfully he didn't argue. He didn't say anything else, either, which led Sylar to sigh internally and repeat the question. "Where may I touch you in a way that doesn't get me hit?" He'd had enough of that.

"Touch me how?"

"Casually," he bit out, because he wanted so much more, but thought it was wiser to start small. Hence this entire conversation – the come-ons were turned down harshly in those moments when Peter noticed them at all. It wasn't like the need and the drive wasn't there - Peter was both very physical and very sexual. Sylar needed to find a way past the inhibitions.

He had Peter's attention, though, which was a good start. After a moment of thought, he answered in a manner Sylar found useful and intriguing. "You can touch me casually anywhere other than my ass, my groin, and my chest." He pronounced this like it was a written rule, something that had always been true and always would be, and something Sylar should have already been aware of.

But Sylar's mind abounded in questions. Why the chest? His chest is off limits but his face isn't? His hair isn't off limits either! You mean I could have been touching his hair this whole time? But not his chest, because of course that's an obvious area for a man to refuse to be touched, he thought sarcastically. Well, that is part of why I was asking. "What about … other touching?" Sylar's expression insinuated dirty things.

Peter's face hardened and his voice became clipped. "What 'other touching'?"

Okay, that's not going to work. Flirty = shutdown, every time. Adopting innocence, he said, "Supportive touching."

Peter narrowed his eyes briefly at Sylar, then shrugged. "Wherever. I don't care. As long as it's really you supporting me, helping. That's different."

Sylar nodded slowly. No ass/groin/chest exemption this time. "I meant it literally, yes. What about medically?" He assumed the answer was the same. This time he was not surprised.
"Yeah," Peter nodded. "Anywhere." Again, though, he felt the need to throw in a glare and say threateningly, "Assuming we're not talking about euphemisms?"

"No, we're not," Sylar said immediately, irritated by Peter's tone and how Sylar's one intimation of 'other touching' was still causing Peter to bite at him. "What about violent touching?" In case I need to do some. Any conversation between the two of them had the potential to spiral in unlikely directions. Sylar preferred to believe this was due to chemistry.

Peter's head pulled back, brows knitting together. Sylar wondered briefly what Peter made of the line of questioning. Did he accept each new question as an unexpected non-sequitor? Was he puzzling out Sylar's true motivations or did he already know them? Sometimes Peter would see right through Sylar, shocking him with the realization that Peter had been onto him from the start. Other times, Peter acted so dense it was a wonder the planet didn't collapse into a singularity. Peter said, "I would prefer you didn't touch me violently at all."

Sylar gave a sardonic, fatalistic loft of his brows. Fine. He's never any fun. But Peter apparently thought better of it and came back for clarification. "Do you mean, like, playing?"

"Yes," Sylar answered patiently. Peter clearly did not understand the purpose of violence. For Peter, it was a means of achieving an end – you used it to remove obstacles or achieve goals when other methods failed. For Sylar, it was an end unto itself. It was fun, exciting, and made his blood race to pit himself against someone. Violence was a game he wanted to play over and over again, and hurting his partner too badly would prevent that. In their first fights, it had quickly become apparent that Peter had no interest in preserving Sylar's ability to fight again some other day. Quite the contrary, Peter escalated with absurd rapidity, making physical conflict so costly and risky that Sylar had faced each new one with the fear it would be the last. He'd had to look out for himself – nothing new; it was depressingly familiar. If they were to survive, he had to change things.

"Playing. Okay. Like sports?" Sylar nodded to Peter's question. Peter went on, "That's okay. Anything but my groin. Nut shots are never cool."

Sylar blinked slowly. Chest and ass are okay, though? Sports-related butt-pats get a bye, then. His face is still not off-limits either. Does he mean that, or is he just not thinking about it because he thinks that should be taken for granted? Sylar looked down, contemplating that and deciding to stop here for the day. He'd learned some interesting things he wanted to think over a bit more and Peter seemed too jumpy to tolerate a follow-up question about intimate touching.

The silence invited Peter to ask his own questions, and he did. "How about you? Do you have the same limits?"

Sylar lifted his head, taking a moment to figure out why he'd ask that when Sylar had started the talk by addressing it. He doesn't believe me. "I meant what I said," he said levelly. "You can touch me anywhere you want."

Peter looked at him straight for a moment, then snorted a disbelieving laugh. "No. You're not telling me you'd be okay with me just copping a feel whenever I was curious."

"Yes. That's what I'm telling you." He tried to keep his tone factual instead of arch as he wanted it to be, offended by Peter very nearly calling him a liar. Why is this so hard for him to believe? He's always fondling my shoulders or arms or the back of my neck or petting my back and touching against my hands when we do things. I never stop him. I don't even call attention to it. Does he not notice what he's doing?

"Seriously?"
Do I detect a hint of interest there? Temptation maybe? Did his mind jump to copping a feel because he genuinely is curious? Sylar sprawled backwards in his seat, spreading his legs and putting his arms along the armrests of the chair, slouching back. Peter was staring at him. Sylar almost -almost-rumbled his invitation before catching himself and changing his voice from seductive to challenging. The small difference was crucial. "Try me." With that, he shut his eyes. He didn't have to wait long. He knew Peter well enough to know that. He heard Peter stand. For a moment, there was the wavering probability Peter would stalk off and leave. That by itself would be good to know because it would confirm Peter's disinterest and establish that the 'hint' Sylar had detected was wishful thinking. But Peter didn't stalk off. He stepped around the table until his knee brushed Sylar's without any evident attempt to minimize contact. Focused only on the sounds, he heard Peter draw in a deep breath, then felt the light stir of air on his arm as Peter let it out. *He's going to do it. Or something, at least.*

Sylar felt the warm pads of fingertips touch his forearm, immediately above his watch. They touched and rested there, immobile. *Nothing so direct as grabbing my junk, then.* Sylar breathed evenly, relaxed in appearance and fact. Tension served no purpose at the moment and he could strike out at Peter as quickly from repose as from alert. Plus, he was nearly certain he didn't need to. A moment later, he felt the change in texture as Peter curled his hand so it was the back of his fingers rubbing against Sylar's arm. *Is he just testing me?*

The contact stopped. It hadn't lasted long, really, although Sylar missed it as soon as it ceased. Not knowing what else to do, he turned his arm over in mute invitation, baring the underside like a dog asking for a belly scratch. That seemed to help, as Peter returned to touching him, tickling over the sensitive skin so lightly that Sylar made an involuntary noise. His skin pimpled with goosebumps. Peter almost immediately made an appreciative noise in return. *He liked that!*

Peter began full-on stroking him, fingers gripping around his forearm and gliding up and down it like it was an enormous shaft. Sylar felt uncomfortable in his groin and shifted slightly in his seat. Peter made another faint, pleased noise before saying softly, "Look at me."

Sylar opened his eyes. *He wants to be seen. He wants the attention. That's why he liked that before – it wasn't the goosebumps, it was that I reacted.* He held Peter's eyes until the other man looked down to where he put one hand on the arm of the chair. It freed the other so he could tease up Sylar's biceps, stopping at the hem of the shirt sleeve as though it was some barrier to be tested and explored. Sylar sighed wistfully, turning his head to gaze up at Peter in a manner he hoped was adoring and encouraging. This was already way more intimate than any passing shoulder-grope Peter might give him. Sylar's heart was thudding in his chest. Everything seemed warm and tingly.

Instead of withdrawing, though, Peter's hand made the leap and brushed across his shoulder and upper chest. *Anywhere?*

"Yes," Sylar murmured, wishing sorely that there was some form of touching he could do right now that could legitimately be considered 'casual'. It was breaking over and through him that Peter's
inhibitions had nothing to do with asking for Peter's permission to touch him and everything to do with telling Peter he had permission. It was blindingly simple (and so very like Peter that something so stupid would be his hang-up).

Peter rested his hand over Sylar's heart, flattening, palm down. He had to be able to feel the organ's pounding. Sylar wondered if Peter could even hear it. Taking a risk of how he would interpret the gesture, Sylar brought his right hand over to Peter's. *This is supportive, right? Or maybe even medical.* Sylar stroked gently down from elbow to hand, where he rested his over Peter's, over his heart, which felt like it was fluttering or misfiring. He hoped it wasn't serious, because the more this went on, the more strongly it was happening and the less he wanted to take a moment out to work out why it was doing that. It was worrying. "Can you feel that?" he finally asked.

Peter smiled and nodded, soft and romantic in a way that made Sylar's gut clench and his pants felt more uncomfortable than ever. Sylar wondered even if Peter was doing this intentionally, creating these weird sensations. Had he come over here and put his hand on Sylar's heart to ...? Sylar's brain was fuzzing out. Looking up, all he wanted to do was pull Peter down to him for a kiss. He reached for him, but Peter gave his chest a little push, clearly a discouragement.

"Not yet."

"'Yet'?" Sylar asked, seeing as that was almost a promise for later.

Peter drew in a deep breath and straightened, his hand returning to his side and Sylar's heart thudding away with almost painful beats. Peter said, "I ... I might have been wrong on some of the things I said earlier. Let me think about it." With that, he patted Sylar on the side of the forearm, his hand trailing off down that limb to perch briefly on Sylar's watch before finally breaking contact. Peter gave him a shy, awkward smile before turning and leaving to have his 'think'.

Sylar shut his eyes and let his head fall back, waiting the few seconds until the coffee shop door closed. It felt like his body was on fire, every blood vessel about to burst – particularly the ones in the organ currently swelling his jeans. It was not ten seconds after the door shut behind Peter before Sylar had his cock in his hand.
After a long time together, Sylar has figured out a lot about how Peter works. There is a very personal issue Sylar wants Peter to understand.

"I have some questions to ask you," Sylar said as they sat down in his apartment. He felt safe here. He felt like 'him' here. He knew he needed those small supports because he was about to break open a subject neither of them was going to be happy about. When Peter seemed well situated on the couch, Sylar leaned forward in the armchair and asked, "When you arrived at the hospital in Odessa to see Matt Parkman, who did you think was with you?"

"Nathan. You."

That was a confusing answer. Sylar clarified it. "Which did you think was with you at the time?"

"Nathan."

"Looking back on it now, who do you think was with you?"

"Uh … Nathan?" Peter's brows drew together a little as though not sure what the difference was in the question.

Sylar blinked. He'd had this suspicion about Peter, hence this line of questioning. "You think that was Nathan? Now, with everything you know now."

Peter tilted his head like a dog at an odd noise. "Yeah."

Sylar breathed out slowly. Peter's sense of identity and who people were wasn't quite lining up with his own and since Sylar was personally involved in this one, the interpretation mattered. A lot. "Okay," he allowed, moving on but not forgetting. "After I touched Matt's hand, who were you with?"

"Nathan."

"After I touched Matt's hand."

"Yeah? At least, I think it was Nathan. I got knocked out."

"Yes. But when I tried to drop you off in the desert?"

"Nathan?"

He stared at Peter, but the guy was entirely serious. The occasional questioning tone seemed more of a 'why would you even doubt this?' sort of thing than any uncertainty on Peter's part. Peter's first answer, 'Nathan; you,' came back to Sylar. "You … don't see a difference between me and Nathan."

"Yeah I do."
Sylar raised his brows again. Once more, Peter was serious. The urge to assume he was lying was strong, but he'd found Peter to be generally very honest with him, scrupulously so. That he would be lying now at such a moment, didn't stand up to scrutiny. There was no reason why Peter would lie at this juncture. The simpler answer, Occam's Razor, was that Peter was telling the truth as he saw it. It was the whole matter of that perception that Sylar was trying to get at. "Why would it make a difference that you were knocked out at the hospital? I'm going to be who I am regardless of whether or not you're conscious."

It was now Peter's turn to blink at him. "What? No, you're not. You don't have to be, necessarily." He gave Sylar a look that doubted Sylar's sanity. "You weren't always."

I wasn't … always. Does he think I really became other people at times? He thinks … I was Nathan all those weeks? "So if I use shapeshifting to look like Nathan again and start acting like him, who am I?"

"How would I know?"

Sylar leaned back, feeling a weird trembling in his limbs. He was glad he was sitting. This is why he did that at Mercy Heights. This is how a good-hearted person can do something so horrible and get away with it without a single moral qualm. He genuinely thought I would be Nathan – not that he would make me into Nathan, but that I was Nathan. "You … know … Nathan's dead, right?"

"Yes." Peter bit that word out with slightly bared teeth.

"But … you think I could still be him, is that it?" Like he could be brought back from the dead through me with the right combination of powers? That was a frightening thought; even more that Peter apparently believed it. It made it even more important to correct Peter's thinking on this matter.

Peter's eyes narrowed. "I don't know. Are you?"

NO! Sylar clamped his lips shut firmly over that reflexive mental shout. Clasping his hands, he put them in front of his mouth to hold back any possible outburst. This was explaining a lot. Peter's most monstrous act looked so different now. He was starting to understand so many things Peter did and said as a consequence, how he treated Sylar … hell, how he treated other people and why he didn't question Sylar's name. "So … you think I am Nathan if I think I'm him. Is that right?"

Peter shrugged slightly. "I think you are Nathan if you are Nathan. I don't know if you are or not. Unless you're acting like him or talking like him. I don't know how else I'd know."

And if I were living his life, pretending to be him … then you would say I was him. He remembered that hollow feeling of not belonging, not being right with the world that he'd had constantly as faux-Nathan. It made his stomach roil just to think about it. Gently, gently though, because he'd figured out what Peter's buttons and levers were and hitting him too hard with things would just make him defensive, Sylar asked, "Don't you see all of that was just an act, Peter?"

Peter cringed a little and some of the light went out in his eyes. Sylar felt his heart hurt in response, even though he didn't understand the reason for the pain he'd just inflicted, he could see that inflict it he had. Peter rubbed his knees anxiously and gave Sylar a pained look. "You didn't think it was just an act, Peter?"

"'You'. Look at me, Peter. Who am I?"

"Sylar."

"If I use shape shifting and I look like someone else, who am I then?"
Peter blinked successively. He looked uncertain, but what Sylar wanted was happening – Peter was listening, he was taking it in, he was thinking. "You're … Sylar. Looking like someone else."

"Okay." *Would he have thought I was actually the president if I'd managed to get to him for real? I think he would have!* The possibilities were mind-blowing. Peter's behavior towards him when he'd been labelled as his brother came back as well. Then from Nathan's memories, he recalled the easier switch in his inclusive, supportive, protective behavior towards Claire as soon as he found out she was his niece. Once the label was applied and as long as it stuck, Peter followed a set pattern of behavior in accordance with it. *Fucking black and white thinking! Let's see if I can show him the grey.* "Stay with me here. I was brainwashed into thinking I was someone else. That doesn't make me that other person."

Peter again drew inward, like a very slow-motion response to being hit. A moment later he winced, shifted his weight uncomfortably, and squirmed a little. Sylar had another feeling that he was hurting the man, and badly. Hopefully it was more of the 'stripping away the bandage' type than reopening old wounds.

Very gravely, Sylar leaned forward and said slowly, "Who was I at Mercy Heights?"

Peter wouldn't look at him. He shrugged one shoulder and said, "Sylar," rather unconvincingly. Then he shrugged again like it didn't matter or was ambiguous.

"Who was I before you took my memories away?"

"Sylar." This time Peter was firm, and looked at him to answer.

"*After* you took my memories away?" Sweat stood out on Sylar's brow. Even just talking about getting mind-wiped made him anxious - even knowing that Peter was (largely) harmless right now and that he was (mostly) safe.

"Well … you were …." Peter hunched his shoulders and covered his face, specifically his eyes. His breathing, previously regular enough, became uneven.

Sylar exhaled slowly as Peter either cried or nearly cried. Sylar swallowed. Peter's pain was a sign the conversation was changing his thoughts on the matter. He was starting to see, perhaps, that no one had been restored to life. He hadn't done anything good or helpful or healing or saving. It was vitally important to Sylar to get Peter to understand that he hadn't been dealing with Nathan at any point after the Stanton Hotel. Peter would never be able to see the injury that had been done to Sylar, or recognize how broken he really was, until he saw that it had been Sylar all along, with his identity deformed and maimed by abilities – first by Matt, then by Peter. "*After you took away Sylar's memories, was that Nathan, or was it still Sylar, just without his memories?*"

In a very soft voice, with his face still covered, Peter said, "I thought it was Nathan."

"Do you think it was Nathan now?"

With a wipe to his eyes followed by scrubbing his hand off on his jeans, Peter rose and left without answer. Sylar slumped back in his seat, triumphant but still sorry. He knew hounding Peter wasn't going to help. The guy was overwhelmed now. But he was overwhelmed because he had listened. There had been no denial or argument. Maybe there would be tomorrow. But for now, Sylar was going to count this as a painful, but necessary, win.
Sylar pressed his lips together firmly, eyes narrowing as he squared up across from Peter. This was something that had been bothering him since Peter had arrived here. It was something Sylar was going to do something about. "I'm going to put a chalkboard out on the sidewalk and every morning when you leave, you will mark on it with a piece of chalk. You promised me you wouldn't leave me here. This will prove you're keeping your word." He crossed his arms like this was a foolproof argument. No more would he be racked by paranoid fear that he was alone again after being unable to find Peter for a day or two. He would trap Peter with his own words and put a stop to it.

Peter raised his brows, like 'seriously?' He rolled his eyes briefly. "I'm going to skip the part where you don't believe my promise because that's really insulting and I don't want to get in a fight. But there's something else going on. You're trying to control me by manipulating me. You know, that 'manipulation' you were so upset about other people doing to you?" Peter reminded him tauntingly. "You're trying to extort me just like they did to you to get me to do what you want. Well," Peter pointed vaguely in Sylar's direction, "I've got an extortion right back at you. You ask me to give you some sign I'm still around every day, and I'll do it."

Sylar froze, staring at him. Was it that easy? After a few seconds and a slow blink, he said merely, "Okay."

A few beats passed. Peter, watching him levelly, said, "Ask."

That was when Sylar's facade crumpled a little as the realization that Peter was serious, and seriously was demanding Sylar ask, perhaps beg him, to do something rather than tell or demand, sunk in. It wasn't that easy after all. Sylar sputtered in indignation. "You want me to actually put into words ..." He made a sweeping hand gesture that started strong, then became weak as he imagined trying to say that to Peter. He didn't ask anyone for anything. He was Sylar! He was powerful. He was special.

"Yeah," Peter said in agreement. "I want you to actually put it into words. You put your demand into words. Now put it into words as a request."

Sylar drew himself up as tall as he could manage, even though the chance that bluster would help him was low. "It doesn't make any difference! You already said you'd do it!"

"No, I said I'd do it if you asked." Peter was starting to really enjoy this, a lot more than he would have had Sylar just rolled his eyes and pronounced the necessary syllables without a problem.

"But you're going to do it," Sylar said with a tone of hurt, possibly betrayal, in his voice. "Why does it matter what I say? The whole definition of a request is that you might not do it – you're not required to. You might back out."

"That's twice now you've called me a liar in this conversation," Peter observed drily.
Sylar frowned at him as though Peter was being exceptionally rude to point that out. "If you're not going to back out, then why do you want me to say that?"

"You need the practice."

"What?"

Peter huffed. "When you want something from me, I want you to ask. I want you to know that you can ask. I don't want you sitting around thinking of how you can blackmail me into things. Ask me. No plots, no hidden agendas." Peter shook his head. "Don't be that person you hate so much, Sylar, who manipulates people into doing their dirty work for them. Instead, tell me why you want something. Tell me why it makes a difference to you. Lead me instead of shoving from behind."

Sylar stared at him for several long moments as he digested the words, then swallowed slowly. With a steady inhalation and exhalation, he intoned carefully, "Peter. Please ..." He hesitated, because the chalkboard really wasn't necessary. What he wanted was an indication that Peter hadn't left him. "Leave a sign, or a note or something, when you've gone out so I know where ... so I know you're still around." He swallowed again, looking down and thinking that Peter was right in a way – he hadn't given nearly as much thought to what it was he wanted as he had to how to corner Peter into giving it to him.

"How about we put up a whiteboard in the rec room and I'll write a note on it when I'm going out?" Peter still wasn't happy about being made to answer as to his location, but it was a lot easier to get his agreement when he knew what it was that mattered to someone, rather than being given a random demand for obedience.

Sylar gave a broken, clumsy nod, not sure about this whole negotiation process. He'd never done it before. It was so much easier to fling someone against the wall with telekinesis and force what he wanted out of them, or merely take it from them. But he didn't have that as a tool here and besides, people tended to fear and hate him after he did that – even if the person he did it to was dead, others made things difficult for him because of it. "Maybe, um, putting it in the lobby would be better?"

"Like a marquee?"

Sylar's brows pulled together. A marquee didn't fit what they were talking about. "Outside? Over the door?"

"Yeah," Peter shrugged. "I could put it outside, but I just meant one of those signs that stand in hotel lobbies and say 'Welcome Whoever'." He gestured, indicating a four foot sign and moving his hands in a square display. Then he had another idea. "Or maybe one of those A-frame signs they have outside of restaurants sometimes. They write and erase on those all the time."

"That would be fine," Sylar said, still feeling out of his depth. He was more than a little weirded out that Peter was actually helping problem-solve for him. He wondered if he needed to make a mental note to go over Peter's deficient vocabulary in future, because that wasn't a marquee at all – it was a pedestal sign or a message board. The 'A-frame sign' was called a sandwich board. Would pointing that out be rude, or helpful? If they were going to talk things out, then what was appropriate? He had no idea how to navigate these unfamiliar waters.

"Okay," Peter nodded. "I'll look around this afternoon and find something. We can talk about it again tonight." He paused, looking at Sylar penetratingly. "Do you believe me?"

It would only be a few hours until it was proven whether or not Peter came back with a sign. That timeframe wasn't at all the anxiety-provoking uncertain forever of never knowing when Peter would
or wouldn't stick around. Sylar could deal with a few hours, or even a day, which was why he wanted the sign – so that he wouldn't go days and days without knowing. "Yes."

"Good," Peter said. Hearing that, by itself, made it worth it for him.

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Title: Lessons Learned
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Words: ~450
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar tries to teach Peter what a marquee is. Peter tries to teach Sylar how to teach him.
Notes: This is straight EQ vs IQ.

"A marquee is a sign up on a wall, advertising a movie or other event."

Peter looked at Sylar blankly from over his lunch bowl of tomato soup with sour cream. "Uh-huh?"

Sylar exhaled as he sat down with his own bowl, plain. An explanation was in order. "You used it incorrectly earlier. What you were describing as a sign in a hotel lobby is just a display sign. A marquee is different."

Peter blinked at him. "Okay."

Sylar wondered if Peter was getting it. "So you understand?"

"They're both signs, right?"

Obviously, he wasn't. "Yes, but different kinds. If you'd just said signs, you would have been right. A marquee wouldn't have been any help for what we were talking about." Well, he supposed it would have helped if Peter were willing to install one, then climb up on a ladder whenever he was going to be gone for the day and change the display, maybe even coming up with creative ways to say he was gone, like riffing off movie titles or something like that. But that seemed unlikely. He pulled over the sleeve of saltines and put six of them into his soup.

"Okay." Peter nodded like it was settled. He went back to whatever it was he was doing with the sour cream dollop in his soup. He wasn't exactly stirring it, but it was more like he was trying to carve little bits out of it with his spoon.

Sylar watched for a moment, then asked, "You understand, right?"

"I understand it's important to you. I'll get a display sign from that hotel we walked past last week. I think I remember seeing one there."

Sylar's brows rose slightly, impressed. Peter didn't even sound miffed at being corrected. "You're easier to teach than I expected."

Peter grimaced. "You're not 'teaching' me anything, Sylar. You're telling me what's important to you and I'm respecting that."

Sylar paused, thinking over his own educational experiences and what he knew of Peter's. He didn't see Peter's point, aside from reflexive defiance (which he knew Peter had in spades). But he liked the
idea of being respected. "What's the difference?"

"One is you trying to push something on me because you want me to know it for your benefit and do it on command. The other is me deciding you have a point and I'm okay with learning things that let me help you out."

Sylar … didn't get it. He knew he was being complimented; he just couldn't see what the distinction was. He nodded like he did, though, and quit while he was ahead.
Adventures in Dreamland

Chapter Summary

Title: Adventures in Dreamland: The Hazards and Rewards of Sleeping with Peter Petrelli
Characters: Peter Petrelli, Sylar
Rating: R
Warnings: One nocturnal emission, a couple nonconsensual kisses.
Word count: 5,000
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Scenes of Peter and Sylar sleeping together.
Notes: Written for the 2013 Advent Calendar. To give some context for this - a few months after Peter arrives, Sylar begins to have nightmares of persecution and judgment. The sleep deprivation drives him mad, until Peter finally agrees to sleep with him, since Sylar felt that napping while Peter was around was the only time he was getting any rest. It's true and Sylar recovers, but he and Peter have to deal with Peter's sleeping habits along the way. They sleep clothed, with a layer of blankets between them (at least for now).

Many thanks to means2bhuman, who wrote Sylar's point of view for the first two of these. Some of these scenes will be incorporated into More Between Us Than A Wall.

Night 1

The sound of Peter's own voice woke him up from his dream. "It has glitter on it," he heard himself say. A moment later, he sat up, bleary-eyed, hands flexing in memory of kneading the squishy material he wasn't handling now. Bemused, he looked over the side of the bed, but there was no box there.

XXX

Sylar awoke to an odd sensation, a sound. He caught the end of something (somehow aware it was the end of a sentence or similar), '…But it has glitter on it.' At first, Sylar, having remained unmoved throughout this wake-up call, couldn't string the words together to make a damn sentence. "Petey?" he grumbled as soon as he identified his bed partner, his tongue heavy and dry. The room was dark but a light was distant, refracting off a hallway. Through that, he could see Peter's hands doing something curled or clutched in front of him. The other man woke and sat up to look around before noticing Sylar. Um…is this bad? was his extremely unprepared response. "Petey?" he asked again.

XXX

"Huh?" Peter looked back. So Sylar really was in bed with him. Weird. He'd thought he was dreaming about that, too, because it was just as nonsensical as the rest. "I was giving your memories back, but they were made of red Play-Doh and one of them had glitter all over it." He laid back down with a sigh, letting Morpheus extend his shroud over him again without being the least
troubled by a serial killer being in his bed. He'd never fully woken up anyway. Mumbling now, he added, "I thought the glitter was unsanitary, but you didn't care."

XXX

A weird feeling twisted in Sylar's gut, unrelenting as it spread through him warmly. Peter wanted to give him his memories back. It made all the difference in the world, that unrehearsed and unexpected admission. It was a very nice thought to snuggle up with, glitter or unsanitariness notwithstanding.

Night 2

Peter was not awake, but regardless, he was aware there might be someone in bed with him. He could smell them; he could feel their weight; he could hear them breathing. Still asleep, he tried to find them. It was involuntary and visceral. His hand groped blindly, finding a warm lumpiness in the blanket and something firmer and more irregular than the mattress underneath. This – this must be what he'd been sensing! The blanket, though, confounded him. He tugged at it, his face taking on a distressed expression and his breathing changing to include little huffs of frustration and disappointment. He pawed at the covering, trying in vain to move it out of the way. He wanted to touch. It was important, biological. He wanted the contact and his failure to secure it was upsetting.

XXX

Sylar came to with the feeling of being touched somehow, intentionally. During sleep that usually meant something very bad. The room was dark but a light was distant, refracting out of the hallway. Through that he could see Peter's hand outstretched, poking and feeling at him, plucking at the comforter between them. Oh, was all his mind had to say. A set of memories not his own classified this as familiar and requiring no questions. He knew instinctively that touching the young man would calm him and result in more, this time unbothered, sleep. Sylar laid his hand atop the searching one, pressing it to his abdomen through multiple layers of bedding and clothing. That was all it took. Peter relaxed and seemed to slip back into a more soundless, genuine rest. Sylar didn't mind at all to give this familial, close contact – in fact, it assisted his own return to sleep with a small smile on his face.

XXX

Peter woke to the feel of hair tickling his nose. "Unng," he grunted, pulling his face back and blinking. Fine hair, richly dark and slightly wavy, was directly in front of him. It was the back of someone's head, but whose? He sank down on his pillow again, puffing out air to blow away the tickling strands. It certainly wasn't Simone. It took him a few groggy moments to place why that wasn't possible. He assumed it must have come from some dream he'd had. But no, this wasn't her and he felt a pang of sadness about that. From the bit of neck he could see, he was with someone Caucasian.

Where the hell am I? He started to pull away from the person he was spooning so he could get his bearings, but the hand gripping his, which he hadn't even been aware of until now, tightened. He stopped and looked over the other's shoulder at where their hands were joined, pressed over the covers on the other's belly. Long, thin fingers with masculine nails wrapped around his own. Sylar! Although the appearance of Sylar's hand wasn't something Peter had memorized, it was still him. A look up at the man's face confirmed it. Everything came into focus then for Peter – he was in bed with Sylar, keeping away Sylar's nightmares, and Sylar apparently was okay with Peter's nocturnal wanderings.

He'd warned him – Peter had, that he wasn't a fraternal bed-partner who minded his own business on the opposite side of the bed. And Sylar, racked by nightmares so persistently that he had begun to
suffer badly from sleep deprivation, didn't seem to care about the warning. It was enough to make Peter suspicious that Sylar might be exaggerating the night terrors as an excuse to get in bed with him, but he hadn't been faking the dark circles under his eyes, the irritability, increasing paranoia and clumsiness, and other symptoms. He wondered if Sylar was awake at the moment – it seemed possible, likely even – but Peter hadn't been paying attention to the other man's breathing and it seemed steady enough now.

He sighed, decision made instantly, and laid down to doze some more. As Peter drifted off, his conscious mind worked out why his subconscious thought going back to sleep was the best solution: Peter liked being snuggled up to people and this was the only guiltless chance he was going to get here in this crazy world. If Sylar was asleep, then he didn't know Peter was taking liberties and it didn't matter. If Sylar was awake, then as long as Sylar pretended to be asleep, he couldn't blame Peter. It was a win-win, as long as he could keep those dratted hairs out of his face.

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**Night 3**

Peter settled in, turned off the light, and shifted to face away from Sylar as he usually did. And as he usually did, when sleep had settled over him or perhaps only nearly so, he rolled back the other way, an arm this time reaching out to find his companion, locating … touching. Only then did sleep take him fully.

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**Night 4**

He rolled over in his sleep, facing away from Sylar for the moment. His foot snaked back, though, finding the other man's shins. There was a space between them, as they were not neatly and tensely stacked one leg atop the other. Peter pulled in air as he immediately wormed his foot into that space, releasing a small, happy, "Mmm!" of pleasure at being able to nest himself so securely.

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**Night 5**

Sylar woke with Peter's face no more than two inches from his own. Somehow and somewhat concerningly, Peter had managed to get nearly on top of him as well. One leg sprawled possessively across Sylar's and one of Peter's arms held him around the shoulders. Peter seemed quite asleep. Sylar waited, but there was no hunching or fondling or other problematic activity going on. But there was no way he was going to be able to sleep with someone else breathing in his face the whole night. He turned his face, his nose inadvertently brushing Peter's – they were so close. It provoked a slight shift of Peter's body and a small squeeze. Sylar sighed. It was nice, being held like this, even if he knew Peter didn't exactly mean it. It made him feel warm and loved even so. He looked longingly at Peter's peaceful, sleeping face (what he could make out with him at this proximity, in the dimness). Did all of this cuddling mean that at some level, Peter was okay with him? He didn't know. He shifted again, and again, Peter clutched him. Clearly, he didn't want to let go.

Sylar swallowed. He knew that what he was about to do was … wrong, or at least questionable. Morally grey, which for Sylar, was an improvement. But Peter was so close. He could feel Peter's breath on his cheek, holding him so tight. It was like they were lovers. And if Peter was as he had confessed and unaware of what he did while slumbering, then how would he ever be able to accuse? Sylar tilted his head and slowly, gently, pressed his lips to Peter's. Peter drew in breath, made a small noise in his throat, and kissed back. It was uncoordinated, at least on Peter's side, but it was a definite and genuine kiss. Sylar felt a thrill pass through him from head to toe. Peter broke off after a few seconds and nosed the side of Sylar's face, giving him another squeeze and raising his knee, rubbing his thigh over Sylar's.
Sylar could feel himself coming erect. How could Peter expect him to behave under this temptation? Since he'd gotten away with it once, he kissed Peter again, letting his lips pulse against Peter's. He gave a roll of his hips, rubbing them together and discovering he wasn't the only one turned on. Peter made another deep, soft sound of pleasure, before pulling in air and tensing all over as he woke up. Oh shit. Sylar held perfectly still, fully prepared to lie his ass off and say he was the wronged party here.

But he didn't need to. "Um," Peter said, lifting himself away and looking guilty. "Sorry," he whispered, groggily adjusting his crotch as he rolled over and put more than a foot between them. Sylar sighed after the other man resettled himself, far away. It was not so much in relief (although there was a little of that). Mostly it was yearning.

Night 6

Sylar was small. He was hiding in the closet, the one where he'd covered the white walls with red and black letters detailing his sins. The others were looking for him. He knew they'd find him, and soon. He could hear their distant footsteps. There were so many of them, so many people he'd wronged, so many times he'd sinned. He cowered behind the door, thinking maybe he was small enough so that when they opened it, as they surely would, he'd be behind it and unseen. But he knew that wouldn't work. There was too much writing on the walls. They'd stop to look, to read, and then they'd spy him out. It had all been a mistake! So many mistakes! So many bad decisions, one layering on another. He was destined to be the villain, the one everyone hated, everyone hunted. It wasn't what he wanted to be!

Hot tears welled up as he choked to keep himself quiet. He couldn't let them hear. They were already in the apartment, searching. They'd find this place very soon now. But maybe it didn't matter if they found him – they were going to anyway, and he wanted to give up, he wanted to die. He wanted to crawl and squirm and surrender and have it matter. He wanted to be forgiven so badly and yet he knew that was never going to come, because he was bad and people didn't forgive those who didn't have any goodness in them. He wanted to be good. He wished he had been good. A mewling sob fought its way between his lips. The footsteps stopped, right outside his door. They had found him.

"Sylar?"

He gasped and almost choked again, his airway not working as it should. It was Peter's voice, he realized.

"Sylar?" The voice was soft, low, and sleepy, which didn't make sense.

The dubious reality of the closet faded, but it was still dark. Sylar felt something touching him on the hip and grabbed at it reflexively, his grip tightening on nothing more offensive than a pillow. He was in a bed, he saw.

"Hey, buddy." Peter released the pillow to him and went on, "You were having a nightmare, okay?"

Sylar blinked, feeling the wetness around his eyes and the humiliating pounding of his chest. He nodded, though he wasn't sure if Peter could see it or not. He didn't trust his voice yet. It would betray far too much weakness.

"Come here," Peter said, voice clearer now of the groggy sleep. He touched at Sylar's shoulder, apparently undeterred by the previous attack on the pillow.

Sylar turned towards him, though he was confused.
"Come here," Peter repeated, scooting himself closer because Sylar wasn't moving. Peter slipped arms around him and Sylar finally figured it out – a hug. Peter wanted to hug him. Maybe that was what Peter did, how he coped. He remembered Peter hugging him after talking him down from an attack of paranoia where he thought Peter was going to end him. It hadn't turned out that way; he'd been wrong. Now, as then, he burrowed his face into Peter's shoulder and upper chest, breathing heavily and unevenly. It might be shameful, but Peter had yet to use any of it against him. He wrapped his arms around Peter in return and shuddered as he accepted the enveloping protection of another. It felt so foreign … and so good.

Night 7

Peter woke, the last shreds of his dream telling him with certainty he was in bed with Nathan. But it was Sylar's face he saw, close and features clear in the pre-dawn light. Peter flashed to the time in the Odessa jail, when his odd, possibly precognitive dream had showed him Nathan replaced by Sylar when Peter glanced away. He had an intense, gut-twisting lurch in his middle that it was happening again and just like the first time, it was terrifying. He made a strangled yelp and scuttled back, pushing, shoving and kicking to get away.

Peter fell off the edge of the bed as he'd expected, bouncing to his feet with stunning alacrity. He staggered, off-balance, against the wall and window, his mind racing as he tried to remember how high off the ground the apartment was and whether he still had regeneration to survive a fall – he was that rattled that leaping out the window was a considered option. He struggled to get his breath.

Sylar propped himself up on an elbow, but was otherwise silent. For several long moments, nothing happened.

Finally, Peter forced himself to move forward, putting his knee on the edge of the bed as he reached out slowly with his right hand. Sylar watched it come for him. *If he so much as says 'boo', I'm going to hit him*, Peter thought, his hand finding Sylar's shoulder and gripping it. He was real. Solid. Peter swallowed, let go, and backed up. He raked through his hair with his left hand and shook his head. His heart was still pounding with fear. His fingers and toes felt pins and needles from the adrenalin. He wanted to get out of this room, out of Sylar's sight, away from the bed and the confusing emotions. He bent and swiped his shoes, shuffling out from behind the bed and going to the nearest chair, where he sat to put them on.

Sylar swept back the blankets and stood. "What are you doing?"

Peter didn't answer. He loosened the laces on the tops of his shoes, thinking that he should have just carried the shoes with him out into the hall. He was fortunate that he slept more-or-less dressed with Sylar, so his state of dress wouldn't slow him down from leaving.

"Where are you going?" Sylar moved between Peter and the door.

Peter shoved his feet into his shoes and stood, not taking the time to tie them. He grabbed up his coat.

Alarmed, voice upset, Sylar put his arms out to the sides a little and tried to command him. "Don't leave!"

There was a frightened tremor in Sylar's voice that shook Peter out of his self-centeredness. He thought about how this must look from Sylar's point of view – waking to find Peter fleeing him, refusing to stay in the same room, not even talking to him. How was he to know that all Peter was going to do was go downstairs and work out or maybe take a walk until he felt centered again? As far as Sylar knew, Peter had snapped and didn't want to be near him ever again. Peter sighed heavily and dropped the coat. He brushed past Sylar roughly, more pushing the man out of his way than
anything else, proving to himself that Sylar wasn't keeping him from leaving. Peter stalked into the kitchen instead, taking a beer from the fridge and opening it on the edge of the counter, heedless of whether it scratched the finish or not.

He came back, slumped in his seat, and drank the top third of the beer in one long swallow. When he came up for air, he glared briefly at Sylar before looking away. Quietly, Sylar took the opposite seat. Peter swirled the bottle slowly. "You weren't even there. Not really."

"Hm," was all Sylar said as he waited for the inevitable explanation.

Peter wondered if he'd ever told this one to anyone either. He didn't think so. Sylar had quite the collection of 'things Peter had never told another person'. Mainly, he was the only person who listened. Peter wasn't sure if Sylar cared, but he did at least listen and that was nice. "After Odessa, when you and I jumped off the stadium, the cops took me in. They put me in an observation cell, I think. I was covered with blood but they couldn't find any injuries. I told them I was fine, but I was … uh, a little hysterical, maybe. I think they were letting me calm down. But I fell asleep, so I guess that's calm. I either hallucinated or dreamed. I thought Nathan came to save me. He was nice, friendly. I hugged him. He sat next to me. He was supportive, but trying to explain to me why what I was doing wasn't going to work."

Peter took another long drag from his beer, self-medicating his tension since he was blocked from exercising. "I looked away for a moment and when I looked back, it wasn't Nathan. It was you. You were in a … uniform, like a delivery service. UPS or something, wearing a baseball cap. You told me I didn't know anything about power." He grimaced sullenly in Sylar's direction, unhappy with the possible truth of that. "It scared the crap out of me." He drank again, trying to dull the memory that was still too sharp in his mind. There was less than a fourth of the liquid left in the bottle. Peter shook his head and then pulled his feet out of his shoes. "I don't know what it was about waking up right then, but … I ..." He shrugged and looked away, then finished the beer. "You want to go back to bed with me?"

Sylar looked surprised and didn't answer, but he rose and went to the bed with a glance back to make sure Peter was making his way to the other side. Peter fussed with the blankets and climbed on top of the main layer, with Sylar under it.

Peter waited for a moment as Sylar settled in, then asked, "Could you face away?"

Sylar nodded and Peter caught the look of disappointment as he turned. Peter figured Sylar assumed he didn't want any chance of waking up again to the sight of his face, but that wasn't it. Peter scooted closer, his hand lingering on Sylar's back where the blanket didn't cover it. He could see Sylar tilt and raise his head slightly in an 'I'm listening/what are you doing?' pose.

"May I?" Peter asked, timid now because he was asking something Sylar might take the wrong way. Sylar put his head down and might have nodded, but he definitely didn't shake his head. Peter came closer and touched his forehead to Sylar's, his arms gathered up between them and his knees against what was probably the back of Sylar's thighs. He wasn't thinking of Sylar as Nathan and he hoped Sylar didn't think he was. Peter wasn't expecting that level of comfort from him. He wasn't expecting anything. He just wanted to be close to a human being as he calmed down, as he let the memories drain away, as he tried to let go of the past. But it was Sylar's scent thick in his nostrils and his body Peter was pressed against.

It was no surprise to Peter when he woke an hour or so later that he was truly spooning him, cupped as close as the clothes and layer of blankets would allow. Peter's right arm was wrapped around Sylar's middle with Sylar's hand over Peter's – it wasn't the first time and not even the first time he'd done it more or less intentionally. Peter's face was mashed sideways against the taller man's back. He
pulled away slowly, wondering how long it would be before they did away with the barriers of clothing and blankets … and wondering if that would be as wrong as he'd originally thought it was.

Night 8

In his dream, Peter had a headache. That seemed to be the entirety of the dream – pain. It was very specific. If you drew a line vertically down his face, the pain was seated along that line an inch above his brows, just where the supposed third eye would be located. It had been trivial at first, but as minutes passed, it began to ache. It felt like someone were pressing the rounded end of a ball peen hammer to his forehead, pressing relentlessly and he couldn't get away from it. It was doubly frustrating because not only did he want to be free of the pain, but he wanted to move forward. He wanted to be closer. He wanted comfort and warmth and yet the pain was keeping him away from all of that. He made a whimpery noise in protest, but nothing came of it. He still hurt and he was starting to hurt inside, as the physical pain translated to emotional, as it started to take on meaning as a cruel rejection from the opportunity to love.

It was the second sad, plaintive sound from his throat that roused Peter from sleep – that, and the awareness the pain wasn't a fabrication of his mind. It was still there when he woke. His eyes opened sleepily to find himself staring up the length of Sylar's forearm, the point of the man's elbow jammed solidly against Peter's forehead. The weight of Sylar's arm rested on him, as it had for who-knows-how-long. The arm was raised, cocked and bent protectively around Sylar's head. Peter had seen him sleep a few times that way. He couldn't imagine it himself. Wasn't it bad blood flow to keep an arm elevated like that for so long? Didn't it get numb?

With a grimace, he pulled his head back, scowling as he rubbed at the spot that had been afflicted by Sylar's bony elbow. The thing he'd been trying to get closer to but been held at half-arm's distance from was Sylar, he realized. He sighed, wondering if Sylar's defensive head-guarding was an attempt to ward off Peter's somnolent cuddling. Even if it wasn't, Peter felt rejected anyway. He frowned at the uncooperative object of his affections. Sylar's arm dipped and wavered, his elbow seeking the convenient prop that had gone missing. With an angry snort, Peter rolled over the other way, rubbing at his head again and petulantly leaving Sylar alone if that was the way the man wanted to be.

Night 9

There was something about the sound of sex. It was primal, encoded into the deepest reaches of the brain. Sylar made sense of the sounds instantly, lighting up with awareness. He was still, lying on his back on the sheets, blankets bunched around his midsection. To his right was Peter, face pressed to Sylar's shoulder, forehead to deltoid, or so Sylar saw when he finally opened his eyes and turned his head slightly to see. Peter's extra layer of blanket was somewhere around hip level and he was lying on his side facing Sylar. The only place they were touching, though, was where his face rooted against Sylar's upper arm as some dream played out behind closed lids.

But the sex – it was very clear what sort of dream was entertaining Peter. His breathing and the long, low, soft moans gave it away. Sylar had to wonder how similar it would be to the sounds Peter might make while having real, wakeful sex. They were definitely arousing. Peter's head shifted and moved, warm and flushed against Sylar's bare skin. Peter's lips dragged across him, complete with uncoordinated mouthing. So, he does like to kiss, Sylar thought. Just not me. He'd assumed as much. Peter wasn't shy about using his mouth to show affection, as he'd seen in Nathan's memories.

Peter moved an arm forward, the back of his curled fingers brushing against Sylar's forearm. "Mmm, um," he said, but didn't get more articulate than that. Sylar's lips curled. It would be fascinating if Peter would let slip a name and make it well worth being woke up in the middle of the night. Peter's
breathing was speeding and becoming strained. His hips made a few jerky, rolling motions. *Is he fucking, or being fucked?* Sylar wondered, but couldn't tell. Peter's peak came fast as such things often did in dreams. The whole affair had taken no more than a couple minutes. *Ah, there it is,* Sylar thought as Peter's last, loudest moan cut off in the middle, Peter held his breath for a few seconds, then all the tension bled out of him.

Curious, Sylar fluffed the topmost blanket once, inhaling deeply. *Yes, definitely.* The scent was heavy and almost as stimulating as the delicious sounds Peter had been cooing into his shoulder. Peter wasn't done yet – no rolling over and falling asleep afterward and Sylar suspected that this, at least, would be consistent even when Peter was awake. Peter continued to move his face against Sylar's arm, trying clumsily to kiss in between soft sighs. His hand moved a few more times, making fitful contact with Sylar's forearm.

Sylar turned, reaching across himself to touch Peter's shoulder and stroke down his arm, petting him soothingly. He knew he probably shouldn't; he'd be safer to just leave it alone and let Peter go back to his slumber, waking none-the-wiser. But something inside Sylar wouldn't let that happen. They'd had a moment, however one-sided, and he wasn't going to let Peter off the hook so easily. So he didn't care when Peter's breathing changed as he woke; Sylar had wanted that. He kept slowly stroking Peter's arm, smiling warmly at him just to fuck with Peter's head.

Brown, puzzled eyes met his, then Peter looked down at the hand smoothing over his arm. He licked his lips uneasily and asked, "What happened?"

"You had an 'emission'," Sylar said, letting his voice adopt a conspiratorial tone. He laid on his back again, using the hand that had been lately stroking Peter's arm to prop his head up.

Peter's glance down at his groin was as comical as it was obvious. He dipped his head as though wanting to hide his face, but he still asked Sylar, "Are you okay?"

Sylar raised his brows. "Have your 'emissions' been known to be dangerous in the past? What kind of strange abilities did you pick up back in the day?"

"Um," Peter coughed. "Um, no, nothing like that." Uncertainly he continued, "I didn't do anything?"

Sylar purred, "You made sweet, sweet love to my arm. The rest of me wouldn't mind a little attention," he invited, letting his voice drop to a rumble.

Peter gulped. "Um … no."

"Hmm, too bad. Maybe I should take matters into my own hands?"

"No." Peter's voice was much firmer, having lost the adorable fogginess of sleep. He finally moved away from Sylar, backing up about a foot.

Sylar looked him over. Peter was stiff, but not in a good way. He was tense now with a defensiveness Sylar could see even in the dark. It wouldn't do to wind him up too much. To the contrary, ultimately Sylar would rather Peter were more comfortable about the whole thing. He realized the teasing had been a bad idea. Soberly he said, "What you did was perfectly natural and it didn't bother me in the least."

"Okay," Peter said, although he sounded unconvinced. He rolled on his side to face away. He pulled up the blanket to his armpits, apparently oblivious to the fresh wafting scent of maleness that released. "I didn't mean to," he said over his shoulder.

Sylar inhaled deeply. "I know." Oh, he knew alright, and that was the bitter part – a waking Peter
didn't want him at all, not yet. But eventually.
"I love you," Peter told him. It was kind of out of the blue, but it was true. He felt better for putting it into words.

Sylar was silent a moment, holding his breath. He looked spooked and finally said, "What do you expect me to say to that?"

"Say you love me back, if you do."

Sylar blinked, then a sly expression settled on his face. He walked over to Peter and put a hand on his shoulder. It slid down, around, and over his back. "You're right. I do love your back." He patted it a few times for emphasis.

Peter laughed, trying not to look like the raging insecurity-monster that he was. "Isn't there anything else you like about me?"

Sylar's hand slid down further and he stepped behind Peter, bending. "I like these, too – your ass." He kneaded slowly, something he liked to do in bed, too. His hands went to Peter's hips and just a little above and in front of them. "This spot – these spots. I love them." His hands rose to Peter's ribs. "And these, too." He moved around in front. Peter was smiling, amused at how specific the areas were. "And here," he said, putting two fingers to Peter's breastbone, eyes locked on Peter's body as though looking for other bits to point out his adoration of. Peter supposed it was too much to hope that Sylar might appreciate him for something more than the physical. He sighed, the smile slipping away. The joke wasn't funny anymore; insecurity had him in its jaws. Sylar looked up at him intently. "But none of them can compare to how I feel about this one." He gently laid his hand over Peter's heart. "Right here."

Peter's frown disappeared and his eyes widened, brows rising a little as his ego rebounded.

"I love your heart so much. There's only one part of you I love even more, Peter." Sylar reached up, putting hands on either side of Peter's head. "This." He tilted Peter's head and kissed him softly, then with passion as Peter wrapped his arms around him.
“So,” Sylar said as they walked along the empty streets, “Fuck, Marry, Kill: Noah Bennet … Angela Petrelli … and Claire.” He grinned smugly at Peter. The man had been too quiet for Sylar's liking. This would get him going, surely.

Peter gave him a side-eye, then huffed and hunched his shoulders against the chill air. “Marry … Angela.” That surprised Sylar. He would have expected her to get 'kill'. Then Peter explained himself, “Because it's illegal and would be annulled automatically.” Ah, clever, thought Sylar. “Kill Claire, because she'd regenerate.” Sylar nodded. That made sense. He should have thought of that before and substituted someone else, like Nathan or that Hesam guy Peter had mentioned was his work partner. “And … um …” Sylar's smug grin returned as Peter hesitated. He'd neatly sidestepped the first two, but there was nothing to do about the last but bite the bullet. “Yeah,” Peter conceded. “I guess that means … yeah.”

“Means what?” Sylar said with mock innocence.


Sylar was silent, his expression impassive as he combined roles and names for the optimal configuration. It only took a moment. “Fuck you, marry Luke, kill Mohinder.”

“Any explanation?”

“No.”

Peter snorted. “Fine. Then I won't play it with you anymore.”

Sylar frowned at the blackmail. Peter had to have his fun or else there was no fun at all. “I can't marry a man, no one can. And I can't marry a kid, so I wouldn't really be married to Luke. Mo would be dead, and you'd be fucked in any case.” He smirked at that last.

“Women can marry men.”

Sylar looked at him, thought about exactly what he'd said, and rolled his eyes. “That wasn't what I meant.”
“It's what you said.” Sylar didn't dignify it with an answer. Peter went on, “And depending on the country, you can marry a kid. Or state. I think Kansas has a marriage age of fourteen. Wasn't Luke like fifteen or sixteen?”

“Then I pick one where it's illegal,” he snapped. “If you get to cheat with Angela, then so do I!”

“Arthur's dead. The only way you'd be cheating with Angela is if you were still married to Luke.”

Sylar almost missed a step. Peter wasn't stopping to think of these outrageous things – he was clearly blurring them out as fast as he thought of them. The surprise wasn't the concepts themselves, it was that they were lurking somewhere inside Peter's fascinating brain, just waiting to get out whenever he declined to engage the usual filter. Sylar had thought he was the only one with that twisted a mind.

“You and I could have a threesome with her,” Sylar offered.

“I'd be too busy fucking Noah,” Peter deadpanned. Apparently fucking his mother was something Peter didn't want to contemplate. Sylar didn't blame him.

“How do you think you'd like that?”

“I think he'd get the job done. He's real big on that.”

“Hm,” Sylar hummed, enjoying Peter's play on Noah being an all-business Company man. “Do you think he's 'real big' where it counts?”

“Wouldn't you like to know,” Peter snarked. “Luke not packing enough punch for you?”

“I don't mind being the one in the relationship who's doing the packing.”

Peter laughed, reaching over to give Sylar's shoulder a little shove. “That's good! That's good.”

“Luke wasn't going to be the one I was fucking, anyway,” Sylar said as he recovered from the unexpected push.

“Yeah, I caught that,” Peter said, flashing him an oddly warm smile.

Sylar wished he knew what those looks meant. Peter always turned down his propositions, but then he gave these looks sometimes that were welcoming and even flirty. It made Sylar think he wouldn't be turned down forever. Which was good – it looked like he had forever to work on it. If he couldn't play with Peter in *that* way, then he'd play with him in this and maybe eventually they'd get to the other.
"Baby, I didn't mean-"

Sylar's snort of displeasure cut Peter off. Before Peter could resume the irritating defense of himself, Sylar snapped, "Why do you always call me 'baby' anyway?" It was something Peter had started doing since they'd been sleeping together, which was only a few days ago. Their relationship was in serious flux. It seemed like even the smallest thing set them off anymore.

Peter hesitated, his face showing that he knew he was in hot water. Sylar found the pause suspicious, but Peter's words didn't lag long enough to make Sylar think he was lying – not outright, at least. Peter pursed his lips and tilted his head in a conciliatory gesture as he said, "Because you're precious, you're innocent, and I want to take care of you." When Sylar only glared at him, Peter's expression faded to hurt and guarded.

Sylar wasn't sure whether to be offended or … he supposed Peter intended flattery with that pap, but he wasn't sure. He growled, "I'm hardly 'innocent'."

Peter sulled up and took a half-step away from him. But he gamely persisted in painting Sylar in the best possible colors. "If you had been given different choices by life, you would have made different decisions. You aren't responsible for what happened to you." His voice softened towards the end.

"But I am responsible for the decisions I made," Sylar said insistently, angry all over again. Peter wasn't taking him or his past seriously. He was mocking it with this 'baby' business. It was insulting.

Peter's head pulled back. Otherwise, he didn't move for a few moments, but his eyes showed the hurt. Finally, he said, "I respect that." He looked away and down, withdrawing into himself.

I am an idiot! Sylar thought as he realized he was stupidly trying to get Peter to admit Sylar was an irredeemable monster. Peter's only sin at the moment was wanting to entertain the fantasy that Sylar was worth loving. And so what if Peter's fantasy included mild infantilization? It was better than imagining Sylar as guilty for all the wrongs he'd committed. Even Sylar knew that wasn't attractive – at least not to the sort of person he wanted to love him. And that was the issue. He didn't think he was worthy of the affection he'd been getting, and so he was running hot and cold to Peter every second since he'd finally convinced the Italian to bed him. He went to Peter, raising his hands to cup either of Peter's cheeks, painfully aware of the flinch away from him. "I'm sorry." Sylar kissed him tenderly and Peter stood for that.

Peter kissed him back dutifully, then turned his face to the side to say thickly, "It's not your fault. I got my feelings hurt, but I'm a big boy, like you always say. It'll be fine."

Ah! He'd been engaged in the same name-calling and not realized that, either. "I'm-" he cut himself off from another useless apology and substituted something better to say, but harder. "I'm a … baby. Don't stop …" He paused to choke on his pride, hoping Peter could fill in the blanks. Clearing his throat, he tried to change the subject, at least a little. "You want to take care of me?"
Peter turned his face back to him, looking up at him with wary hope. He touched Sylar's sides – a light, tentative contact, like he was testing. "I like taking care of people."

Sylar leaned into him gratefully, breathing out in relaxation as Peter slipped his arms around him. It felt like something might break inside of him and he needed Peter holding him to keep it safe. "You take such good care of me," he murmured into Peter's hair, shutting his eyes and letting the tension bleed away.
Sylar rode the elevator to the ground floor, exiting and heading for the door. Something he caught out of the corner of his eye arrested his progress. He stopped and looked again. Peter was in the recreation room already. That was a first – usually Peter was out roaming around and Sylar had to find him. But that wasn't the only novel thing. Sylar's companion was crouched on the overstuffed leather sofa, huddled into the corner of it. He held a baseball in his left hand. Leaning against the arm of the sofa was a baseball bat. He glared at Sylar with the most intense hate Sylar had ever seen, which was saying a lot.

Sylar walked to the doorway with slow, measured steps. If it weren't for the ball in Peter's hand, he'd have thought the man was lurking down here with the bat, waiting to assault him. Peter made no move to get up, so maybe he was safe. Marginally.

Peter was still glaring death at him. He growled, "Go somewhere else, Sylar."

Sylar cocked his head. Obviously, Peter wanted to be alone. But as far as that went, he probably didn't want to be here at all. Neither did Sylar, really. People didn't get what they wanted very often. Sylar saw no advantage in granting Peter's wish. "I live here," he answered, casually leaning against the doorframe to signal how unthreatened he was.

"Go find something to do somewhere else." Peter's teeth were bared.

"Hm." Sylar leaned his head against the frame, too, and blinked innocently at Peter. If he provoked the man enough, would he really take up that bat and use it? What was putting him in such a bad mood? "Did you have a bad dream? I've told you that you can sleep with me."

Peter's shoulders gave a shudder. "Go." His eyes seemed to go unfocused a moment later.

Sylar waited until Peter's hand moved to the bat. Instead of leaving, he walked brazenly into the room, over to the upright piano. The only activity of interest he had planned today was dogging Peter's heels and seeing what the other man was up to. Peter was usually busy with various projects that were pointless in Sylar's eyes but meaningful to Peter. In either case, the activity was a relief to Sylar. Peter was interesting, if frustrating and annoying at times (even if those were most of the time, it was still better than being bored). This moodiness was new. That Peter would leave his apartment
and come over here to be moody and incalcitrant in public was … well, based on Nathan's memories, Sylar knew that was Peter. He wanted to be seen, even if he wouldn't admit it. Sylar raised the lid on the piano, peering inside at the wires and felt-covered hammers.

"What the fuck are you doing?" Peter snapped. His tone was still nasty, but his voice no louder.

Sylar knew that was not good. He suspected Peter was still holding the bat, but at least he'd moved back to full sentences and engaging. Without looking back (but listening attentively in case Peter rose), he answered, "It's out of tune. I thought I might take a look at it."

"Get … out of here. Something else."

Incomplete sentences now. That was even more dangerous than the earlier zoning out. Sylar let his eyes slide back to Peter. He couldn't see it, but he suspected the man was shaking. As amusing as it was to push the envelope of Peter's self-control, he didn't know enough about what had set Peter off to get much joy out of it. He wasn't even sure it involved him. He exhaled and replaced the lid of the piano before leaving the room entirely.

He didn't stay gone for long, returning from a trip upstairs with a book of baseball statistics and history. Peter had gone back to being vacant-eyed and fondling the baseball. He looked alarmed and angry as Sylar waltzed right over to the couch and sat himself down on the other end. Sylar opened the book to a likely spot and began to read, giving no attention whatsoever to the seething eyes directed at him from only a few feet away.

"What are you doing?" Peter hissed.

"Something else – just like you said." He expected more of a fight than he got. After a few more minutes of staring (which should have been brief, but felt like a small eternity to Sylar), Peter flopped over to his side against the arm of the couch and did nothing. When Sylar's peripheral vision told him it was safe, he glanced over. Peter seemed to have withdrawn into his own little world. He was cuddling the baseball and staring into space.

Sylar sighed and flipped through the book to find the start of a chapter, rather than the random page he'd begun with. He wanted to complain that he was not equipped to handle Petrelli drama queens, but, well, honestly, he was probably better equipped than most. He could be very patient when necessary and he knew most of Peter's tricks. Among other things, he didn't think this was an attempt to manipulate him – at least not an intentional one. Peter was upset and he wanted to be upset in the company of others, but apparently not Sylar or else he wouldn't have tried to run him off. Peter's hindbrain probably hadn't clued that there was no one else other than Sylar to be upset near. If Sylar was not welcome, then the upset was probably because of something Sylar did. He hadn't done anything lately to trigger this sort of ... whatever it was Peter was doing. That left the issue of Nathan.

He kept reading. There wasn't much he could do about Nathan, much like he couldn't do anything about the other murders. On the one hand, he wanted to shrug his shoulders and move on – it had happened, it was over, why couldn't people accept the new reality without whoever-the-fuck in it? On the other hand, he had this void inside of him where his mother used to live, and his dreams of his father, his dreams of being a Petrelli or the even shorter-lived one of being linked to Claire (a pencil in the eye had shown him the error of those thoughts, though he'd gotten the hint thoroughly enough using Lydia's ability). He was empty, hollowed out, and made purposeless by those losses. Was that how Peter felt about Nathan?

As if on cue, Peter sniffled. Sylar's head jerked around sharply, aghast at this breach of appropriate behavior. There were tears wetting Peter's face, leaking down the side of his nose and around his
nostrils, where Peter was currently wiping them off with his sleeve. *Nasty*, Sylar thought. *And weak.* All his parent's admonishments about crying welled up in Sylar's mind – it was childish, pointless, noisy, distracting, made them angry, they'd give him something to cry about, it didn't matter, he wouldn't get his way with tears, he was a sissy, he was a baby, he was pathetic and worthless and vile. He stared at Peter. Why was he crying so openly? Was he not ashamed of it? That seemed the very opposite of weakness. Either that, or Peter was so far gone he didn't care.

Disquieted, Sylar went back to his book. He had less of an idea of how to tend a crying Peter than one who was brimming with rage. A few minutes later, Peter shifted and nudged his feet against Sylar's thigh. He thought at first Peter was trying to urge him off the couch so he could stretch out, but that wasn't it. It was the contact alone Peter was seeking. He'd stopped weeping, at least. Peter pulled up the baseball bat (an event that caused Sylar no small degree of tension) and hugged it.

Sylar sighed and put his hand on Peter's sock-clad, top-most foot. If Peter was touching him, then Sylar got to touch back, right? Peter cuddled the stupid baseball gear and didn't object, so that seemed to be how things worked. Warmth slowly suffused his hand and the spots on his leg where Peter's feet were against him. It was nice. Then Peter made a noisy, hiccupping swallow. Sylar put the book down. He did not want Peter to start crying again, especially not if he was going to be loud about it this time. That would drive him from the room faster than any threat of physical pain.

"You can hit me," he offered.

Peter lifted his head to look over at him, groggy, with eyes red-rimmed and hair in disarray. Sylar wondered how his hair had become so messed up from simply lying there. "What?" Peter said after a moment.

"I said you can hit me," he repeated, "if it would make you feel better."

Peter snorted and let his head settle. "Why would that make me feel better?"

"Because you're angry at me."

"I'm grieving. I'm not angry," Peter said bleakly. Being self-aware didn't seem to be helping his mood.

"Fine. Then you're grieving, angry, and in denial. You can still hit me."

"With the bat?" Peter asked, still lying down and not looking at Sylar. He didn't sound hopeful so much as curious.

"Yes," Sylar answered calmly, knowing that being hit like that was probably a death sentence. Offering himself up to the relatives of those he'd killed was something he'd done more than once.

Peter was silent. Sylar had to wonder if he was thinking it over. Peter shifted the bat in his hands a few times and finally tossed it aside, out of reach. "I don't want to hit you with the bat," Peter said sullenly. He sniffed. "Why do you think that would help anything?"

"There was … someone else – Elle. I killed her father. She was … very angry about that." Sylar wrapped his hand around the top of Peter's foot, looking down at that continued contact. Peter was touching him, wanted to touch him, wanted to draw comfort from him no matter what Sylar had done. He remembered the brief but passionate relationship he'd had with Elle. It could have been so much better. He wondered if things could be better between himself and Peter, if they could ever get this Nathan thing out of the way. Peter lifted his head again to look at him, so he went on, "I … let her kill me. And … she got over it."
"She got over you killing her dad?" Peter said, voice blank.

"Yes."

"I'm not going to get over you killing Nathan."

Sylar nodded silently, still looking down at where he cupped Peter's foot. What if Peter didn't get past it any more than Sylar had over killing Virginia? He gave Peter's foot a squeeze and Peter pressed it against Sylar's thigh in response. Sylar smiled a little, fleeting and tiny and sincere. He wasn't sure he wanted Peter to get over it, anyway. Maybe it was time to accept that sometimes, people never let go of their loved ones.
Peter sat on the end of his bed, straddling one of the corners. His shirt was discarded nearby, along with socks and shoes – pants were still on, though. His fingers traveled from mid-chest to his shoulder, feeling along where Sylar had gripped it as he told him about Nathan's feelings for him. It was a lot to process. Even though Peter had walked away from Sylar and his offer, he couldn't walk away from his own thoughts. He'd spent the day running from them, but he knew there was no sleep to be had until he dealt with them.

'Some of his love wasn't so brotherly, Peter.' That was what Sylar had said. What would that have been like, being with Nathan, in bed, intimately? It was somehow easier to think of now that Nathan was gone. Whatever Peter considered or fantasized or decided wasn't going to make for an awkward Sunday brunch. That ship had sailed, leaving him free to consider what might have been, had he been a passenger.

He rubbed his shoulder slowly, unconsciously recreating Sylar's touches upon him. Would Nathan have trod him as roughly in sex as he did in real (non-sexual) life? Would he have been as callous and falsely careless about Peter's feelings? Would fucking Peter have just been an extension of the older, wiser, telling-Peter-how-to-run-his-life brother that Nathan was? Or would Nathan have let down the façade? Would the intimacy have cracked the tough pretense and maybe in bed he would be … gentle, or even considerate? Was it possible? It seemed unlikely. He was Nathan, after all. His basic character wouldn't change. But what if Peter was the one who was dominant? Could that even happen? Peter wondered. Nathan was … soft inside. 'Weak', Peter's parents would have called it and it seemed preposterous that neither of them ever seemed to see that. They were too busy projecting onto their eldest son what they wanted him to be, Peter supposed. How would that 'weakness' play out in bed? Did, maybe, Nathan want to be topped? Topping and domination didn't necessarily go hand-in-hand as Peter was well aware, but with Nathan he was pretty sure the two would be inseparable. Would Nathan allow it?

Peter opened his pants with his right hand, pushing them down. He was suddenly hard – painfully so in the confines of his jeans. Finally free, he touched himself lightly. His lids fluttered as the fingers of his left hand, still lingering on his shoulder, moved up to trace the spots where Sylar's mouth had kissed his neck this morning, before their fight. "Mmm." He made a soft, unashamed moan. No one could hear him. Even if exploring with Nathan was impossible (not that he ever would have, he told
himself, even knowing Nathan had had 'thoughts'), there was still Sylar. Peter had denounced the idea of doing Sylar-as-Nathan and such a thing still struck him as depraved, but the idea of doing Sylar-as-Sylar, Nathan's memories and all – maybe that wasn't so depraved. Certainly Sylar was eager to try it.

He stroked faster. It wouldn't take long – he could feel it. Something about this subject turned his crank so hard that it would take him little more than seconds. The skin on his neck, a little up from where Sylar had kissed him, was hot and tender from where he'd been bitten. *Sylar … Sylar did that.* He'd done it when he could have done worse; done it instead of making any more effective attempt to avoid Peter's blows. It was like he'd exposed himself to the pain just for the opportunity – he wanted Peter that badly. Peter pressed at the sensitive flesh. It hurt. His dick stiffened further, if that was even possible. He groaned aloud, thinking he would come right then, but he only skirted the delicious edge before easing back. What else was it Sylar had said? *'I want to ruin you, possess you, use you …'* Oh yes. Peter wasn't going to allow any of that. It was dangerous, as well as stupid. But like with Nathan, what if there was another way? Sylar was probably just as hung up as Nathan about topping and dominance (letting him take anything even hinting at a superior role was likely to be disastrous for Peter), but that didn't rule out the opposite. It simply mandated it. And Peter … wasn't entirely unwilling to take it. (Particularly not in fantasy with his throbbing cock in his hand.) *'Just take what your body already wants. Take it and you can have it.'*

Peter's hand on his dick moved faster. His breathing became strained as his peak came over him. The sensation and the thoughts blended together as the fantasy of being with Sylar lost coherence. It was a mess of images of fucking his ass, pushing him down and forcing him to submit, Sylar's flushed face, steaming and wet-from-the-shower body, the scent of him heavy in the bed they'd shared, eyes so luminous and dark and rich and expressive, lips questing hungrily for Peter's, Sylar's hands touching him with so much delicacy when they were capable of inflicting so much pain.

Peter came in a hot surge, gasping at the intensity of it. He almost never came that hard alone. Sometimes he couldn't even manage orgasm at all when by himself. He didn't want to think about why his subconscious found this to be such a turn-on. For once, the rest of his head was perfectly content to let it lie.

His hand dropped away from the bruise on his neck, which he'd squeezed and prodded on the way to his climax almost as hard as Sylar had bitten him to start with. He slumped back on the bed, panting and wiping the wet fingers of his other hand on the nearby shirt. He dabbed at himself halfheartedly, then lay quietly to enjoy the buzz. He was pretty sure he could sleep now.
Title: Temptation
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 1200
Rating: R
Warnings: A halfway non-consensual kiss.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter finds Sylar (nearly) irresistible.

Peter woke with Sylar pillowed on his chest, tucked under his arm like a child. The long lashes and peaceful expression on the man's face reinforced the impression. He looked so innocent, unguarded, and needful of protection like this. Despite it being Sylar, Peter couldn't bear to disturb him. Sylar didn't know Peter was awake, so there was no requirement to move away. For a time at least, Peter knew he could bask in the cuddly warmth without repercussion. Pleased by that, he stroked Sylar's back slowly a few times before letting slumber reclaim him.

When he woke again, Sylar was shifting like he was uncomfortable. Peter suspected his neck might be bothering him. It was a tough position to keep for very long. He slipped to the side, lifting his arm and letting his drowsing companion ease down to the mattress alone. Peter sat up on the edge of the bed, where he rubbed at his shoulder. It wasn't sore so much as stiff. He rolled it through its range of motion. Behind him, Sylar made a sleepy, half-protesting noise and fingers trailed over Peter's lower back.

Peter turned, hiking up one knee and facing a lovely sight. Disheveled bed-hair fell across part of Sylar's face. His expression was bereft at Peter's departure. Muscular shoulders were bared by the singlet the man had worn to bed. The rest of him was lost under the blanket. Sylar's hand pulled back a little to tease along the outer edge of Peter's nearer leg. Peter was in sweat pants and a short-sleeved t-shirt. Large, dark eyes partly screened by the hair peered up at him hopefully. He didn't ask Peter to come back to bed, but Peter didn't need the words to be spoken to hear the request.

He didn't want to – he was done sleeping and he suspected that what Sylar wanted him for had nothing to do with sleep, innocence, or protection. It was tempting all the same. He felt a yearning inside for the intimacy, the friendly contact, letting down his defenses and letting someone in. But it would be a false intimacy, or at least only a physical one, Peter thought. Their relationship might encompass sharing a bed and even comforting one another from nightmares, but a fully awake Sylar was often mean-spirited and unpredictable, not to mention his past. It was hard for Peter to hold that in his mind while looking at Sylar, though. At the moment, he looked incredible – somehow managing to look kind, vulnerable, and thoughtful all at once.

Peter reached down for Sylar's hand and touched across the long, straight bones of his index finger, then over the bump of knuckle to the veined tendons on the back of his hand. Sylar stilled, watching Peter's hand as it traced back and forth over the man's wrist, then traveled up his forearm. It was very hairy. Peter lingered there to straighten the wayward hairs. He felt Sylar breathe out softly, having held his breath from Peter's first touch. Peter raised his eyes and as Sylar's flicked up to meet them, uncertainty and need stamped on Sylar's features.

"You are beautiful," Peter murmured, heartfelt. He glanced up and down Sylar's body to indicate all
of it. He meant nothing feminine about the word. He could have as easily described Sylar as magnificent, but that would have lost the sense of allure Peter felt for him, the desire. Sylar licked his lips and swallowed. Peter curled his fingers around to the softer, silky-smooth skin on the underside of Sylar's forearm and at this, Sylar breathed out the faintest moan.

Peter had to stop himself from climbing on top of the man. He wanted to so bad – to get back under the covers and bring forth more of those sounds of appreciation and pleasure. The yearning inside was a conflagration now, burning him up inside. He was stiffening in the loose sweat pants, which were still too clingy by far to Peter's current mind. *He killed my brother. This isn't right. Don't do this. He's just a pretty face. No!*

With an effort almost physical, Peter tore himself away and stood, breath coming harder than it should for such a small thing. He moved away, around the end of the bed, as Sylar winced and flopped over on his back, eyes shut in frustration. Peter stopped there, regarding Sylar with hungry eyes and an erection that wasn't going away. He felt like he was trembling inside. He still wanted to go back. Sylar's eyes opened to slits, then fully, looking back at him and taking in how obviously tempted Peter was, how close and how desperately he wanted what he shouldn't have.

Sylar whipped off the cover and stood in singlet and pajama pants, no less aroused than Peter was if the folds of the pants were any indication. He strode to him forcefully and whatever his intention was, he wasn't stopping to make sure Peter was on board with it. If Peter was teetering in his resolve, then Sylar was determined to unbalance him. "No!" Peter reached out to heel punch the oncoming man in the sternum, but Sylar expected it. He snatched the wrist and jerked it to the side before pressing himself into Peter, against him, their bodies flush and firm against one another.

*Oh God.* Peter's trembling wasn't purely internal anymore. Almost all of the same motion, Sylar kissed him, hard and full on the mouth, demanding what wasn't his. Some shred of self-control finally reasserted itself in Peter's mind at that. If Sylar had been just a bit more tentative, Peter might have been lost, but he was long since tired of being bossed around in all aspects of his life. Sylar didn't get that privilege. Instead of shoving away, he reached up with his free hand, slow and non-confrontational. Sylar let it pass, consumed in the kiss, rolling his eyes when Peter caressed his cheek and ignoring it as Peter moved his hand on to his ear. At that point, he grabbed, twisted, and yanked downward.

With a pained noise, Sylar released his wrist to flail at the unexpected pain. Peter grabbed his shoulder and shoved down in the same direction he was pulling on the man's ear. It was a pressure point and a good one. Sylar went to his knees and Peter let up on the twisting. Sylar's hand was on his now, not quite pulling him away for fear that Peter wouldn't let go his grip. Sylar's eyes went to Peter's triumphant face, then dropped to his groin where Peter was still rampant despite the violence. A leer spread over Sylar's features and he opened his mouth, licking the corner of it and looking up at Peter with brows raised slightly in question.

Peter huffed half a laugh at the offer to blow him. Now *that* was something tempting, too, but in a different way. "Ha. No. Not today." He let go of Sylar's ear entirely and gave the man a light push backwards followed by Peter backing off.

Sylar swayed, leering grin still in place. "Someday," he said and Peter couldn't contradict him.
"I want to go to bed now," Sylar said. *I sound like a sulky child.* There was nothing for it though. He hurt too much inside to do anything other than keep his eyes down and wait tensely for Peter to acknowledge the end of the uncomfortable conversation.

"Okay," the other man said.

With a curt nod, Sylar went about his rote preparations for bed, where he waited impatiently for Peter to join him. It was early. He was grateful when Peter didn't insist on staying up and doing his own thing. Sylar's eyes tracked Peter's usual bedtime rituals until the man laid down on his back on the other side of the bed. Sylar scooted over to him immediately.

He put his forehead to the point of Peter's shoulder, his face against Peter's upper arm. He breathed out heavily in relief, like a child reunited with a beloved security blanket. Eyes shut now, he cupped his hand over the hollow of Peter's elbow, holding him. He felt Peter twitch – usually Sylar waited until Peter was sleepier before expanding his contact beyond the minimum. *Please don't pull away.* *Please*, he whined inside, but said nothing. Peter was a human being, not a blanket or a teddy bear and could do as he liked – not always choosing actions Sylar enjoyed. Sylar held perfectly still. Peter didn't move further.

Sylar's shoulders sagged finally and he started breathing again. He pulled his knees in so they rested against Peter's thigh. His eyes were wet. He didn't want to think about all the things they'd talked about, or rather that he'd been accused of (*reminded of*). He didn't want the guilt about how he should have made different choices. He didn't want any of it! None of the memories, muddled in his mind at the moment so he was confused about how and where he'd grown up, what his name was, or which crimes he was accountable for. Multiple lifetimes of wearing a mask and pathetically trying to win the approval of others flashed behind his eyes. He didn't like any of it – his whole life, none of it. He wished it would just go away, stop, cease to be. He didn't want it!

*I'm still being childish.*

He didn't care how it looked. He only wanted this thing that he had now, which was more than he'd ever had before in any of his incarnations – a warm arm to hold and plaster his face to and hiccup against as breathing through his nose became difficult. Then Peter turned. For a moment, tears renewed as Sylar expected to be abandoned. Peter rolled and hugged him, wrapping him in his arms and pulling him close. Sylar made a tiny sound of surprised pleasure, huddling in. He felt too big and awkward and foolish, but if Peter thought any of that, he gave no indication of it. It was the acceptance he needed. He was here, having feelings, and Peter was entirely validating without
saying a word. No questions were being asked, no answers demanded. *He said no conditions,* Sylar mused, sniffing against Peter's chest now. He hadn't really believed Peter's promise to comfort him. The tears had stopped with the hug, the consolation of not losing his hero having left him oddly clear-headed. He supposed he no longer had a legitimate need of Peter's embrace, but it was too precious a thing to give up. Instead, he burrowed deeper, snaked his arms around Peter in turn, and stayed that way until he fell asleep.
Practical Reasons

Title: Practical Reasons
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 400
Rating: PG
Warnings: None.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar doesn't understand Peter's reading choices. Peter thinks there's a lot Sylar doesn't understand.

Peter walked back to the desk in Sylar's apartment, picking up the book he'd been reading. He shut it without bothering to check the page and stuck it back on the nearby shelf. He turned back to the desk, reaching for the game on the top of the stack. It was Battleship. He remembered having won their last match. That was good – it was a win/win. If Sylar won, he'd be happy to have revenged himself, and if Peter won, he'd enjoy having the trend continue. He regarded Battleship as a coin-flip-game anyway as to who won. At least, it should be a coin-flip-game, but people like Sylar insisted on playing it methodically, which defeated the whole purpose. He turned to see if Sylar was interested in playing it again, methodical or no.

Sylar was staring at the book Peter had returned to the shelf. "Kant, A Critique of Practical Reason," he read the title out loud. He looked at Peter wonderingly. "Why were you reading that?"

Peter shrugged. He didn't want to get into deep philosophy about one's understanding of reality when deprived of sensory experience, because that would lead inevitably to a discussion of how Peter perceived their here-and-now. It was not the same understanding Sylar had.

Sylar was not to be deterred. His wonder went to suspicion and uncertainty. "Why were you reading that? That's a very heavy book," he added, which could mean the literal heft of the substantial tome, or more likely the intellectual rigor required to comprehend it.

Peter frowned. "It was just something I was reading, Sylar."

"But why? That's not you. That's nothing like you."

He would have been offended if Sylar knew jack shit about what he was talking about. It wasn't even the first or second time he'd read the damn thing, having had to write a term paper in college on it and discussed it at some length with many of his friends. He gave Sylar a good, long, hard stare, thinking about how Sylar must be using Nathan's memories to be so certain. "Nathan didn't know me. He knew about me, and what he expected me to be, and that was all he thought he needed to know. Don't make the same mistake." Peter gestured at the game in front of him. "Now put the book back, have a seat, and let's play Battleship."
Title: Favorite Arrangements
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 1,000
Rating: R
Warnings: None.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Fighting, fucking – not truly either, but they're certainly mucking around in a gray area.

Peter struggled to stay focused on the piano while Sylar loomed directly over him. He could feel the man's presence as a heat against his back, prickling across his skin, making the hairs on the back of his neck stand up. When Sylar deliberately blew on his ear, though, Peter knew it was time to throw down. "That's it!" he snapped. Snarling, he got to his feet and clear of the bench. Sylar looked delighted. Peter swung his left fist at the man's smug face, trusting Sylar to make sure it didn't connect. It was only partly a feint, but as he'd expected, Sylar put his main attention into blocking it. Peter's solid kick to the shin went entirely unopposed.

Sylar backed up an unsteady step before swinging a few punches of his own. Peter stayed well out of range now, circling right and sizing Sylar up as though he was considering rushing him. He was obvious enough about it that Sylar gave him a 'come and get it' gesture, so Peter lunged at him … and kicked him in the other shin instead of committing to the bull rush. Sylar made an inarticulate roar at that and cuffed him solidly across the head. Peter jerked back and down, getting hit on the side of the face and then had his shirt grabbed by Sylar's other hand. He wasn't sure what Sylar was planning with that, so he twisted away, the taut fabric slipping out of Sylar's grip before he could tighten it.

Peter got his balance. He should have probably been thinking of a strategy, but instead he was just responding. It turned out to be better that way. Provoked now, Sylar stepped forward and swung at his head with long arms that took a while to unwind. Mind empty and hands lightning quick, Peter grabbed the guy's wrist, side-stepped, and yanked him forward, following the path of momentum just like he'd been taught years ago. Hey, that worked! Sylar fell forward flailing onto the couch. Peter came down with a knee to the back of one calf as Sylar was trying to get back up and slammed his right forearm across the back of Sylar's neck to force him back down. Sylar face-planted on the leather couch and couldn't draw breath for a half-second, long enough to get disoriented in the middle of a fight. Peter grabbed his left wrist with his free left hand, applying pressure with his right to keep Sylar's head down. They were all useful actions that made sense in context, but none of them stopped Peter from twisting Sylar's left arm around behind his back. That was important.

Peter wrenched the wrist upward and the fight was over. Sylar gasped and involuntarily cowered down away from the pressure. He was stuck. He couldn't twist away forward with the couch blocking him. A moment later, Peter felt him go limp. In response, he lowered the wrist a few inches. One of Peter's knees had ended up between Sylar's legs. He was on his knees behind him, but the sexual connotations of the position hadn't occurred to him until Sylar reached back with his free right hand to brush it up and down against the outside of Peter's thigh.

"Huh," Peter said. The gesture could be read as supplication or as defiance. Peter decided to take it as complimentary in either case. He let go of Sylar's left wrist, letting the arm fall and hoping there was no resumption of hostility. Sylar didn't do anything – he stayed right where he'd been put, his
right hand moving up and down the front and now curving around the inside of Peter's thigh. It felt so good after the rush of the fighting that Peter felt light-headed. He put both hands on Sylar's shoulders. Relief, arousal, and satisfaction surged through him. He had Sylar right where he wanted him in a way. It was perfect. He rubbed lightly, feeling the fabric shift, skin flex and muscle firm underneath. It felt good. Sylar's hand made a fist in what he could grip of Peter's jeans. Peter breathed out a slow, deep breath. His head sagged. He could smell Sylar – his hair, his sweat, the back of his neck. Sylar was so close, so present, and so available.

Sylar tugged on his jeans, head turned so he could see Peter out of the corner of his eye. "You like this position?"

"Not my favorite." Peter's voice was strained. He backed away, getting his hands off of Sylar and Sylar's off of him. They were done. This was as far as he would go. But fuck it was tempting!

"What is?" Sylar got to his feet. "Your favorite?"

Peter looked him up and down, noticing and not lingering on the hard-on Sylar appeared to have. Peter would be surprised if he didn't have the same. It would be embarrassing if it wasn't becoming so much of a trend between them. "I like facing the person I'm with." Just like he was facing Sylar now. Peter bit his lip and turned away.

"That can be arranged," Sylar purred, reaching for him but only to touch at Peter's elbow, not to seize or hold.

"No, Sylar, it can't," Peter said, all the reasons why he couldn't do this bubbling up in his mind. "You killed my brother. I loved him, and you killed him. You took him away from me, twice!"

Sylar grimaced. "If I'd known you were so into threesomes, maybe I would have left him alive."
"Hey, there's a rowboat!"

Sylar lagged behind as Peter jumped down the rocks to where the boat was moored on the little bit of sand and muck at the edge of the river. By the time Sylar joined him, Peter had it untied and was pulling out the oars. He handed one to Sylar, who was standing on the last rock, reluctant to go further. He'd leave tracks and he might get his shoes dirty.

"Come on," Peter urged, as though this was the whole point of their stroll down the riverside. Peter had professed a desire for a change of scenery, which Sylar had interpreted as 'I'm bored'. With a put-upon sigh, he took the offered oar and gingerly climbed into the tiny boat, using the oar to keep his balance as he passed Peter and headed to the other end.

"Where are we going?" he said in a complaining tone as he nonetheless stuck the oar in the water and prodded at the silt.

"Downstream, across, I dunno," Peter said, grunting as he shoved the oar into the soft riverbank. They came free at last. The boat rocked as they sat, having the sense not to remain standing and thereby tip them both into the water. They ended up at the opposite ends of it with an empty seat between them. Peter leaned across it with his hand palm up. "Here, give me the oar."

Sylar looked at him steadily, making no motion to surrender the cedar stave. "You give me your oar," he countered. The boat was too narrow for both of them to sit side by side. There would be only a single rower.

Peter pulled his hand back and gave a confused tilt of his head. "You're going to paddle us? What do you know about boats?"

"I know this one is too small to have a rudder, so whoever controls the oars controls our destiny," Sylar quirked a brow, amused by his own wordplay, "and our destination."

Peter looked from his oar to Sylar's, hands tightening restlessly across the smooth wood. "That's not how it works," he said after a pause long enough for nearly a hundred feet of shoreline to drift past.

"Oh?"

"Boats have captains."

Sylar cocked his head slowly, considering what Peter was working himself up to offering. It was a concession of sorts. Rather than beat around the bush, he asked directly, "And am I the captain of this boat?"
"You can be," Peter said with a false-looking shrug, pretending he didn't care.

"You'll go where I say we go?" Sylar wanted to be sure he knew what he was getting. People didn't let him in the driver's seat very often, if ever.

A smile flitted across Peter's face and he moved into the middle seat, fitting his oar to the eyelet like the matter was decided. "Yes." He waited for Sylar to give him the other. "That's the deal."

After letting Peter cool his jets for a few more moments to make it clear who was in charge, Sylar magnanimously handed him the other oar. "We'll go across then." Peter had wanted to see something new, after all.

Peter set up the oar, gripped both of them, and looked around to get his bearings. "Yes sir," he said quietly, but without sarcasm or disrespect, like it was Sylar's due. It was weird how that small thing ran through Sylar like electricity, making him sit straighter and his skin prickle. It was shaping up to be a good outing after all.
It's mystical," Peter said earnestly. "You are a custodian of everything Nathan was. He's a part of you and of who you are. No matter how much you insist he's dead, he lives onthrough you."

Sylar frowned, gritted his teeth, and said nothing.

Peter shook his head briefly at that reaction. Maybe the thing about Nathan was too much of a sore subject for Sylar because he hadn't chosen those memories himself. He tried a different angle. "It's like all those people whose abilities you took? You took their lives, they're over now, but some essence of who they are continues, in you. Their abilities came from who they were, just like yours did," he gestured solemnly to Sylar, "and mine." He touched his own chest. "It would be ..." he searched for the right word, looking back and forth at the ground for a moment, "a tragedy, if they were lost. It would make their deaths pointless. At least through you, they have some meaning. They have a legacy. You have a duty to use their powers responsibly. It's the least you can do for them." He paused to assess how Sylar was taking this. The man's face looked strained, like he was holding something in. Peter made a dip of his head and raised his brows, both motions inviting Sylar to comment.

"Well," Sylar said after clearing his throat and managing a straight face. "I'll try to remember that sacred trust the next time I'm using telekinesis to masturbate while I'm shape-shifted into your niece."

Sylar was laughing both before and after Peter slugged him. Shaking with rage and disgust, Peter stalked off, intent on not talking to the heel for as long as possible. I don't know why I even try with him!
Peter hissed in pain, side-stepping clumsily away from the chair he'd accidentally bumped his nearly-healed, but still tender, broken hand against. "Ow. Fuck," he muttered and grimaced, cradling it as the ache went literally bone-deep, the back of his hand throbbing near the knuckle of the ring finger. The break was called a boxer's fracture and he'd gotten it with a particularly ill-timed punch to Sylar's skull some weeks ago. They were still a long way from being best buds, but Peter's noise had brought Sylar out of his seat. He captured Peter's hand now, quickly enough that Peter couldn't yank it away without endangering himself even worse. "Careful! Hey!"

Sylar's formidable brows twitched, but he didn't let go. Deft fingers traced the bones and tendons in Peter's hand, examining him with the same intensity Sylar might have directed towards one of his clocks. "Peter," Sylar said condescendingly, "no one knows better how fragile people truly are than a killer."

Peter snorted, rejecting Sylar's self-identification. "And no one knows better how people need to be comforted than a nurse." He didn't need Sylar grabbing and pawing him – it was almost as upsetting as hitting his hand in the first place.

Sylar hesitated, looking up at him piercingly and meeting Peter's steady, irritated gaze. Sylar looked down at the hand he'd seized and was currently holding hostage. He petted it awkwardly. "There, there?" he said in mock hopefulness.

Peter huffed out a single laugh at that and managed to extract his hand. "Your bedside manner could use some work."

Sylar tilted his head and shrugged. "But your hand doesn't. Just be more careful."

Peter shot him a searching look, not for the first time wondering how and why Sylar considered it in his interest to keep Peter intact. He would have thought Sylar knew better, but the belief that Sylar was looking out for him, no matter how tenuous, meant Peter had started seriously pulling his punches. So maybe Sylar did know better after all.
"You're a monster just like I am."

Peter had heard that sort of thing often enough from Sylar that it didn't get under his skin. He knew it was a statement about Sylar anyway, not about Peter at all. Maybe an education was in order. "I'm Peter Petrelli – paramedic, nurse, that skinny, shrimpy little kid from New York. Son of Arthur and Angela Petrelli." He hesitated. "As far as I know."

"What?" Sylar tensed under his hands. Peter was massaging him on an actual massage table. It was a weird thing to do, but everything in this place was weird. They'd been exploring little shops inside one of the larger office buildings. Finding the massage parlor, Sylar had stretched himself out and mockingly requested service. Peter had laughed, but went ahead and provided it. The shock on Sylar's face was worth it all by itself – and he wasn't going to discount the opportunity to get his hands all over a very handsome man (and the only human being he'd seen for months) without repercussion or retaliation.

"Well, it wouldn't be the first time a Petrelli found out they didn't have the family they thought they did. Not even the second or third. Who I'm related to changes a lot."

"Mrm," Sylar said, relaxing again as Peter moved up to his shoulders. Sylar was still wearing his shirt, but they'd taken off coats shortly after coming in the building.

"I don't have any reason to think I'm not their son. Nathan … I would assume he'd know if I wasn't."

Sylar shifted his head and made a flimsy, noncommittal wave of one hand. Peter took it as agreement that Nathan had no reason to suspect different.

Peter moved back down the man's spine, eliciting a faint groan of pleasure from Sylar. "I've never been called a monster. I've been called a lot of other things – a cheat, a fraud, drama queen, late … late-blooming, an accident, an extra, a dreamer …" He paused as he reached the top of Sylar's jeans. It was tempting to pull the shirt out of his way and do this skin-to-skin. He could see a little swirl of fine, dark hair against smooth, pale skin in the gap where the shirt had ridden up. "Sexy," he murmured, before dragging his mind back onto the subject of discussion, and pretending that was one of the labels he'd had. It was, but that wasn't why he'd said it. Leaving the shirt between them, he started working his way back up, using the heels of his hands for more pressure. Sylar's groan was not faint this time. "I've been called an underdog and a glory hound, a poodle and a pet – hell, I've been called a dog outright, but it wasn't true. I wanted more than that with her," he said wistfully of one of his college girlfriends. He expanded his range out to Sylar's deltoids. "I want you to think that I'm more than a monster."

Voice slurred with relaxation and pleasure, Sylar got out, "Right now, I think you're an angel."
Peter chuckled and stepped back, finished. "So is that all it takes to change your mind – a few minutes on a table with magic hands?"

Sylar lifted himself up on his elbows to regard Peter. Voice clearer, he said, "That's all it took for me to become a monster." He dipped his head to one side. "But it was a wall, not a table."
"You son of a bitch!" Peter's second blow cracked Sylar across the chin and for a moment, he thought he'd done some serious damage. He hesitated long enough for Sylar to take advantage, trying to hit Peter in the ribs and ending up slamming Peter's elbow instead. "Bastard!" Peter tried to swing again, but Sylar was too close now. A half step back so he could pummel the guy more only served to bring his heel up against the couch. Sylar bulled into him, tumbling them both onto it.

"Don't- No!" Peter shoved, kicked, and tried to get one of his knees between him and Sylar as the other man climbed between his legs. He hadn't been fast enough, though. "Fuck," Peter said, before punching at Sylar's side because it was the easiest target to get at. Sylar grabbed his wrist; Peter jerked it away. Peter tried to roll them off the couch – being on the floor would at least put him on top and in a better position to bash the guy's face in. Sylar still had a foot on the floor and shoved back. Then Sylar came forward in a clench, putting his body against Peter's so as to rob Peter's blows of any effectiveness and better control him. Peter grabbed Sylar's shoulder, fingers gripping both fabric and flesh beneath. His other hand took the back of Sylar's head, twining through hair and making a fist.

Peter arched against that lean, firm body that pressed against his. Lust sizzled through him. He was hard in an instant – Sylar, no more than a second after him. The violence had his blood pounding. His skin felt electrified by the adrenalin. His breath was rasping in his throat as Sylar mouthed the side of his neck. Peter's hand, in his hair, held the man to him as Peter's hips strained against him. He didn't think this was the way it was supposed to be. One wasn't supposed to hit one's lovers. You weren't supposed to curse them and call them names and want to grind their face into paste against the floor. Peter's body flushed with even more excitement. All he could think of was how twisted this was, how much he hated Sylar, and how fucking hot it felt. He moaned.

Sylar, in answer, put his hand between Peter's legs and seized his groin through his jeans with a dangerously tight grip. Peter's breath caught. Sylar sucked at his neck and firmly manipulated him. Peter's moan turned to a begging whimper, his fist tightening in Sylar's hair and the fingers of his other hand digging into his shoulder. He came fast, and hard, and shuddering, with Sylar whispering sweet nothings in his ear about who he belonged to and what a filthy little pervert he was. Peter agreed, for the most part, though he didn't have the breath or the inclination to say it out loud.

Before the aftershocks faded, Sylar propped himself up to rub himself against Peter's crotch, pumping away in a clothed simulation of sex. Not that this wasn't sex. Peter wouldn't deny what they were doing even if they hadn't gone so far as getting naked yet. He caressed Sylar's sides and hooked his feet around the back of the other man's knees, giving him gentleness and leverage. Peter tried not to wince at the blood that dripped from Sylar's mouth as the man panted over him, a reminder of
violence Peter would deny if he could. Sylar sank to be enveloped by welcoming arms after his peak. For a while now, they would just lie together before things went back to the way they were. And that, Peter thought, had to be the most twisted part of all.
Imagine

Sylar opened the back door of the apartment building, taking care as he always did that the door slid shut behind him with barely a whisper of sound. Then he paused to listen. Peter was playing piano in the rec room. That let him know where the man was and that Peter was unlikely to hear him approach. Even so, his tread was quiet as he walked to the open door, stopping short of it to listen again. It had been over a week since they'd spoken to one another – some degree of caution seemed wise no matter what.

The song was easily recognizable – very famous, one of John Lennon's. Just as Sylar was getting to appreciate it, Peter stopped playing and started muttering to himself. He had been singing, too, which was also weird. Peter didn't have the best voice – he was no professional singer and never would be – but it was good enough in a world without competition. He resumed. Sylar started to walk inside when he caught the word Company where country was supposed to go. That stopped him. Peter stopped too, but when Sylar glanced in, it wasn't because Peter suspected him. He was humming to himself and scribbling something on a page of sheet music. He played a little more, singing to himself low and mostly inarticulate, then stopped again.

Sylar leaned against the wall, unseen, and wondered. It seemed that Peter was finished, though, because he ran through the entire song start to finish, singing it loudly enough that Sylar was finally able to catch all the words. The changes were minor, but very significant.

Imagine there's no heaven
   It's easy if you try
   No hell below us
   Above us only sky
Imagine both the people
   Living for today...

Imagine there's no Comp'ny
   It isn't hard to do
   Nothing to kill or die for
   And no prophecy too
Imagine both the people
   Living life in peace...

You may say I'm a dreamer
   I may be the only one
I hope someday you'll join me
   And the world will be as one
Imagine no abilities
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or Hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine both the people
Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer
I may be the only one
I hope someday you'll join me
And the world will live as one

So, Sylar thought, this is what Peter does when I leave him to his own devices for too long. It was sweet. And kind of cute. He had a feeling Peter had done this solely for his own entertainment. Their relationship was nowhere near the 'living as one' mentioned in the song, but it was warming that Peter could think along those lines with everything that had happened between them. Peter had chosen not to alter that line, after all, and that meant something. Sylar decided against creeping up on Peter and scaring the crap out of him. Instead, he walked back to the back door, opened it, and let it close noisily before tromping back to the rec room with a heavy step. Peter would talk to him again – he was sure of it.
He stood on hot, pale sand within a brick arena. Across from him was Sylar. Both were clad as gladiators in leather and bronze. Each was holding a short, sharp bronze sword. Peter blinked at the person obviously intended to be his opponent. Sylar looked grim and resolute.

"No!" Peter objected, letting his sword hang to his side. "I won't do it! I came here to get his help, not to kill him!" He spun, searching the empty brick and stone bleachers to find Matt Parkman outfitted as Caesar, toga and golden laurel included. "That's not what I came here for," Peter complained.

"It's what I'm here for," Matt said reasonably. "I'm tired of supporting you inside his head. It's not working. Just give up and put an end to it."

"No!" With Peter's refusal to fight, Sylar sat down heavily on the sand. He put his face into his hands and started crying about all the other people he'd had to kill in here. Peter looked at him, torn inside. It seemed senseless to blame a gladiator for murder.

Matt shrugged and put his out his thumb, downturned in a gesture of finality. "Then I will."

Heretofore unseen entrances to the arena opened to release lions into the fighting pit with them. Sylar remained sitting on the sand, helpless in his grief. Peter ran, interposing himself between Sylar and the lions, somehow snatching up Sylar's sword along the way. A weapon in each hand, he stood, looking between the blades and the circling, wary lions. "I don't know how to use swords," he said. His voice sounded strange to his ears.

"Peter?" Sylar called from behind him, also sounding odd.

But Peter couldn't spare the time to look. He slashed at one of the lions which had rushed him, barely evading the razor-like claws. He had trouble telling how big the lions were. At one moment they seemed like monsters; the next unruly house cats. It must be the fear, he told himself. He tried to slice at the nearest cat-lion, waving his sword in a slow, wide arc that never even got near the cat. That was when he realized someone had thrown a net over him. They must be trying to get him out of the way, so he couldn't protect Sylar! He struggled with it, but it was everywhere he reached. He could barely breathe. "No!"

"Peter!"

Sylar was grabbing his forearm, maybe trying to help with the net? Peter remembered that he'd taken Sylar's sword and left him defenseless. Maybe he could cut his way free … Then he was on his back, in bed. Peter fought with the tangled sheet, taking out his frustrations on it and finally flinging it off the end of the bed. Panting, he stared after it with a dazed, numb expression before turning to embrace Sylar without warning or preamble. "I'm glad you're okay," he murmured.
After a moment of tension at being seized so abruptly, Sylar softened. "Who were you fighting?"

"Matt," Peter said, processing that it had all been a dream. "And lions." He supposed there was no reason to be awake anymore. Exhaustion tugged at his consciousness.

"Interesting combination."

"Not as interesting as you in a gladiator outfit," Peter mumbled, letting sleep claim him once more.
Brainstorming

Title: Brainstorming
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 1,600
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter asks Sylar to be a sounding board for Peter's various crazy ideas about how to save Nathan.

"Just hear me out," Peter asked. "I could go back in time and get Jeremy's ability. Then-" He made an exasperated noise. "But then I'd have his power, not time traveling. I couldn't get back." Sylar, listening, raised his brows slightly in a 'really?' expression. Peter ignored him, although he had the nagging feeling he was missing something there. "Okay, wait – instead of me getting time traveling, I get Hiro … but Hiro has a brain tumor." He paused to wonder how that had turned out and if it had any effect on his ability. Peter had been able to borrow his power, after all, so that argued it was intact. From Sylar's surprised look, he gathered Sylar hadn't been up to date on Hiro's health. He wondered if Sylar knew anything about brain tumors and abilities … but that was beside the point. "Okay, well, it doesn't matter who. Maybe I can find someone else with time traveling. This is just a thought experiment, after all."

"Gedankenexperiment," Sylar said.

Peter blinked at the unintelligible word. It seemed random. "Okay." When Sylar only nodded, Peter blew it off and went on, "I find someone with time traveling and we both go back to meet Jeremy. You know, if that meeting wasn't friendly, then it might explain a lot about how upset Jeremy was with Noah and I. And that whole shotgun thing. Of course, the stuff about his parents explained that, too." Peter's nose wrinkled in memory. "Anyway, I get Jeremy's ability somehow, then we time travel back to the plane, right after Noah and I – that's past-me – parachute out of it. Then I'd try to heal him – Nathan. I hope he hasn't been dead too long." He waited a moment to ponder that. "But if I could heal him, then … Oh. Then we'd crash. That's no good." He frowned. "No, wait! Whoever teleported me in there could teleport us out again! That's right." Sylar gave him another long-suffering look. Peter ignored him again. "And if it didn't work, then we could go back earlier … like right after you'd killed Nathan. You didn't stay in the hotel room for long. There had to be a while between you leaving and whoever found him, finding him. He definitely wouldn't be dead too long then!" Peter thought through the process – teleporting in, healing Nathan's fatal wound before it even bled out, then the three of them teleporting out like they'd never even been there. "What do you think?" he asked Sylar hopefully.

Sylar blinked at him slowly. "I can't believe that you ever beat me at anything."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Sylar shook his head. "It means the next time I tell myself I'm better than other people, I'm going to think of this conversation and remember that this is the tactical genius who thwarted me twice."

Peter frowned heavily at him. "Well, what should I do?"

"For starters, why not go back to when Nathan was alive, and skip the crap about getting Jeremy's
healing ability? Or are you too obsessed with saving the day to see that as a possibility?"

"Oh!" Peter stared off into the distance, thinking that through. "Yeah! But wait … what would that do to you?" He gave Sylar a puzzled look. "I'd still inject you, so you'd be caught ..."

"What would have happened to me if you healed Nathan in the hotel room and teleported out with him?"

Peter's face fell. One of the rules of Sylar listening to him talk through his ideas about how to save Nathan included not entertaining options that involved Sylar's death or loss of identity. "Oh. I didn't think of that."

"Obviously," Sylar said dryly. "So obviously, in fact, that I believe you. But if you teleported into the elevator or the end of the hall, you could intercept yourself and dearest Nathan, and you could explain things to both. Nathan would not have to die and your past self would not have to carry through with the injection."

"Oh." Peter nodded. He supposed that worked. "Okay, but what about you? You were in the hotel room with Claire."

Sylar sighed. "Despite your feelings about the matter, I can be reasoned with. That was … not the best time to attempt it, but I can hardly think of a worse method of dealing with me than a head-on assault. I've been ambushed by better teams than you two and won."

"But then you'd be facing not just past-me and Nathan, but me and the time-traveler, too," Peter pointed out, thinking the match might go very differently.

Sylar stared at him for several seconds, then started laughing. "That's your answer? Just keep sending back more reinforcements from the future?"

"Well, okay, that's probably not going to work." And, also, it was against the rules of their current conversation. "Yeah, we could talk to you," he conceded. "But what happens if that works? I mean, it would change the whole future!"

"So?"

"You can't do that! I mean, I can't do that."

"Why not? Hiro does it all the time."

"No, he doesn't."

"He came back in time once to prevent me from taking the ability of his girlfriend. And he managed to talk me into curing her aneurism at the same time. See? I can be reasoned with!"

"Okay, fine, yeah." Peter's lips pursed. "But what happened to reality?"

"Nothing. I didn't have her ability any more."

"But you'd had it before?"

"In the past of the Hiro who came back to prevent me from taking it, clearly."

Now Peter was blinking, trying to follow that. "Okay. I guess that sort of makes sense. I mean, it was a Hiro from the future who came back and told me to save the cheerleader, so I guess in that Hiro's past, I didn't do it." He frowned. "Doesn't that mean there's a whole bunch of different realities?"
"No."

"How do you know that?"

"Because I know how time works."

Peter frowned even more mightily at Sylar. "I don't get it."

"And if your previous mental gymnastics were any indication of your intellectual ability, you will continue to not 'get it' even if I explain it. So I'm not going to," Sylar said in a superior tone.

"People who can't explain things don't understand them themselves," Peter said in a similar tone.

"I never said I couldn't explain it," Sylar said testily. "I said you wouldn't understand it."

"I'm trying to solve my problems here, Sylar!" he snapped. "That's better than just sitting around for three years stewing over them!" He gestured sharply at the world around them, the world Sylar had moped in for the relative time span of years, doing nothing to better himself or his situation as far as Peter could tell. Sylar's face froze and he leaned back. Peter knew he'd gone too far. He shut his eyes for a moment, took a deep breath, and said, "I'm sorry. You insulted me. I got hot. I insulted back. It was low. I shouldn't have. I'm sorry."

After several beats, Sylar allowed, "You apologize well."

Peter noted the lack of acceptance of said apology, but he'd gotten the impression Sylar didn't understand how apologies worked. Or maybe he would simply never forgive anyone for anything – that seemed like a really lousy way to live. "I've had more practice than I wanted."

Sylar swallowed, nodded, and after an awkward pause, said, "Go on with your brainstorming. I'll listen. If nothing else, I want to hear what I need to protect myself against."

After a beat, Peter said, "So you're saying I wouldn't change time … well, I would change time, but you're saying I would just … I don't know. Would it work?"

"Yes, maybe. Assuming past-me could be talked down from my plan, which might take more persuasion than you have." He shrugged at Peter's darkening look. "I'm trying to be realistic. I didn't get to the point I was at then without being desperate and desperately determined. You would also have to succeed in getting your past self and Nathan to stand down, which might be just as difficult, especially with Claire there goading you on."

Peter rolled his eyes – not at Claire's role, but at how accurate Sylar was that the whole thing would be impossibly difficult, now that he considered the personalities involved. "Even if I could get there, to the right moment, I still couldn't stop it. I wouldn't listen to me." He shook his head. "I've tried that before and I didn't listen then, either."

Sylar gave him a puzzled look.

Peter shrugged it off. "You know who you would listen to? It's the same person that if I walked up with them next to me, working with me, then past-me and Nathan both would shut up and listen."

"Who's that?"

"You."

"Me?"
"You know about time. You can get Hiro's ability and cure his brain tumor, because you'd have to be in his brain to do it. He'll trust you because you did it before for his girlfriend. And then you could take me back to Jeremy's place. I'd get his ability and we'd come right back to where Hiro was and I'd heal him." Sylar's mouth had fallen open slightly. "We'd go back to the Stanton Hotel. You'd show Nathan and past-me that you could be trusted. And you – you'd be the one who understood what Sylar in that room was going through, and what you'd need to say to get through to him. That would do it."

Sylar shut his mouth, an unexpected and newfound respect on his face.
"Come back here," Peter said, reaching out and snagging Sylar's wrist. He pulled the other man back into bed with him. "I'm not done with you yet." Peter ran his hand from Sylar's bare hip, across his waist, and up his equally bare chest, openly admiring the territory.

"You Petrellis are so greedy," Sylar laughed, settling himself next to Peter. "Never getting enough."

Peter dipped his head, kissing and then licking a hairy pectoral. "Hungry."

"Needy," Sylar insulted, softening it by petting Peter's hair and combing his fingers through the tousled mop.

"You taste so good." Peter dragged his teeth along Sylar's skin.

Sylar arched, his hand making a fist. "Mmm. Do I?"

"Mm-hmm," Peter crooned agreement, face buried against the other man as he nibbled at a nipple.

"You're insatiable."

Peter lay off Sylar's chest and moved up to regard his face. "That's not true." He pretended to give Sylar a kiss, ending up brushing his lips teasingly with his own. "You satisfy me just fine."

Sylar hooked his hand around the back of Peter's head and kissed him deeply.
"Hey," Peter said, putting his book down. "Do you think it's possible – and just hear me out here," (he'd been saying that rather a lot recently), "but is it possible that you're Nathan and that really was Sylar we burned at Coyote Sands?"

Sylar frowned at him. "How?" was all he said.

"Well, let's say they gave all of Sylar's powers to Nathan. And then a few weeks later, it got to be too much for Nathan, and realized he had other abilities, decided he was Sylar, and had an identity breakdown."

Sylar gazed steadily at Peter for a while. "You Petrellis really like the idea of fucking around with people's identities, don't you?"

"No, it's not that," Peter insisted. "It's that with abilities, anything is possible. I didn't think Nathan was you, so how would I know if you were Nathan?"

"Matt Parkman is a telepath. He would know."

"Can he be trusted?"

Sylar blinked.

"Can my mother? Or Noah?"

Carefully, Sylar said, "One would think they would have said something when their precious 'Nathan' began insisting Nathan was dead and calling himself Sylar."

Peter nodded. "Yeah, well, I didn't say this was serious. I was just thinking about it." He picked his book up again.

Sylar watched him for a moment, head slowly tilting. "How do you know Nathan ever existed at all – as long as we're posing hypotheticals?"

Peter raised his head. "You mean, like he was an invisible-friend-big-brother or something like that?"

"Yes."

Peter's brows pulled together as he thought it over. It seemed ludicrous – all the layered details, all the times people had referred to Nathan, he'd been on the news, ran for Congress – to think of all those as fictive broke his sense of reality. "I can't buy it. Who caught me when I jumped off that building?"
"Maybe you knew how to fly all along."

Peter smiled a little and found his page in the book. "That would be cool," he agreed. *But I'd rather have had Nathan in my life.*
"It happened to you, too," Sylar said. "You aren't bothered by that." It was almost a question. More, he was daring Peter to deny it.

"Losing my memories?"

"Yes."

"No, losing the memories wasn't what bothered me. Not the same way it did you. What upset me was being stuck in that cargo container for so long and *that* is what's more similar between us. We were both abandoned, Sylar. Cast aside and gotten rid of. For you, it was taking your identity. For me, it was sending me off where I'd be out of the way forever. No one wanted me. That hurt."

"Rejection."

Peter nodded. "Not the memory loss itself. I was … happy, not knowing. I was curious of course, but I had a little bit there after Ricky put my identity in my hands that I didn't look. I thought about maybe never looking and leaving it all alone, but there were things going on – my abilities, the whole thing about me being in Ireland where I didn't have any background – I thought I needed to know, that it would be safer for the people I was with if I knew."

"You enjoyed being someone else."

Peter smiled faintly. "Yeah. For a little while, there, I wasn't a Petrelli." His smile deepened. "Oh man, is that why you're so angry? That they went and made you a Petrelli of all things? Damn. They could have made you an Anderson or a Jackson or a Hooper – anything but a Petrelli."

"Very funny," Sylar said drily.
Escapement

Title: Escapement
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Words: 1,750
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar tries to use the only ability that was ever really his on Peter.

Escapement: One of the most important parts of any watch, the escapement provides impulses that maintain the oscillation of the balance wheel ensuring the rate that the escapement will allow the hands to revolve.

With an intent, focused expression, Sylar watched Peter. Peter was doing nothing particularly interesting at the moment (Sylar thought the man was sketching the piano for some stupid reason) and that was the problem – Peter did not do what Sylar wanted him to. Sylar did not want immediate, constant obedience, but he wasn't getting the reactions he wanted. There was no connection between them and life had pretty definitely narrowed down his choices for a possible connection. Peter was it. There was no backup, no second choice, no alternate. It was Peter or no one, forever, and Sylar had had three long years to deal with that other option. He did not want an eternity of it. That meant he needed to get Peter to play ball with him.

Somehow.

He'd tried all the basic things – explaining that Peter had no other choice, withdrawing his own presence and trying to wait Peter out, making offers of things he knew Peter had to be in need of – but Peter was uninterested or even outright hostile. I'm missing something. Or I'm approaching it wrong. I'm trying to bargain with him and he doesn't want to deal. What if bargaining isn't right? For a moment, his mind floundered as it struggled to find a decent option. Extortion, threats, deceit, and blackmail were considered and discarded. Those ... aren't right either. I don't want that. They aren't reliable and it wouldn't last. It wouldn't be real. He dropped his eyes slightly, so lost in thought that it took a moment for him to realize he was staring at Peter's watch, the one that didn't work and yet Peter kept stubbornly wearing it as if to taunt Sylar with its silence.

A watch. I'm good at fixing watches. And figuring things out. Why can't I figure this out? I could imagine him as a watch. His eyes rose to Peter's profile as the man continued to ignore him in favor of drawing the inanimate objects he preferred to focus his attention on. He's a watch that won't give me the time of day. So how do I fix that? Well ... what's wrong with him? The battery is still charged, obviously, but ... he's not working right. Sylar tilted his head, realizing there was something wrong and different about Peter, something off-kilter that prevented him from functioning as he should, as even Peter wanted to function. He wasn't quite 'right' with the world.

He sorted through Nathan's memories, looking for an easy answer. But there isn't one. Nathan doesn't know. Looking at Nathan is like looking at one Rolex trying to find out what's wrong with another. They're both Rolexes and have a lot in common, but the only way I'll figure it out is to look at the one that's not performing. His mind toyed with the analogy of Petrellis as Rolexes. It's a good brand – a little over-hyped and over-priced, but there's a lot of good craftsmanship in them. They're tough and reliable and the genuine articles are works of art. Not as unique as a Sylar, but their
quality is more easily recognized by the public.

There's not a problem with the casing, he thought with a momentary lascivious glance up and down Peter's body. And while I'm sure he's in need of some routine maintenance and ... lubrication ... Sylar licked his lips briefly, I think the problem is something deeper. It could be something twisted or warped. He's certainly seen some rough use. If I could open him up and see, maybe it's a part I could fix – press it back into shape, make adjustments. He's made it this far, to me, so his basic functioning is intact. It's just his ... responses are off. He's not, he looked at the stopped watch, living for the moment as it is now. He's living in the past, or maybe the future, what with how much he seems to approve of that future version of me he ran into. He needs to deal with me, here, now – not some future me with a kid!

"What's important to you?" Sylar asked directly, as the only useful way to get inside of Peter's head was metaphorical.

Peter gave him a moment of attention immediately, then looked back at his paper to finish something. He looked up after. "I've told you that – saving Emma and everyone else at the carnival."

"Her specifically?"

Peter shook his head. "No, not her specifically. She's just ... She's the only one I know the name of."

"There's some evasion there, but it's not my point. "So it's the ... saving people part of it?"

Peter put down his pencil. "I want to save people, yes," he agreed warily.

Sylar didn't see the attraction, even though he'd done it himself. People were messy and complicated and untrustworthy. Each one you saved was a liability. He didn't want people to start expecting mercy (or impotence). But this wasn't about him. "You like to save people." Peter didn't answer. Sylar thought it through. You want to be allowed to save people. That's what's important – getting people to admit they need you, getting them to surrender their life into your hands, so you can save them and get all the glory. Sylar smiled slightly. You're such a Petrelli, Peter. No wonder you go searching after people so messed up that they turn to you. No wonder you're not interested in me. I'm not giving you those signals that you need so badly. "You want to be their hero."

Peter frowned deeply. "I want to help them."

Sylar tilted his head slightly in a nod of ambiguous agreement. There's not much difference. Wait – is there? "You want to be special," he countered, exploring the nuance.

Peter set aside his sketch pad and pencil, turning to face Sylar. "No. It's not about me. It's about them. I want to help people. I want to make them happy."

Happy? I can think of a few ways you could make me happy. "You want to ... satisfy them?"

Sylar meant that just as lewdly as it sounded, mostly as a joke, and in reference to himself as a possible recipient of such satisfaction. He didn't expect Peter to take it the way he did. "I ... Yeah, I guess so. But ..." Peter sounded thrown and unsettled. "I tried that. It's not really what people want."

Sylar carefully stilled his face so it wouldn't show his surprise at what Peter was implying. What? What is he saying? Did he fuck all those people he was with in the past just to make them happy? Seriously? It wasn't about him, Peter? Well, I guess it was, actually, but it wasn't about Peter wanting to get off – at least not directly. The possibility of this being true was boggling, and made so much more sense in light of Peter's character than him as some kind of determined Lothario. He's like a male nymphomaniac then, but only getting off on the idea of getting someone else off. You tried
satisfying them that way, but it didn't scratch your itch. Because it never lasted. They never stayed. They didn't acknowledge it. They thought you were just getting off on it the same as I thought. "But when you offer to save their life, they can't … reject you." All that paramedic stuff – and the dying old people – it's about finding people who can't turn him away. It was sad, really. Sylar felt very strange for having mocked it, but at the same time, it was so … weak. And needy. And vulnerable. It's a vulnerability. I can use that. I can acknowledge him and the sacrifice he wants to be seen to be making.

Peter was eyeing him with disturbing intensity now.

**I should** be able to use it, at least. I don't like how he's looking at me – he knows I know how to reach him. "I won't reject you, Peter," he said softly.

Peter stood, threatening in his posture and body language as he moved immediately to loom over Sylar. Oh yes, that hit a button. Sylar looked up at him innocently. He didn't want a fight. Peter though, seemed to want nothing other. He snarled, "You said I didn't have anything you wanted!"

It took Sylar a few seconds to place what Peter was talking about – after Arthur's death, Sylar had left Peter alive and explained it away with a disparaging comment. That was a long time ago and a lot of very different conditions. But he's still resentful about it – because I turned him away. It fits. That's the piece of the mechanism that's out of place. "Nothing I was willing to kill you for," Sylar said equally softly as before. He leaned forward slightly, trying to will Peter to calm down and let it happen.

Peter snorted and reached out to shove Sylar's shoulder in a transparent attempt to start a fight. *I'm not going to help you out of this, Peter.* Sylar let the motion rock him and gave no other reaction to it. Agitated, Peter stomped away several paces before saying, "I never said I wanted you."

"You don't have to," Sylar answered. *You came here for me, you nitwit. Of course you want me. You want things from me; I want things from you. We can work this out so we both get what we want. I know how to fix things between us. Let me do what I'm good at."

Peter glared death at him, then stalked out. If steam could have been shooting from his ears like in the cartoons, it would have. *Oh, did that ever wind him up.* Sylar leaned back with a pleased smile on his lips despite Peter fleeing the scene. *So much tension. He wants me. I can do this.* Sylar's mind began running through ways of showing Peter he was approved of and legitimate, making connections with how Peter had lived in Nathan's shadow and was obviously craving the light. *I can fix him. And then our time will finally come.*
His arm aching from all the throwing and catching he'd done, Peter flopped down on the curb next to Sylar, watching as the man deftly rotated two baseballs with the long, slender fingers of one hand. Around and around they went. Sylar frowned at them, saying, "For some reason, I thought playing with your balls would be more fun." He was so deadpan it was funny.

Peter smiled and gave him a playful nudge on the shoulder, causing Sylar to catch one ball with each hand as he lost balance and dropped them. "Come on, then. Let's go find out."

"Do you know why I slept with half of New York?" Peter asked, his fingers slowly sliding across Sylar's sweat-slicked shoulders as they lay next to one another, post-coital. He hadn't really had so many partners, but Sylar seemed unhappy with the number in any case. The sex they had had with one another had been everything Peter had hoped for and more.

"Mm," Sylar rumbled. "Why would that be?"

Peter shifted, folding his hands on Sylar's hairy chest and resting his chin atop them. Drunk on endorphins, he gazed at his new lover. "Because I hadn't found you yet."

The best way Sylar could describe it was someone making love to his hand. Peter kissed fingertips, sucked at sensitive digits, and rubbed his face against Sylar's palm. The side of his nose slid up the heel of Sylar's hand to his watchstrap, where Peter unexpectedly swiped his tongue across the watchface. Sylar jumped. Peter looked up deviously. "I don't think that's a Sylar at all."

"What?" Sylar sputtered indignantly at Peter doubting the article's provenance.

"It took a licking and kept on ticking." Peter pressed the back of Sylar's hand to his cheek lovingly. "It's gotta be a Timex."
Title: Hot and Cold
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 550
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Frustration
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter frustrates himself.

Warmth. Peter woke up with his face pressed to the middle of Sylar's back, fuzzy cotton t-shirt between them. *Ugh. What am I doing?* His eyes opened. He pulled his face back an inch or two, working out where he was, in bed with Sylar as a balm to the other man's phobias about being alone. It felt so good to be here, huddled under the comfy blankets, with his bed partner so close. *I want to fuck him so bad,* came to Peter's mind unbidden. *We might as well go ahead. We're sleeping together anyway.* He let his forehead settle against Sylar's back again with a noisy sigh of frustration. *That's not going to happen. It's not. Period. He has good reason to be afraid and traumatized and need someone in bed with him. I do not have good reason to be fucking the guy who killed my brother. Or even to be lingering here now that I'm awake. I should get up and go take a cold shower.* Instead, he inhaled deeply of their mingled scents. The air between them, trapped under the blankets, was positively saturated. He wanted to luxuriate in it. He wanted to do more than that. He wanted to cup his body to Sylar's, snake his arms around the man's torso, nuzzle his back and stroke his chest until Sylar woke, then see if he could sweet talk him into sex. It wouldn't be difficult. Sylar had made it clear the offer was on the table. Just the fantasy of taking him up on it had Peter hard. *No. No, no, no!*

Peter rolled away, flipping the covers off of himself with annoyance and a barely suppressed growl. He stalked to the bathroom, erection tenting his boxers. He looked straight ahead, not checking to see if Sylar was awake because he didn't want to risk the eye contact. He didn't want to know if Sylar saw him parading by, arousal perfectly evident in the morning light. But he shut the bathroom door quietly just in case Sylar was still asleep, trying to convince himself that his walk of shame had gone unnoticed.

He stripped quickly and got in the shower, only to find that his raging hard-on was rapidly fading. After all, the object of his desire was out there in bed, not in here in the shower. Peter's angry growl was not restrained this time. He made one more attempt, stroking himself determinedly, but the irritation at himself for being less excited than he had been in bed, now that he could actually jerk off, just made him lose his erection even faster in a self-reinforcing downward spiral. With a snarl, he left off and slammed the heel of his hand into the wall. The tile cracked under his palm, leaving an obvious mark of his frustration. *Fuck! I don't know how to replace tile. Cut it the fuck out, Peter. He'll make you fix that. (Maybe he won't notice?) Fat chance of that. He'll notice. I'll have to explain. (Maybe I slipped?) I'm not going to lie. (So I'll tell him he's irresistibly hot? That sounds like a fun conversation.) God-dammit!* Thoroughly disgruntled, he took the cold shower he thought he deserved, or at least needed.
Give Me An Inch

Three connected stories.

Title: Give Me An Inch
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 500
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter gives Sylar a little coaching on how to get him in the mood.

"Look down!" Peter said in desperation. This had gone so far. He couldn't take it anymore, yet even with direct and clear orders, Sylar still stared at him from inches away. But a tiny furrow appeared in the man's brow, so Peter clarified, "Look away! I don't care, just give me an inch here!"

Sylar's eyes made a flicker – half a blink – and then to Peter's surprise, he drew in a breath and dutifully looked down, eyes focused on Peter's upper chest.

Peter stood very still, feeling stupid and angry and exasperated all at once. Seconds passed. Sylar wasn't moving either, not even his eyes, which were fixed on the second button of Peter's flannel shirt. Peter shut his own eyes for a moment, then opened them and relaxed. That was possible now – shutting his eyes, taking a moment, and relaxing. They were things he couldn't do while Sylar was devouring him with his dominating gaze. Peter was in the spotlight then, he was 'on', and there were things he couldn't deal with in that state.

Now, though, he could. He touched Sylar's shoulder, lightly, stroking the outside of it, then the top. Softly, he said, "You don't have to do it all the time. It's just a little thing. Sometimes. It makes me think you trust me enough to take your eyes off me for a moment-" He hadn't been sure Sylar was even listening to him, so immobile was he and his expression, but at these words, Sylar turned his head and looked away pointedly, before turning back much more slowly, eyes rising cautiously to Peter's face.

"Yeah." Peter nodded jaggedly. "Yeah, that's, uh, yeah." He smiled weakly, embarrassed and strangely charmed by the level of coaching Sylar needed on what Peter considered very basic interactions. One did not stare at the subject of one's affections like one was a cross between a socially inept teenager and a half-starved tiger, even if Sylar was, in his own way, both of these things. Peter touched along Sylar's jaw, his own gaze going from his fingers to Sylar's eyes repeatedly, checking in to make sure it was okay. Sylar remained as unreadable as a brick wall.

Voice still soft, Peter said, "You don't have to fight me all the time. You don't have to try to … take over. Let me lead a little, okay? That's what I want to do." He paused for a moment, thinking about what Sylar knew of him. "I'm not the little kid Nathan knew. I want to be calling some of the shots in my life. It makes me feel safe." He touched the front of Sylar's chin with his thumb, not firmly, but just a suggestion for him to tilt his face downward. "It makes me feel sexy," Peter murmured as Sylar followed the gentle not-an-order. They kissed.

Title: Let Me Take A Mile
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Words: 1,500
Rating: R
Warnings: None
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar makes use of the hints he's been given.

In laying out the ground rules for how Sylar could get with him, Peter had shown his colors even more than usual. He'd always hero-worshipped Nathan, but that was only a symptom of a broader complex, Sylar saw. Peter wanted the easy admiration Nathan had – the public support, people listening to him, the approval of their parents. For all Peter's defiance, he wanted to be his father. He wanted the power, the respect, the instant obedience Arthur so easily commanded from people, even total strangers. Young Peter had seen that, tried to emulate his male role models, and got smacked down for it time after time. He was too young, they'd earned it and he hadn't, and there just wasn't room for two favorites in the family. No wonder he was so angry inside. No wonder Peter had cultivated such a different career and social circle from the rest of the family. There was no other way to be his own man – 'it's my turn to be somebody, Nathan', he'd said, words so clear and meaningful about the thing Peter was willing to die for.

In their circles, among his parent's friends or Nathan's cronies, he was always the disregarded, bratty little brother and although Peter knew how to play that role through long practice, it wasn't the one he wanted. He wanted to be the star. He wanted to be the hero. He wanted to be king of the hill, the leader, a big shot. He wanted to be everything his last name should have entitled him to. He was stamped from top to bottom as a Petrelli, from his rebellious, too-long hair that was nevertheless expertly styled to the higher-end footwear that evened his gait and subtly made his bowlegs a non-issue. Even the workout routine Peter was plowing through at the moment were marks of his wealth and privilege – those less fortunate did not have the free time or the equipment unless they were in prison. As Sylar was, now.

So Petrelli wants me to be his bitch, Sylar thought, trying out the idea. It should have been galling, but Peter had been so transparent that it was mostly amusing. It wasn't as much a threat to his pride when Peter put it as I'll be more turned on if you act inferior than if he'd implied Sylar was actually inferior. It helped, too, to know where it was coming from. Sylar had been Nathan for a little while. The power and prestige had its perks, but they weren't the important things about the identity, any more than abilities defined who Sylar was. That last was something that had taken Sylar years to work out. Perhaps Peter would learn faster. It depended on how good a teacher Sylar was.

Peter finished his workout and towed the sweat off his face. Sylar closed his book and held it to the side, adopting an attentive posture. He might as well start now. Even that small change from his usual pattern of lounging disinterestedly changed Peter's behavior. Instead of going straight out, Peter rubbed the towel across the back of his neck and stretched a couple times. He was posing for him, Sylar saw with delight. Sylar could see even see Peter watching him in one of the wall mirrors, making sure his audience was paying attention. The moment Peter saw his gaze had been noticed, he looked embarrassed, tossing the towel over one shoulder and turning to leave.

"Wait," Sylar asked, still sitting. "Can you show me?" Lead me.

"Show you what?" Peter stopped at the door.

"How do you pick which weight to start with?" It didn't matter if Sylar knew the answers or not. What mattered was letting Peter tell him, letting him have the attention he so sorely craved.

"Well," Peter said slowly, loitering near the door, "it depends on what you're looking to do. If you want bulk, it's high weights and low reps. If you want strength and maybe sculpting, it's lower weights and higher reps." He looked from the free weight rack to Sylar, who had shown only a passing interest in the past.
Sylar went where Peter's eyes had directed him. Standing over the rack, he asked, "What do you consider a high weight?"

"As high as you can lift without injury." And here Peter came, walking over to stand next to Sylar. Sylar felt a thrill of joy, as he always did at successfully manipulating people. It was such a small thing, but it tickled him in the right places.

Sylar picked up the twenty-five pound dumbbell and hefted it. "This seems light." To demonstrate, he tossed it an inch or so before catching it. He might not have Peter's brawn, but a hard life had not left him a weakling.

"No! Don't do that." Peter's hands were on him now, touching his forearm with one and his hand with the other. "That's really hard on your shoulder. Get something heavier then. Respect the weight. Respect your body."

Sylar was returning the dumbbell as Peter spoke. At the end, he looked up at the man, keeping his somewhat bent-over posture. "Respect my body?" he repeated quietly, just leaving the words hanging in the air for Peter to react to.

Peter's expression changed – brows drew in and his mouth relaxed. His lips parted slightly. He put his hand on Sylar's hip and pressed. "Squat. Don't lean over like that when you're going to lift. You'll strain something." His words were softer.

Sylar squatted. As he handled the weights, Peter fondled his shoulder, short strokes on the outside of his t-shirt. Sylar didn't know how to respond to that, so he just let it happen, enjoying the little touches and taking his time with the dumbbells. He and Peter hadn't even gone so far as to have a serious make-out session yet. They'd managed kissing and getting closer to one another. Sylar had groped him against the wall once, which had earned him an open-handed smack that connected, followed by a left hook that didn't. The smack was sexy. The hook wasn't, which he assumed was why Peter had launched it. He had not missed that Peter didn't try too hard with the hook. It had seemed like a mixed signal at the time. Now it made sense. Peter wasn't objecting to the intimacy. Sylar had been using the wrong approach.

He settled on a weight and stood. "One of them or two?"

"One's good to start with." Peter's hands traveled down Sylar's triceps with a lot of unnecessary contact. He pressed on Sylar's elbow. "Keep this straight and pump up and down." Sylar struggled to keep a straight face at Peter's pornographic directions. "You want to make your biceps do all the work. Keep the muscle isolated. If you have the weight right, you should be able to do ten or fifteen reps before muscle fatigue. Then stop, do the other arm, wait thirty seconds or so, and repeat the set. You do that for three sets and then stop."

"That shouldn't take long," Sylar said, finding the weight already more challenging than he wanted, having mistakenly picked what felt like the limit of his ability to lift even two or three times. His ego did not allow him to show it, but he was relieved to switch at ten repetitions.

"Don't curl your wrist. Keep it straight." Peter reached across him needlessly, as though Sylar wouldn't know which body part Peter was referring to unless he touched it.

Sylar stopped at a single set, hoping Peter wouldn't mind. These weren't the muscles he was hoping to flex. He squatted again to return the weight. He looked up at Peter from below – Peter, who hadn't moved away and was still standing over him, touched his shoulder again. Ah. A light bulb went off in Sylar's head for what that touch was about. He wants a blow job. From the squat on his toes, he turned at the hips and settled forward on his knees. Peter took an immediate step back. Shit.
Misjudged. Sylar looked up at him, his wide eyes all innocence and intention. "Too forward?"

Peter swallowed and stammered, "N-no. Well, not- It's- I'm dirty." He gestured at the weight machines. "I just finished. I'm sweaty." He hesitated for a moment. "Unless you're into that?"

Sylar tried to sort out if Peter was really that fastidious (improbable), or if he was just looking for an excuse to turn him down (then why ask if it worked for him?) "What if I am?"

"Uh … kay." Peter scratched nervously at his belly. He just stood there, looking spooked.

Sylar remained on his knees, canted about halfway between facing Peter and facing the weight rack. He put a hand on the weight rack, trying to look casual and unthreatening. "Are you?"

"Uh, no. I'd feel bad about what I was making you put up with the whole time, unless that was what was doing it for you."

"Ah." An excess of consideration – that fits.

"Come, uh," Peter shifted his weight uneasily, "come take a shower with me?"

I thought you'd never ask. "I'd love to." Sylar rose smoothly to his feet and followed. He kept his distance, remembering that left hook. Crowding Peter and taking what he wanted wasn't the way this relationship was going to go. That made it different from the relationships he'd had with women – all of whom seemed to appreciate him being take-charge. Peter was special. He smiled to himself about that.

Once in the shower, there wasn't going to be much choice about being close. From out in the hall, Sylar watched Peter strip in the penthouse bathroom. Shoes had been left near the front door. Socks came off as soon as Peter entered the bathroom. The shirt came off smoothly … then Peter paused, glancing back at Sylar as he wadded the cloth. Sylar waited, taking in every inch of Peter with his eyes. He knew what was under those shorts in a general way. He'd caught glimpses now and then enough to know Peter was basically normal in size and had so little pubic hair as to make Sylar wonder if he trimmed it. Peter turned to face him, dropping the shirt to the side as he squared up confrontationally. His face was a shut book.

Time to show I was listening yesterday. Sylar strode to him with steady, unhurried steps, never breaking eye contact. Peter's nose wrinkled and the man sucked in breath, trying his damnedest to look bigger. That was amusing. Sylar stopped less than a hand's span apart. He loved being tall. He looked almost directly down at Peter, their height difference exaggerated by Peter being barefoot. Peter's eyes fairly glittered with defiance, anger, and other dark emotions spawned from a lifetime of insecurity and jealousy. Sylar met those eyes, let himself drown in the intensity of the emotions and how it filled Peter's frame with such fire. It connected them. Peter never gave an inch when his back was up. That was another thing Sylar loved – Peter's persistence, his passion, and his spirit.

With deliberate intention, Sylar gave Peter what he wanted. He looked away, down and to the side, hooding his eyes and almost shutting them. He dipped his head and turned it, letting his face take on its most placid expression. He felt Peter's exhale. In his peripheral vision, he could see the man's stance relax. Sylar turned his head back to look at Peter full-on, peering out from under his brows. It was a threatening look, face hard. The intimidation was spoiled by Peter almost playfully touching Sylar's lips, his own expression happy.

"Come on," Peter chirped, all lightness now. He even gave Sylar a quick smooch before shucking his gym shorts and heading into the shower so quickly Sylar didn't see anything but a flash of gloriously rounded, pale cheeks.
Peter turned on the water, hidden now behind the contoured resin surface of the shower door. Sylar stood there with a slowly blooming smile. He was touching his own lips as Peter had. *It worked.* That thrill of getting someone to act as he wished ran through him from top to bottom, lingering longest in his middle. *I'm going to have so much fun with this!*

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**Title:** Coming Clean  
**Characters:** Peter, Sylar  
**Words:** 1,400  
**Rating:** NC-17  
**Warnings:** Shifting POV per paragraph. Hopefully it's not too disorienting.  
**Setting:** The Wall  
**Summary:** They shower and get off.

Peter took the one step back he could take when Sylar joined him in the shower. He'd begun to wonder if the man would. Sylar had taken long enough for Peter to soap and rinse everything. He'd been thinking about moving on to his hair when the shower door finally opened. Sylar had a presence and dignity even naked. Peter admired him openly for a moment – curly dark hair, pale skin, long and lean body. Then Peter looked around the rest of the shower stall, thinking that was more polite than continuing to ogle. He gestured for Sylar to move to the center and use the spray.

Sylar, for his part, was hyper-aware that he was pasty-white, lanky, and hairy. He tried his best not to be tense or adopt an aggressive posture. It was tough, though, when Peter retreated the moment he approached. He stood for inspection, not sure what it meant when Peter looked away. *Is he disappointed?* Peter waved him towards the shower spray. That would put him closer to the other man, so he took it, dipping his head into the warm water and rinsing his face.

Peter leaned against the cool tile and traced along Sylar's shoulder, down his upper arm and to the hollow of his elbow. Sylar glanced at him but didn't react otherwise. Instead, Sylar took up the washcloth and soap, setting about cleaning himself while Peter's fingers danced over whatever portion of his body was within reach. Sylar did not stray from him. His skin was soft, incredibly so. Peter recognized the phenomenon from the time when he'd been nearly vaporized in the future. He'd regenerated somehow and among the various consequences, he'd found that his skin had grown back baby-smooth. It was nice to touch, but he wondered what had happened to Sylar so recently as to leave this markless mark on him.

Sylar found many reasons to turn, luxuriating in Peter's light, undemanding touch. He wanted more – he always did – but this was nice and free and intimate. It also gave him an idea of where Peter's mind was. Not in the gutter, apparently, because he didn't linger over nipples, go below the waist, or above the neck. It was almost platonic, making Sylar wonder if he'd completely misread the situation. Given that he was standing in the shower naked with Peter, that seemed unlikely.

When Sylar put up the washcloth, Peter took his nearer upper arm in both hands and rubbed the bicep, manipulating it with a firm but gentle pressure. Then he turned Sylar so he could do the other arm, keeping his eyes on his work even as he could feel Sylar watching him. When done, he rested one palm on each and looked up. Sylar gave him, again, the brief glance down and back up. Sylar's hands rose to cup the back of Peter's elbows, then touch at his sides. Peter smiled as butterflies fluttered in his gut. *We're really going to do this? Yeah, we are.* His smile turned almost pained and he shifted his weight. He was so tense and uneasy. Sylar was a killer. He was dangerous. He was unstable. His murders had not been accidents. *This is such a bad idea.* Peter let his hands smooth over the wet, warm skin, sliding to the back of the arms and pulling Sylar forward and against him. He'd worry about consequences later, like he always did.
Yes, yes, yes! a voice was chanting in the back of Sylar's head as he stepped nearer and oh-so-gently gathered Peter into his arms. Peter tilted his head up and to one side. Sylar matched him. They'd done this before, too, just fully clothed and not in a shower. This kiss wasn’t as tentative as that one had been. Sylar knew Peter's taste now. He knew the way his skin smelled up close. He knew the way Peter kissed him repeatedly rather than continuously, and how the little man mixed it up by sucking on his lips and teasing with his tongue. Sylar curled his hand behind Peter's head to cradle it and hold him there. The water beat down on Sylar's back and ran down his legs. He had to reach down and adjust himself so he was not trapped to one side, but was fully erect against Peter's lower belly.

Peter hummed with interest when Sylar's hand traveled downward, but the contact was minimal and inadvertent. Peter dropped his own hand, which was neither. He took up his mostly hard penis and gripped it with Sylar's own. Sylar was still for the moment, looking down and watching carefully. It was the kind of thing to watch, so Peter did, too. They were looking down on the heads of two cocks, one hand partly surrounding them, sliding up and down slowly. Peter looked to the side at the rack, pulling down some body wash. It seemed the least likely to cause irritation. A good dollop of it between them made his handful slippery. Sylar took the bottle from him and put it back, letting Peter use both hands.

From Sylar's standpoint, this was very strange sex. But it seemed very safe. It didn't hit any of his problematic buttons, it got him close to Peter, and it was definitely going to get him off. Especially once the lotion or shower gel or whatever was added to the mix and he moved himself to prevent the water from washing it away. Then he just let Peter go to town, giving him a sudsy hand job while rubbing one out himself, in the same … handful. Sylar even smiled as he watched. It was simple, friendly … boyish was another word that came to his mind. He could imagine a couple Boy Scouts or other adolescents helping each other out like this. His mother had always said those organizations were rife with perverted behavior. He chuckled at how right she might have been. Maybe that was where Peter learned all this. Since his hands were free, he began to caress Peter's face and kiss him. It was a welcome distraction from the desire to thrust, which was building fast inside himself.

Peter moaned when Sylar finally began taking some initiative himself, cradling his head, stroking his cheeks, and kissing him deeply and passionately. Sylar's insistent, probing tongue earned several more moans as Peter leaned against the cool tile and pumped his joined hands up and down around their members. He could feel Sylar's hips beginning to hitch, so he changed the timing of his strokes. A second later, Sylar caught on and fucked his hands in sync. "Oh!" Peter pulled away for air, panting in the steamy atmosphere. Sylar's kisses didn't stop. They trailed sloppily across his cheek and licked down his neck, where Sylar stopped to use his teeth. "Ah!" Peter tensed all over, rising up on his toes as nibbles turned into harder, demanding bites. He pumped faster, not caring if Sylar kept up with him. He squeezed their organs together, feeling their ridges sliding up and down, the lather frothy and hot.

Sylar could feel Peter straining and flexing under him. Neck muscles corded and jumped, his hands frigged them together faster and faster. He was right on the cusp of coming, but tried to hold it off until Peter popped. He hooked one arm around Peter's head, pulling it to the side to completely expose his shoulder and neck. Sylar littered it with bites and love marks. "Every time I look at you, I want to see these," he murmured between marks. "I want to know we were together. I want to fuck you and suck on these when I do it-"

"Ah!" Peter tensed all over, the pornographic image from Sylar's words pushing him over and filling him with surging heat. He spurted and dribbled. Sylar turned him, kissed him savagely hard, owning him through his mouth, and came as well. Sylar pressed him against the wall, rubbing his whole body up and down on Peter, smearing them both with lather and ejaculate, while nuzzling at Peter's face affectionately. Peter smiled lazily and returned it, thinking he'd never seen Sylar act quite like that. He liked it. It made him feel warm inside, and connected. "You want to fuck me?" he
whispered.

Sylar breathed out heavily. "I have wanted to fuck you since the moment I saw you on the road, with that pipe." He rubbed his cheek against Peter's like a cat. "But you're the one calling the shots here."

Peter laughed softly and reached out the let the water wash off one hand before he stroked it through Sylar's hair. "You let me feel sexy and I'll give you anything you want."

Sylar leaned back, smiling slyly as he looked down at Peter's chest, fingers absently circling a dark nipple. "That is the idea."
Title: Head Game
Characters: Sylar, Peter
Words: 6,300
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Mild abusive behavior and messed-up thought patterns.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter blows Sylar's mind. Sylar returns the favor. POV shift to Peter in the middle.

Sex with Elle had not come out of left field. Sylar had been considering the differences between her and Peter. Intimacy with Elle had been the result of a relationship, consisting of many shared adventures and the development of trust. By the time he'd seized and taken her in the Canfield's deserted home, she'd already accepted him. With that in mind, Sylar had begun trying something new – touching Peter, frequently, and as familiarly as Peter would allow. As it turned out, that was much more familiar than Sylar had expected. At the moment, Peter was skimming through sheet music, his guitar next to him on the couch. Sylar touched his shoulder, pinching up the fabric to rub it briefly between his fingertips. Peter ignored him.

Sylar, standing next to the end of the couch where Peter was sitting, hitched up his hip to sit on the arm of the furniture and turned his hand so he could smooth his thumb across the side of Peter's neck. Bare, warm skin. It was human and real. It anchored him – a tiny, fleeting connection. Instead of batting him away as he'd expected, Peter sighed and let his head loll back as his heavy-lidded eyes tracked over to Sylar.

Oh?
All that neck, bared to him, vulnerable and so clearly offered. Ohhh … He must be in the mood for something. Sylar turned his hand to stroke the side of Peter's neck with his knuckles, then cupped it over his windpipe. Peter drew in air with the motion, nostrils flaring slightly. He blew it out. His eyes shut completely as Sylar caressed him. Peter's Adam's apple was a hard knot under Sylar's palm. He pressed on it slightly. Peter's lips parted. Oh, wow. Sylar was moved, immediately and spontaneously. He got up and turned, leaning over Peter swiftly to press his mouth over that naked throat, his teeth menacing the delicate skin. Under his lips, he felt Peter growl. The next moment, Peter twined a hand into Sylar's hair, gripped tight, and pulled him off. He was pushed away.

The expression on Peter's face was almost disgusted. Yet it seemed … overdone. Sylar studied him as he straightened. Disgust was the polar opposite of attraction, but there was no way he'd misread Peter's receptivity. Just to test it, he reached out, saying, "Here, let me wipe that off for you." Peter gave Sylar's hand the same half-snarling look of disapproval, but he didn't stop it from touching the saliva-wet spot on his neck where Sylar's mouth had been. Sylar didn't wipe. He smeared. He was certain Peter could tell the difference. Peter's eyes were fixed on his with a smoldering look that was totally new. Sylar dared not look away.

Dilated pupils, the analytical part of his brain registered. He lifted his hand, paused, and then touched his damp fingers to Peter's lips with the intention of sliding them across if it was allowed. He didn't think it would be. This had already gone way, way beyond what Peter had permitted before. To his shock, Peter opened his mouth and sucked in those two moist fingers. A twitch ran through Sylar. Even when he was completely surprised, he hardly ever moved. Stillness was the default, but this startled him so much as to throw all normal reactions out the window. There was warmth – soft, wet warmth encasing his fingers, followed a moment later by Peter positioning them with his tongue and biting the fingertips. Sylar's mouth dropped open. He was sure he looked like an idiot. He huffed out a surprised breath and his lids flickered as Peter...
sucked the fingers in deeper again, fondling them with his tongue.

Oh ... oh ... Oh my God, that's so filthy ... and perverted. So deeply, deeply perverted. The things he'd done with those fingers – even Peter knew enough of what he'd done that he'd be more justified to bite them off than this ... this ... whatever Peter was doing. He's blowing my fingers. Oh my God, he's fellating my fingers! Sylar twitched them slightly, barely daring to breathe. I could get off from this, that other, dispassionate corner of his mind mentioned. Peter rolled the fingers to one side of his mouth where he rubbed them over and against his molars, before going back to the soft middle, cradled by the roll of his tongue. Then he sucked hard for a moment.

The whole time, Peter had been staring at him with only the briefest breaks to blink and apparently savor what he was doing. Sylar smiled haltingly and huffed out something like a chuckle. He might have spoken, but Peter interrupted by reaching for Sylar's groin. It was right on a level with him. The erection there had been largely unnoticed. Peter's fingers found it without ever looking. He rubbed and that first pressure made Sylar whimper involuntarily. I am not going to cream my pants, he told himself firmly. Not over so little.

But it wasn't so little. Peter ejected the fingers from his mouth, sat up, and abruptly put his face to Sylar's crotch, rubbing it back and forth in a slow, luxuriating motion over the hard ridge of his erection. It was very sensual. His dick went from mostly hard to rock solid. His hands clutched at Peter's hair, combing through it with rapid petting motions. He could near Peter inhaling against him. So fucking dirty! And then feel the heat of his breath steaming through the denim of his jeans and cotton of his underwear. "Ahh," Sylar groaned softly.

He felt something sharp and looked down to see Peter was mouthing the cylindrical bulge of his penis, biting at it through the cloth. I'm going to ... No, no, please no. Don't. He pulled Peter back, seeing the darker splotch of Peter's drool marking his erection. Peter licked his lips and reached up to pick open the top button of Sylar's fly. He ... What? He mouthed, No ... Sylar had no idea how serious Peter was or wasn't.

Sylar's brain felt like it was shorting out. Peter leaned back a bit to look up at him with a sultry, mischievous smile on his luscious, reddened lips. That was when the explanation hit Sylar like a blow: It's a joke. He's ... teasing. Joking. Showing me what I can never have. Despair flooded through him, more horrible and wrenching than for many things in his life that he would have objectively judged worse. So someone wasn't going to blow him. Big deal, right? But he'd been so close. And it had been Peter. And there was everything that might mean if Peter were willing to touch him like that! Then there was the betrayal to deal with. Peter had been friendly to him for days now, even weeks. Had it all been leading up to a foul trick?

Then Peter laughed and gave a tug at one of Sylar's belt loops that he had hooked a finger through. "Come on," Peter said.

Sylar's voice caught in his throat. With difficulty, he coughed out, "Don't fuck with me!" He couldn't tell if he sounded outraged or terrified, aggressive or weak.

Peter's expression sobered. He kept watching Sylar's face as the hand on Sylar's belt loop abandoned its position to snake around and stroke his ass. "Fucking wasn't what I had in mind."

It ... what? Sylar blinked at him, struggling. The touch on his rear end had immediately proposed another option – perhaps Peter was suggesting he fellate Sylar in exchange for a turn at his ass. If that was the deal, Sylar would agree. But then Peter's words – fucking wasn't what he had in mind?

"You're fucking with me," Sylar growled with hurt. He was cycling through emotions hard and fast.
"No," Peter said softly, almost a croon. "I'm not." His fingers found Sylar's crack and worked their way up and down the seam. Sylar resisted the urge to spread for him – not until he knew what the deal was. Which was kind of ridiculous, as he was perfectly willing to give up the goods. He just didn't know what was going on. Peter's other hand explored the top of his jeans, toying with the unfastened button. "I'll bet you have a beautiful cock." Fingers trailed down to tease the shaft.

Sylar quivered. "I don't understand why you're doing this."

"I happen to enjoy giving head," Peter said, now lightly pinching the head between thumb and index finger.

"That's impossible!" Sylar spat out before he could consider it. Oral sex was never provided willingly except in exchange for financial remuneration, or under the emotional extortion of a relationship – 'suck me or I'll break up with you', 'suck me or I won't give you any money to buy that thing you want'. That was why it was so popular in porn – it was a clear marker of subservience and domination. It was an ego stroke to force someone else to do it. The idea that someone would want to do it of their own free will? Impossible.

Peter's hands lifted from him. His expression soured. "Are you calling me a liar?"

Oh. Crap. That was something Peter took special exception to and Sylar knew it. He swallowed. "No. I just …" Sylar gestured at his crotch. The whole thing was inexplicable. He rubbed at his engorged organ. All I was doing was touching your neck, he whined inside at how carried away this had become. He felt boxed in a corner. I'll be good. I can be good. Good boys get rewards, right? Not that he'd ever been given much of a reward, but that was what he'd always been told. "You like it?"

"I like it." Peter gave a single, determined nod. He touched Sylar's top button again and that was all he touched. "Do you?"

OH! A new possibility ran through Sylar's head. Peter had stopped progressing when Sylar had pulled him away and lipped, 'No.' Obviously, it had been seen. It had been seen and was being … respected. Almost. Sort of. Peter was still molesting him, but he'd otherwise stopped. He needs my permission. He's asking for it. None of it made any sense, why Peter would want to suck him off at all, but that was a mystery Sylar was content to explore after the sex act was complete. "Yes."

Swallowing down his doubts, Sylar stepped directly in front of Peter, trapping him on the couch with his knees on either side of Peter's. He unzipped his fly and pushed down his jeans. Peter's hands stroked over his and played with the band of his underwear. He looked completely serious. With a deep breath, Sylar hooked his fingers into the cotton briefs and tugged them down, too. He'd lost some of the raging erection he'd had moments earlier. Tension and fear had taken it out of him. Peter viewing him now didn't help either, even with Peter's rapt expression. Before he lost it entirely, Sylar reached out, grabbed a fistful of Peter's hair, and pulled him to him.

"Hey!" Peter objected, getting a forearm across Sylar's thigh and resisting.

"You said you wanted it." Sylar let go, confused. He felt the edge of anger welling up.

"Not like that!"

Does he want a different position? Sylar strongly considered backhanding Peter just for being a brat. It would be so easy to do.

Peter massaged his scalp, making a big deal out of nothing. "Be nice to me," he ordered.
Sylar frowned. He was entirely flaccid now. He wished he was erect so he could hit Peter and then shove himself down the man's throat. That's what he deserved for all this teasing and taunting, all this build-up without delivering. But instead, here he was, impotent. Peter came closer and touched him, sliding a finger along the now-dangling flesh. Sylar snorted and backed off, disgusted that Peter would touch him while he was so soft. It was all too fucked up. He didn't understand it. It didn't make sense. And he wasn't aroused anymore. He yanked up his jeans and fastened them quickly. "Go fuck yourself if you want it so bad," he snarled. He made a fist and raised it. Peter looked between it and Sylar's face, Peter's own suddenly wary and pale. Hitting him would be so satisfying. It would end the fascination his subconscious already had with sticking his dick into Peter's mouth – seeing that opening bleeding and torn would kill his libido. Peter's face hardened. He was going to fight back.

"I'm damaged goods, Peter," Sylar warned. He shook his head, dropped his fist, and stalked out.

"How could you even be willing to do that? It's disgusting!"

It had been more than a week, but Peter still knew exactly what Sylar was talking about. He favored him with a displeased look. "I like doing it."

Sylar shook his head silently.

"How could you be willing to put your dick in my mouth, huh?" Peter mocked. "It's lined with teeth. The mouth is the dirtiest part of the human body. It's full of spit and undigested food particles." Sylar blanched at the graphic description. Peter smiled, his point made. "But, lemme guess – you like doing it?"

Sylar looked away.

"Have you ever had a blow job?"

"Yes," Sylar snapped, "of course I have."

"'Of course', huh?"

"I'm sure you've had hundreds!" Sylar said spitefully.

Peter shrugged and said slowly, "Maybe. I'm sure I've given more than I've gotten. I'm happy about that."

"You're sick."

Peter's eyes emptied of expression. He remembered sitting in front of the TV in the 80s, staring at an old episode of M.A.S.H. without seeing it, listening as his father told Nathan about why gay people couldn't be allowed in the military. They were so sick in the head that they'd spend all their time 'hootting each other's roots' instead of fighting the enemy and thinking about their sweethearts back home. In fact, they weren't even worth protecting as citizens. They were outside the norm, outside society's protection. They were sick, infectious, and contagious. They probably all had AIDS. They needed to be quarantined for the good of society, marked in some way so people could recognize them. The rant had gone on for the rest of the show, while Peter had sat there, slumped on the couch at the age of sixteen, thinking about the cute boy in his garage band that he'd been thinking of saying something to.

He didn't want to hit Sylar. He just wanted to crawl off under a rock and stay there. That old saying that no one can make you feel inferior without your consent? That's bullshit. He got up, gathered his
Three weeks was a long time to not hear anyone's voice. It wasn't a patch on three years, but Sylar had spent those years with no one there to ignore him. It was so much worse to know there was someone just down the street who wouldn't talk to him – that he was so repugnant that they would endure the silence just so they weren't interacting with him. And in case that wasn't bad enough, the person who preferred nothingness over him? It was Peter Petrelli, who could barely keep his hands off people and seemed to exist to interact with others. But not with Sylar. No, Sylar had managed to go from seconds away from being a sex partner to being an anathema.

Stalking the avoidant Peter was an exercise in masochism. Sylar knew that, but by the time two weeks was turning into three, he was doing it anyway. Peter didn't flee or hide when he caught sight of Sylar, so it wasn't difficult to do. Sylar was leaning against the side of a brownstone building, watching Peter read comic books in a little strip of park next to the slow-moving river that bounded one side of the city. His stomach rumbled and he sighed. Soon, he'd have to give up his observation to seek out sustenance. When he got back, Peter might be gone. He frowned about that. Usually, he stayed as long as he could, but just then a plan hatched in his mind.

Fifteen minutes later, he was hurrying back to the park. To his relief, Peter was still there, enjoying the partly cloudy day under the dappled shade of a tall, otherwise nondescript tree. Carrying the grocery bag, Sylar walked up to him. It clinked when he set it down on the bench next to Peter, who gave him a scathing look for interrupting and coming so close. Sylar ignored that, sitting cross-legged on the grass, hands curled over his knees. Sylar inclined his head towards the sack. "That's for you."

Peter glared at him, then went back to the copy of Doctor Strange that he was reading. Sylar swallowed and looked away, watching the river roll by. Minutes passed and pages turned. The sound of another human presence was nice. So was the fact that Peter hadn't left. He looked back when Peter put aside the finished comic. Peter looked in the paper bag, then at Sylar. Sylar blurted, "You like that brand of soda, right? It's the one with cane sugar."

From his face, Peter was very clearly still pissed. Seventeen days later, and he was still angry. He really knew how to nurse a grudge. Though that probably had more to do with their past than anything about Peter particularly. It was amazing, really, that Peter hadn't come here to murder him, nor succumbed to the temptation that no doubt arose when they argued. It was downright mind-blowing that Peter tolerated his touch and had made what Sylar had decided was a completely serious offer to sexually service him. But maybe Peter was done being mad now, because he reached into the bag and pulled out a glass soda bottle, regarded the label proclaiming it to be orange and cream, then picked up the corner of his shirt to cushion his palm as he opened the cap. He sipped it and nodded approvingly.

Sylar stood up, hurrying over. Peter moved away from him along the bench, pushing over his comics to get away. Sylar pulled out the second bottle (for himself – crushed melon flavor, a certain irony there) and then a plastic bag of green grapes along with a second plastic bag of cheddar cheese cubes. "You said you liked cheese and grapes. I remember." Sylar offered them. If he was hungry, then Peter had to be as well. He'd tried food offerings in the past, but only the suggestion of and invitation for them and never putting the food directly in front of Peter. This was harder to turn down this way. After a sigh, Peter took the packages from him and set them down on the bench. He didn't eat. That was a bad sign. Sylar swallowed uncomfortably and mentally vetoed his plan to move the sack and sit where it had been. He pulled out an apple for himself and returned to the grass, this time in front of where Peter sat. He was in range to be kicked, should Peter think that was appropriate.

Sylar looked down
and rotated the apple, rubbing it slowly against his jeans. "I was wondering if you could tell me what it's like." Peter slipped the stack into his backpack. Sylar cringed at the impending abandonment. "Please?" Sylar asked.

Peter sighed heavily and leaned back, reaching out with a foot and shoving Sylar's left knee. It was not a kick and Sylar was not hurt by it. If anything, he was heartened by the interaction. Peter grimaced and looked away.

"I'm sorry," Sylar whispered sadly, looking down at the apple he had no appetite for.

"For what?" Peter said dully, then coughed to clear his throat because he hadn't spoken in weeks. Sylar talked to himself enough that he didn't share the same problem.

"For everything," Sylar said, having no idea what, specifically, Peter was looking for. "For making all the bad decisions. They were my fault. I take responsibility." At least, he knew he should take responsibility, but honestly, he didn't really know what that meant. Nathan's memories were no help either. "I shouldn't have said what I did."

"Which was?"

Sylar swallowed again. This was a test he wasn't prepared for. "That you've had a lot of blow jobs …?"

Peter laughed scornfully, rolled his eyes, and opened the bag of grapes. He popped a couple in his mouth and chewed. "Sylar, you have No. Fucking. Clue."

Sylar pursed his lips and was silent. At least Peter was talking to him again. To that, he credited the gift of food and the deliberate choice of a subordinate position, though that had been a near thing.

"What you should be sorry for is telling me I'm fucked up and there's something wrong with me. There's not. And there's nothing wrong with you, either." Peter frowned at him. "'Damaged goods' doesn't get you off the hook. If you're going to take responsibility, you've got to fucking take responsibility!"

Sylar tried to make himself small. He let Peter have his rant. The words were musical in a way. There was a lot of percussion and base in them, thumping and moving, the sounds rolling with passion and dark energy.

"Pay attention to someone other than yourself. Believe me when I say something isn't working for me. Listen!"

Sylar's head snapped up. He'd heard the words, but … well … yeah, he hadn't been listening the way Peter wanted him to listen. "I'm listening."

Peter looked at him suspiciously. "What does it mean – what I've said?"

"When you tell me something, I should believe it," Sylar said, paraphrasing carefully. "When you speak to me, I should listen." There were unpleasant consequences for not doing so. Aside from the silence, Peter would be unhappy, and that was something that had begun to matter more and more to Sylar as he realized Peter had been willing to be with him until he'd fucked it up by … whatever it was he'd done. But he was sure it was genuinely his fault. He'd figured that much out.

"I want to speak with you," Peter said, a little yearning in his voice.

Sylar looked up at him, thinking about how hard the isolation had to be on Peter the empath, and
how much of a lowlife he had to be for Peter to turn away the literal last man on earth. He nodded. "We're speaking with each other now."

Peter nodded back, opening the bag of cheese and picking out a couple cubes. Obviously, he'd been hungry. Peter had base needs, just like Sylar. "What is it you wanted me to tell you about?" Peter said sullenly.

Sylar responded, "What it's like to suck cock."

Peter nearly choked on the cheese. Sylar looked very concerned for him, mentally reviewing the process for the Heimlich maneuver, while Peter sputtered and gasped and got himself straightened out. "Um, yeah, kay," Peter said when he could breathe again. "I thought you said that was disgusting."

Sylar tilted his head to one side and back in something of a shrug. Carefully he said, "You said you liked doing it. I believe you."

Peter gave a smaller roll of his eyes and pulled out a grape and a cube of cheese. He judged them in his hand for a moment, then put both in his mouth at the same time. He chewed and swallowed. He was such a strange man. Sylar supposed it was to his benefit that Peter's appetites ran to the special and strange. "Yes," Peter said, "I do like doing it. You like kissing, right?" Sylar nodded. "It's like kissing, but more. More intense. More," Peter gestured at his mouth, "more filling. You have ... a dick in your mouth. I know that's obvious, but it's sexy, too, just to have it there. It's ... heavy. It's in you. You can taste it, smell it, feel it. It's right in your face. It's overwhelming in a way. You know how a really great kiss can take your breath away?" Sylar nodded slowly, not that he knew what Peter meant. He'd always thought that was an exaggeration. "It's like that. It," Peter gestured at his groin, though there was no obvious erection at the moment, "turns me on."

"It ... tastes okay?"

"Tastes fine. Tastes like dick. Assuming it's clean. I mean, you could suck someone's armpit right after a good shower where they cleaned up all over and it would be okay, but I wouldn't want to put my mouth there after they'd had a long day. Same with a blow job -- it needs to air out a little before I want it. Maybe use a wet washcloth to get it clean."

"And at the end?"

"Of the blow job?" Sylar nodded. Peter went on, "You can usually tell when someone's going to come. If they're polite, they'll tell you. You keep sucking or you stop and jerk them off. If you keep sucking, then you swallow or spit. Come doesn't taste bad. At least, not normally."

"And ... what do you do?"

Peter raised his brows a bit and ate two grapes with a single, larger cube of cheese. "That depends on how I feel about the person."

Sylar nodded slowly, thinking it over. It was filthy and perverted and had given him a hard-on just thinking about it.

"Do you want to try it?"

That caught him off-guard, but it made sense immediately. 'Responsibility.' How better to demonstrate to Peter that Sylar saw nothing wrong with him, or his preferred sex acts, than to do them himself? If he ever wanted the wet dream of Peter sucking him like had almost (almost!) happened before he'd fucked it up, then this was the way to get it. Plus, he didn't want Peter thinking
he thought he was the sick freak that Sylar felt he, himself, was. He'd reviewed his words obsessively and come to the conclusion they were poorly chosen and motivated by unhelpful prejudice. He was not the sort of person with the privilege of making such moral distinctions. He didn't know where the idea had even come from that he was – maybe it was some Nathan-esque holdover. He had killed at the direction of Petrellis, with less potential reward and less regard for the feelings of his master. He could do this. Peter might even be nice about it. "Okay." He rose to his knees, dropping his uneaten apple to the side.

"No," Peter said abruptly. "I've been out here all day. If it's your first time, let's … I can clean up."

Peter was definitely going to be nice about it. That was touching. Sylar stroked himself twice through his jeans, mostly to draw attention to it. "I'd rather have you dirty," he purred. He'd rather have it just like it was – the hard truth, the rough practicality of it. He didn't want it cleaned up or sugar-coated. He wanted it to be real. Peter's mouth opened, then shut without a sound. Sylar smiled toothily, deeply pleased to have shocked the more cultured Peter speechless. He knee-walked forward, putting his palms on Peter's knees and spreading them. Peter didn't resist; he just breathed out a surprised laugh.

"Right out here?" Peter practically squeaked.

"Mm-hmm," Sylar rumbled, insinuating himself between Peter's legs. *So naughty to be here, for you to let me be here.* They'd never been this close. The touching they'd done had been casual so far. The incident where Peter sucked his fingers was as licentious as they'd been. Sylar didn't know if a kiss was appropriate, but he knew he wanted one – and now. He assumed Peter wouldn't provide one after. If he was going to suck the guy's dick, then he wanted to at least get something for himself out of it. He was on his knees; Peter on the bench; their faces were actually on a level. He kissed Peter without permission or reservation. Peter tensed. Clearly this wasn't expected or even very welcome, but that was the story of Sylar's life. He touched one side of Peter's face with his fingertips, trying to make it okay, as his other hand slipped behind Peter's head in case the man tried to refuse him. Truth be told, it was the first time he'd ever kissed a man. He knew it wasn't Peter's first time, but for all the surprise the little Petrelli was showing, it might as well have been.

When Peter didn't pull away immediately, but instead turned his face and tried to kiss back, Sylar let his hands drop, smoothing them over Peter's shoulders and arms, then coming back up along his chest. Sylar sucked at the lips, letting his eyes slide shut. He moaned when Peter's mouth opened and a tongue tickled along his lips. He swiped at Peter's tongue himself. It retreated. His followed. Peter tasted wonderful. The grapes and cheese made a creamy, tangy, sharp-sweet counterpoint, layered and complicated with the citrus fizz of the soda in the background. Behind it all was Peter himself, not too different from his scent. The flavor was stronger, more visceral. It was masculine and robust, clean and smooth, easy on his tongue. He could taste that for hours without getting tired of it, he realized.

Peter sighed in pleasure as the kiss wore on, hands stroking Sylar's sides encouragingly. Peter was an amazingly good kisser, nothing at all like Elle who was all wild enthusiasm or Lydia who was too slow and lost in it for his preference. Peter engaged, led, teased and provoked. He played with his mouth and with Sylar's, all the while his hands caressed and stroked and gripped. It went on and on like neither of them had kissed anyone else in forever.

Peter was the one who broke it off, nuzzling at Sylar's face and dragging his lower lip across Sylar's cheek, his eyes half-closed. *He's been starving for this,* Sylar thought, wondering if it was cruel that he hadn't been the sort of partner Peter could satisfy himself with easily. Sylar growled. He was as he was. Maybe Peter needed to learn to deal for once. Peter was dealing – and if his current method included sucking on Sylar's earlobe, Sylar wasn't going to complain. Sylar pushed his hips forward.
in short, rhythmic motions. His crotch was against the curled edge of the bench. It was just a pressure. He wished he could jerk Peter forward, vaporize both their clothes, and fuck him right here, but that wouldn't be allowed. Peter was behaving, so it was well past time for Sylar to get to business. He gave a hard nip to Peter's neck because he could, and looked down to unfasten the man's jeans. Sylar sank to his haunches as Peter wriggled and positioned himself, eagerly pushing down his jeans and pulling himself out, erect penis and testicles together.

Sylar viewed, and smiled slowly. He remembered what Peter had said to him. "Now that is a beautiful cock." It was a normal length, naturally darker than the rest of Peter's skin and currently flushed with arousal. The head was not fully swollen, but there was still a drop of wetness on it. Short, wiry, sparse pubic hair surrounded it, reminding him of how patchy a younger Peter's attempts to grow a beard had been. Obviously, the hair growth pattern extended to other areas than his face. Sylar inhaled deeply of his scent. It was strong, but not repellant. He couldn't see what Peter was bothering to warn him about – they'd both smelled far worse things. But he made a mental note of how this reflected on Peter's preferences. It would be useful later, he was sure. He leaned closer, his hands on Peter's splayed knees, and breathed in deeply once more.

"Is it okay?" Peter asked, petting the side of Sylar's head.

Sylar turned his head up only enough to roll his eyes upward and see Peter under his brows. His smile broadened. Peter was as insecure and uneasy as Sylar had been almost four weeks ago. He glanced back down, thinking about how he'd feel if Peter balled that fist in his hair and shoved his face at his groin as Sylar had more or less done with Peter. Sylar might not object, but he wouldn't be happy. That, then, seemed to have been his misstep, the thing that had damaged their first, tentative connection. He made a mental note of that, too, intending to never do it again. He had to strengthen those ties, even if it meant behavior modification.

He didn't know how to start, so he just kept leaning in until he was there. Swallowing, he gingerly wrapped his lips around the head. Peter's erection was flagging – again, it was just as Sylar recalled his own had. Nerves. That Peter was nervous calmed Sylar. It meant he could be in control here. He was the one, as Peter had pointed out, with his sharp, dangerous teeth wrapped around Peter's defenseless penis. He touched those teeth to the sensitive flesh. One of Peter's feet shifted in discomfort so Sylar lifted them off his skin and used his pursed lips to hold the cock away from his teeth.

Sylar licked, having heretofore been holding his tongue back and away from contact. Now he tasted. The fluid at the tip had a flavor all its own. It was a bodily fluid and tasted like some distant combination of saliva and blood, without the metallic taste blood always had. It was like serum, or gunk or various less pleasant but pedestrian secretions. He let the tension go out of his body. It wasn't bad, not by itself. The thing that gave him psychological dissonance was putting Peter Petrelli's cock in his mouth – not the sensations themselves. The sensations were pleasant. The filthy perversion he was committing was … well, there was no other way to think about it than the same way he did about anything else that was forbidden and nasty. It was hot. And so, so wrong. His own erection strained against his fly.

Sylar started sucking and bobbing slowly, working out where he could put his tongue and what he could do with it. Peter's moans and breathy gasps were a good guide, as was Peter stroking Sylar's hair and the occasional rises of his hips. Sylar was doing it for him, clearly. That was fantastic. He was being of use. He was wanted. What he could do was of value to Peter. Peter was accepting him, showing his trust, and thoroughly demonstrating it. Peter's hands were buried in his hair, but not holding his head or directing him. The only direction was the occasional grasping he did, tucking his feet up under the bench and whining when he'd shift his hips in a tiny, involuntary thrust.
All this display of arousal was going straight to Sylar's dick. He had a free hand, so he reached down and massaged his groin, his other hand wrapped around the base of Peter's cock to keep it steady. Sylar was slurping messily, drool running down over his fist. There was nothing else for it – keeping one's mouth open over and around something triggered the reaction, which seemed as inescapable as the aching need in his pants.

Sylar pulled back to just the tip, encircling the knob with his generous lips and applying suction. Peter almost came up off the bench. "I'm coming!" Peter blurted out, the first articulate thing he'd said throughout the blow job. One of Peter's hands nudged his head frantically, like Peter hadn't realized until too late what was happening.

Sylar felt a surge in his loins at how much he'd made Peter lose control. This was his chance to show how far he was willing to go, how much he was willing to do, and how giving a partner he would be if Peter elected to continue with him. A few determined sucks later, he felt Peter's seed spilling into his mouth, hot and spurting. He swallowed hard and immediately, hardly tasting it at all. His own hips bucked forward unexpectedly and he nearly gagged himself on Peter's cock as he felt a surge in his loins. His throat worked again reflexively as Peter's second wave of ejaculate threatened to choke him. Tears stood out in his eyes as he unexpectedly came. He swallowed a last time, lifting himself off to breathe in rough, semen-scented gasps.

He glanced over things. There was so much slobber that the crotch of Peter's jeans was soaked like the man had wet himself. Sylar knew he looked just as disgusting with a spreading wet patch to show his shame. That was what they were now – both of them – flagrantly indecent for one another. He sucked in lungfuls of Peter's scent, the smell of his sex and come, wanting to imprint this into his brain – this was his connection. This was his tie. He squeezed Peter's penis and licked the last drop that oozed from it, holding that sticky, pearly drop on his tongue as he looked up at his partner in crime and showed it to him. It was filthy, sick, and nasty. It was also honest, lustful, and for him alone. Sylar swallowed it down.
"The other day, you told me you weren't a serial killer, but you didn't explain why."

"What you're asking is personal," Sylar said like that was the end of the matter.

Peter drew back his head and scoffed. "Like me telling you what it was like to go down on Catey wasn't."

Sylar looked confused and uneasy, then he sneered. "You've had sex with so many people it's practically public knowledge anyway."

Peter stepped closer and even though he did it casual, Sylar knew enough to go on alert. He didn't flinch or dodge when Peter grabbed his shirt and shoved him against the wall, even though he fully expected to get hit. Peter's free hand went to Sylar's shoulder, palm flat against it to hold him there. Sylar didn't resist. With intimidating calmness, Peter told him, "Who I'm with and what we do together is private. That I tell you about it is a sign of how much I trust you, not that it's something I'd tell to anyone who asks. If you want to keep that trust, then you have to show some respect."

"Respect for your legendary cunnilingus skills?" Sylar couldn't help but snark. It earned him a hard slap, almost instantly. Peter's hand was back on Sylar's shoulder before Sylar had even worked out which one he'd been hit with. His cheek stung and reddened, but his face became more impassive than ever.

"I share very personal things with you all the time, Sylar. Don't act like you're the only one making an effort here. You have reasons. I want to know what they are." Peter released him and stepped away.

Sylar glared at him. "You think slapping me around is going to make me tell you what you want to know?"

Peter took a seat and looked up expectantly, ignoring the objection.

Sylar rolled his eyes and circled, getting away from the damn wall. He stopped when he had his back to the way out. That made him more comfortable. He didn't know why he was explaining this – Peter didn't deserve an explanation, especially after hitting him – but he did anyway. "Serial killers are perverted. They're deranged. They pick their targets for sexual reasons. That's not what I did!" Peter nodded, face sober. He wasn't trying to argue, so Sylar continued, "No one calls a soldier a serial killer. Or an executioner. Or even a mad scientist who kills his subjects. They kill people for different reasons – legitimate reasons (or at least in the case of the mad scientist, he thinks they're legitimate). A serial killer knows what they're doing is wrong."
"You've said," Peter said slowly, "that you knew what you did was wrong."

Sylar shook his head decisively in contradiction to his words. "Yes, I said that. You're taking it out of context."

Peter nodded and gestured for him to go on. "Okay. Then explain."

"I knew I was murdering people. I was not getting off on it."

Peter weighed that for a while. "How much do you know about serial killers?"

The question seemed serious, not challenging. Sylar hesitated a moment, then spoke like he was quoting something, "The inability for form attachments is a common factor, as is the existence of facilitators who encourage the devaluing of human life. The quality of attachment to parents and other family members is critical to how they relate to and value other members of society. A dysfunctional family history can lead to the inability to attach, which can further lead to homicidal behavior unless they find a way to develop substantial relationships and fight the label they receive."

"You're not a serial killer because you don't want to be a serial killer?" Peter asked.

"I am not a serial killer because I am not a serial killer."

Peter tilted his head slightly, taking that in. "Okay," he said agreeably. "You're not a serial killer." He waited a few beats and added, "You do realize, right, that what we have is a 'substantial relationship'?"

"And you're not dead," Sylar said simply.
They sat together in the laundry room, listening to the whirring and sloshing. Sylar spoke. "Tell me about a time when you had sex on a washing machine."

Peter gave him a long, piercing look.

Sylar shrugged slightly, more a gentle roll of his shoulders. "Or in a laundromat."

"I've never had sex in a laundromat," Peter said sharply. Looking off to the side, he grudgingly admitted, "I made out in one once."

"Either," Sylar said. "The laundromat, or the washing machine."

"How do you know I had sex on a washing machine?" Peter challenged.

"Because you denied the laundromat, but not the other. Ergo, the washing machine happened."

Peter scowled at him. "Why do you want to know, anyway?"

"I like to know things – especially these kinds of things."

"What are you going to do with the information? It's not … valuable."

"Oh, it's very valuable." Sylar raised his brows and looked at Peter loftily. "I'm going to think about it next time I jerk off. So …," his expression turned particularly lewd, "spill."

Peter snorted and looked away. He was silent for a long time, before finally saying, "It only happened the once." He looked back at Sylar, who was watching him back, listening with polite, but pointed, interest. Peter looked away again. "Her name was Cheryl … or maybe Sherry."

"You don't remember? Peter Petrelli, who prides himself on never forgetting a name?"

"Do you want me to tell this or not?" Peter said nastily. Sylar smiled, but said nothing. "Fine. Yeah, that was her name. I went to her apartment to … study or something." Sylar was still smiling. Peter made a palm-up gesture with the hand nearer to Sylar, shaking his head. "It was a long time ago! I was like a freshman in college or something!"

Sylar's smile faded to seriousness. "Go on."
"Jerk off material, huh?"

"I've been alone a long time," Sylar dead-panned. "And since you're not putting out ..."

Peter sighed and leaned forward, elbows on knees. Another long pause passed. "I made a pass at her," he said quietly, cupping his hands together. "I'd been flirting and she was flirting back. That was how I got in her apartment. Once we were there, you know, the studying thing fell apart, since neither one of us wanted to. I asked her what she liked," he glanced over at Sylar slyly, "in the way of sex. She said anything I wanted was good." Peter looked away, pooched out his lips, and shook his head a little. "That was kind of a boner-killer – someone who doesn't know what they want, can't or won't tell me. It doesn't give me anything to work with. So I asked her what she liked to do to herself, when she was alone, what did she think about." He gave Sylar another sidelong look. Sylar was a rapt audience now. Peter's voice softened into bedroom tones.

"She said she didn't think about anything much, but there was this one thing she did that always got her off. I asked what it was. She was embarrassed, but I teased it out of her – the washing machine. I told her to show me, so she did. She put in this ratty old bathrobe and knotted a towel around it, then started the cycle. While it got up to speed, we kissed. Then she climbed on top of it and kissed down. It was nice," he purred, occasionally flitting his eyes over to Sylar, who was listening avidly.

"Then it started rumbling, shaking a little. She started smiling and laughing. I guess it felt really good. I'd been touching her – her sides, her hips, her breasts – but now I started working on getting her jeans off. I unfastened the top button and worked my hand inside, but I only stroked her belly. We were french kissing so deep, it was awkward to do more than that. So I ran my fingers around the belt line. She scooted out of them, said she usually sat on the washer naked anyway, this was why she didn't have a roommate." Peter smirked, now looking straight ahead with a faraway look in his eye.

"We made out a little more. I was petting her. Then I asked her to come to the edge of it. She did, and I went down on my knees. It put me just at the right level." Peter looked away and shook his head. "It actually went sort of downhill after that."

"What? How?"

"It's not important." Peter shrugged. "Just ... if you want jerk off material, imagine I stood up and fucked her silly after that."
"But what really happened?" When Peter didn't answer and kept looking away, Sylar reached out and touched his shoulder gently.

Peter glanced back at him, his expression now normal (without the 'porn narrator' look he'd adopted before). He huffed. "She said her dad had shown her the washing machine trick but had never shown her that." His voice took on an edge. "I asked her what she meant, and she … anyway, he'd molested her since … I guess puberty, I don't know, and …" Peter shook his head. "I lost my … anyway, I left. I was stupid, nineteen, and I didn't know what to say or how to react to that. I don't remember what I said, but it was probably clumsy, and I left. I don't think … she … really knew how to deal with it either. That's why she was blustering it out to the first guy who got her off other than her fucking father." Peter sat up and leaned back in the chair, one fist balling and releasing over and over. He shot Sylar a tense look. "You asked."

"She was damaged goods," Sylar said hollowly, looking a little more pale than usual.

Peter shook his head. "Yes, no, not really. I mean, what happened to her sucked, but it didn't mean there was anything wrong with her."

"How would you react to that now?" Sylar asked, blank-faced.

Peter gave him an appraising look. "You mean … to being with someone who'd been molested?"

Sylar blinked a few times and said, "You said you were nineteen then, like that … explains it. How would it be any different if you'd been older?"

"If I'd known then what I know now," Peter said quietly, looking straight at Sylar as he spoke, "I would have held her. I would have told her I was glad she'd enjoyed it. I would have asked how she felt about how things had been with her dad and if she'd ever shared that with anyone else. I would have listened … and I would have stayed."

Sylar was silent for a long moment. "And then you would have fucked her silly?"

Peter hesitated, then gave an easy smile and reached over to lightly chuck Sylar on the shoulder. "Yeah. Then I would have fucked her silly. If that's what she wanted."
Peter slapped that fine ass of Sylar's as Peter jogged by him on his way off the basketball court. He was being playful and teasing, a result of the growing comradery as the exciting game had worn on. Peter seized his water bottle and drank deeply as Sylar turned to follow him, slowly, methodically, dribbling the ball as he did. Like the swat was no big deal. The slow beat drew Peter's eyes, not that he had any problem looking Sylar up and down. The guy was hot. Peter sucked down the last of his water and swiped at his mouth, licking his lips as his hand fell away. Sylar gave new meaning to the phrase, 'tall, dark, and handsome'. Usually, Peter's mind did not linger on his companion's looks, but the game, with its constant jostling and fighting, had created a hyperawareness of the other man. He could smell him, and that was not a bad thing. Not at all. Peter was ogling and for once, he didn't give a damn.

The expression on Peter's face was enough to draw a relaxed smirk from Sylar. Sylar reached out and tousled Peter's sweaty hair. Peter rolled his eyes at the friendly gesture, his air leaving him in a happy sigh. It should have stopped there. It could have stopped there. Then they could have gone back to the game for round two with hardly any interruption. But it didn't happen that way. Peter stood there, still catching his breath from the exertion, and didn't move as Sylar failed to follow the usual social script of taking his hand away. Instead, he came a half-step closer and trailed that hand down the back of Peter's neck, then made a slow sweep around his neck, drifting to his shoulder and then back.

Peter could have pulled away. He should have. He gave a shiver at the touch to his bare skin, to the slight shift of fabric of his sleeveless t-shirt as Sylar's fingers nudged it before returning to the more sensitive skin of his neck. Peter just looked at him, eyes wide. His nostrils flared. His breath pulled in. It felt like his hairs stood on end. He flushed and his lips parted. A totally inappropriate flood of lust filled him.

As if able to read Peter's mind, Sylar's hand hooked the back of his neck and he swooped in, intent obvious. Peter finally woke up from his hormonal inebriation, jerking his hands up between them. Sylar flinched and stopped in place, a few inches from Peter's face, face frozen in expectation of being hit for his forwardness. That struck Peter as being unfair – he was sure his face and body language had communicated clearly to Sylar that he was interested. Hitting the guy over an obvious interpretation would be wrong. Instead, he kissed him, quick and definite, before twisting away and putting some space between them. Sylar's face was priceless.

"Peter?"

Peter shook his head, hoping they could laugh off the whole thing. What he'd done was stupid and he knew it. Sylar looked way too intrigued by it all. Peter came closer and snatched the ball from him, ignoring the questioning tone. "Hey. Let's play ball." The break over, Sylar followed him back out onto the court, where the battle began again. Peter played hard and aggressively, all over Sylar.
He pushed himself until he was dizzy, trying to stay one or two steps ahead of the lithe, taller man. He was up by several points when Sylar went down, hitting his elbow with a pop on the parquet flooring. Sylar's wince was fleeting, but Peter saw it all the same. He dropped the ball, stilling it with his foot. He didn't bother to ask if Sylar was okay. "Let me see."

Sylar was on his feet again and didn't resist as Peter took his arm, stabilizing the upper arm and gently palpating the joint. Peter asked, "Do you think it's dislocated?"

"No," Sylar said in a quiet tone that matched Peter's. "I just hit it hard. It's fine."

"You sure?" Peter murmured, now stroking his hand down Sylar's forearm and carefully running the elbow through its range of motion. He looked up at Sylar's face, supposedly to watch for any pain response. He was so close – warm skin under Peter's hands, blood still rushing through Peter's body, both of them breathing heavily.

Sylar put his other hand on Peter's shoulder, idly straightening the turned-under hem of his t-shirt. Then his fingertips ghosted along the side of Peter's neck as before. Peter felt himself flush, heard himself gasp. He saw Sylar reposition himself slightly for what Peter was sure was another attempt to kiss him. And as hot and horny as Peter was, he still knew that was wrong. He dodged back, almost tripping over the basketball at his heels. Recovering, he cleared his throat and said, "I have to go get cleaned up." He left without looking at Sylar again.

He hurried to the showers, thinking he needed a cold one. He got his clothes off in a flash and was under the cool water before he heard the locker room door swing open again to admit Sylar. Each shower was set up in a two-stage booth with a swinging door separating it from the locker room at large. There was a shower curtain dividing the booth into a dry dressing area and the shower part which Peter was in. There were a dozen or so showers. Sylar could get his own. Peter washed privates and pits using the thin shower gel from the dispenser on the wall, then leaned his hands against the tile and slumped. Water cascaded down him. He stared after it as it fell, imagining what it would be like to be each droplet, free, but falling. Sometimes, he wondered if that was his life – the terrifying and terrific elation of freefall before some disastrous ending. His tension began to ebb as he watched one drop after another fearlessly take the plunge and fall from his hair and nose.

The scrape and clink of the shower curtain rings, way too close, was his only warning. Peter whisked, wet hair plastering itself unhelpfully across his face. There was Sylar, in the shower with him. Fear washed through him at the intrusion. Peter whipped his hair out of his face with one hand while the other formed into a fist, attacking the threat without hesitation. He connected, tagging Sylar hard on the jaw. The blow spun Sylar to the tile wall where his hands slapped against the smooth surface to break his momentum. Sylar got them up then, interposing them in case Peter swung again. The posture gave Sylar an unintentional cringing look. Peter blinked water out of his eyes and registered that Sylar was naked, too.

He didn't know what to do about that. He didn't know what to think about it, but it took away a lot of the element of danger Peter's subconscious had initially imagined was there. Sylar didn't let him work it through – the man met his eyes, his expression careful but focused, and lowered himself to his knees. Peter's brows rose and he shuddered as he took in the meaning of the act. He stared down, meeting Sylar's eyes as the man leaned in, slow, steady, and inexorable, with Sylar looking up at him all the while. Peter felt hypnotized by those dark, fathomless eyes. Only peripherally did he see the strong features and the glossy, dark hair scattered haphazardly across Sylar's brow from their violence. Reddened lips parted as Sylar neared his goal. Peter was looking nearly straight down, holding his breath in disbelief. They'd never done anything remotely like this. Hell, the pat on the ass Peter had given earlier was, like, the most. Ever.
Until now. Their previous boundaries were obliterated as Sylar's mouth touched him. Lips parted further and Sylar's clever tongue licked Peter's penis into his mouth, sucking it in. It was soft yet, but the contact was like shocks through Peter's system. He hadn't believed it was going to happen until it did; he hadn't thought if he should allow or prevent it, what he should do. Sylar wasn't touching him at all with his hands, merely leaning forward awkwardly, sucking and pumping at Peter with his mouth. Only one thing occurred coherently to Peter to do: "Um, here." He touched the side of Sylar's head and took a half-step forward so the man wasn't leaning so uncomfortably. Sylar shot him a smirking acknowledgement and went back to work.

Peter finally started to breathe again. He had the feeling in the pit of his stomach that this was awful and he needed to stop it, but his hips seemed to have a mind of their own. His brain fuzzed out and even that weak moral objection was lost in the static. He was hardening fast, even under the uneven attentions he was getting. Sylar had paused to lick him all over, sucking at the sides and base, rolling Peter's dick over his nose, and finally sucking him back in with a wet, satisfying smack. Peter skinned at Sylar's hair with one hand, the other bracing him against the wall behind Sylar's back. His touch on Sylar's hair was delicate and tentative at first, then turned to fisting it as his breathing hitched with each wave of suction. Sylar's hands were still on his own thighs. Only his mouth worked, alternating hard sucks of the tip with short, tongue-swirling and longer periods of bobbing up and down. The changing pattern was lighting Peter on fire inside.

"This is going to be quick. I'm there." He pulled himself free and turned to direct himself at the wall, his hand pumping furiously to finish. Sylar was having none of it, however, and grabbed him back, touching Peter with his hand for the first time. He thrust Peter's dick back in his mouth just as the cusp of the orgasm hit. Sylar's first suck provoked a lurching half-thrust as Peter expelled his come in the back of Sylar's throat. Sylar winced at being gagged with cock, but he managed to swallow. The gentle, fleshy contractions around the head of Peter's dick made him spurt again with a tortured groan. The next time, Sylar did it on purpose, then pulled back and kept sucking him, kept swallowing, as Peter whimpered and twitched in aftershocks and overstimulation, not able to pull together enough thinking ability to tell Sylar to stop.

When Sylar did stop, it was when he wanted to. Peter moved back to make room as Sylar got to his feet. Peter stared at him, feeling bizarre – haunted, vulnerable, and taken advantage of all at odds with the warm, bubbly feelings of post-orgasmic goodwill. He wanted a hug and to be told it was okay and persuaded that he hadn't just dishonored his family and his brother's memory, even if he didn't think Sylar could do any of those things. All he could think of as Sylar made one last, exaggerated swallow, licking his lips, was that he hadn't asked for any of this, hadn't wanted it, and hadn't done what he should have done to stop it. Now it was too late. Sylar turned to walk out.

"Sylar?" Peter's voice was almost tremulous. Almost.

The man looked over his shoulder, casting his eyes up and down Peter's body as if he owned it. He said, "I'll leave you to clean up," making it unclear if Sylar was leaving to clean up, if he was leaving so Peter could clean up, or both. Probably both.

Peter stared at the shower curtain until it stopped moving. Numbly, he turned the water temperature to as hot as it would go and sat down under the scalding spray. He held himself tightly as though he were cold, the water running over him to wash away what he wouldn't admit were tears.
The fight had gone on long enough. Sylar could see Peter was getting genuinely angry. Pretty soon, one or both of them was going to get hurt. Sylar knew the odds were it would be him, as he was already losing as they grappled on the floor. Much as he liked to criticize Peter for not knowing when to give up, that only had bite if Sylar himself wasn't guilty of the same thing. Still, it would rankle his pride to say anything out loud. Instead, he indicated his surrender in a primal and unmistakeable way – he dropped his defenses, lifted his chin, turned his face away, and exposed his neck. He hoped Peter had enough sense to see what he was doing.

A second later, he had reason to doubt that as Peter grabbed the offered throat. Sylar made an involuntary, faint noise as he tensed, but didn't otherwise move. Neither did Peter, so maybe he understood after all. He had surrendered; Peter was accepting it; and yet Peter was still holding him, forcing the submission, proving it, being dominant simply because he could be. He was rubbing it in. A shudder ran through Sylar. For whatever perverse reason Sylar didn't bother to explore, that was hot as hell. He was hard in an instant and hitched his hips upward in a slight motion. Peter huffed, but he didn't pull away. There was no snarky comment, no objection at all.

Sylar's eyes were shut. He lay on his back on the floor, Peter half-crouched above him with one hand on his throat and the other restraining one of his arms. Peter's legs pinned Sylar's, which put their groins perilously close. Sylar exhaled his yearning in a thin whine. Being taken and held down triggered something wanton and dark in him. It thrived on pain and subjugation. Maybe Peter knew that, and had the dark opposite of it, because his thumb began to slowly stroke up and down Sylar's neck. Sylar shifted his hips again in hungry need and a moment later, Peter adjusted his position so his hip rode down across Sylar's crotch. His knee pushed between Sylar's thighs. Sylar gripped the shirt on Peter's side, rubbing against him fast and firm. It was bony and uncomfortable, but it was also a willing, warm body which was enabling him. His breath puffed out. Peter put just the slightest pressure on his windpipe and it was perfect. Peter knew. Peter was participating. This was almost sex.

With a stifled groan, Sylar came. It had taken him an embarrassingly short time, but Peter had never given him this sort of opportunity before. There had been no sex and precious little comfort or even touching between them – just the fights and whatever contact was inadvertent. This – this had been very, very intentional. Sylar's lids fluttered. His head lolled. He didn't know what to do with this experience now that he'd had it. Peter took his hand off Sylar's throat, putting his fist on the floor next to Sylar's head. He bent. A light kiss was placed on Sylar's cheek. It was … sweet, cute, almost fraternal. It was the kind of peck you might give a relative you hadn't seen for a while. Sylar opened his eyes and looked at Peter, who gracefully rolled off of him.

Peter didn't look aroused in the least, but satisfied? Yes, he looked satisfied and sort of smug. Sylar sighed, deciding to be pleased that Peter didn't look angry or disgusted. Maybe this was something they could do more often? 'Smug' was something he could work with. Peter went to his knees and
gave Sylar a nudge. "You need to go get cleaned up," he said quietly, glancing away. He was completely aware of what had happened, and he was accepting it.

"I'll do that." Sylar sat up, then got his feet under him as Peter stood with him. Sylar tried to reach out for him, just to touch his arm, but Peter stepped back and batted him away. Watching Peter's face with special attention, Sylar said, "I'm sure we'll find something else to fight about soon."

Peter gave him a sly smile that gave Sylar a fluttering sensation in his gut. "I'm sure we will."

Sylar came awake with a start when Peter grabbed his wrist. His eyes flew open, his heart thudded, and his brain flooded to full capacity. In front of him, Peter lay in bed, eyes shut, a troubled expression on his sleeping face. *Fuck,* Sylar thought, realizing what was going on. Peter was having a nightmare or something. He turned his hand and took Peter's wrist, giving it a squeeze. Peter's expression cleared and his breathing deepened. Apparently, that was all Peter needed. Sylar, though, was now wide awake. Peter slumped over onto his back, drawing Sylar's hand and arm along with him. Sylar frowned at him.

Putting up with Peter's nocturnal shenanigans was the stated price of sleeping with the man, along with not actively molesting him. Generally, Sylar was willing to pay, but at the moment, he felt irritated and taken for granted. He reached in an instant that Peter had woken, for real this time. Peter's breathing caught and his body tensed. Sylar didn't care. He snuggled in close, putting his shoulder in Peter's armpit and his head on Peter's upper chest. Being close dissuaded Sylar's own nightmares, though honestly he didn't need to be *this* close. But he liked it. And if Peter was going to wake him up randomly in the middle of the night, then he could deal with being a little taken advantage of in return. To Peter's credit, he dealt with it fine. Once Sylar was settled, Peter dropped his arm to Sylar's back, brushed him lightly a couple times, and then fell back asleep.

Sylar slept lightly for the rest of the night, enraptured by the feel of strong arms holding him close, and so willingly. It was even nicer that Peter had awoken, Sylar decided. It made the choice to hold him seem very intentional. He hoped Peter had thought it out and made a deliberate choice, and not some half-asleep, muzzy decision that it wasn't worth fighting over. Even if that, by itself, would be an improvement between them.

Peter woke again, eventually, and disturbed Sylar's dozing by trying to inch out of his embrace. It was the stealthy motions of a man trying to wriggle away from the ugly woman who had looked fabulous through the beer goggles of the night before. Sylar growled as the illusion of a willing partner cracked and fractured.

"I have to go pee," Peter whispered in response to the growl.

It gave Sylar hope. "Come back," he asked in his own whisper, like reality couldn't take it if he spoke at full volume.

"No." Peter had made it to the side of the bed and stood. "I'm getting up."

"I want you," Sylar said petulantly. He didn't like the refusal.

Peter just shook his head and rolled his eyes.

Sylar snarled. If Peter was going to take himself away, then fine! He pushed his face into the pillow Peter's head had rested on and rolled himself into the warm spot Peter's body had left. Thrusting his hand into his pajama bottoms, he pushed them down and stroked himself hard within a few seconds.
Peter was still standing there – of that, Sylar was very, very aware. Sylar kept his eyes mostly shut and moaned for his audience, tugging and jerking himself. He bared his teeth, feeling himself ridiculously close, ridiculously fast. He'd never done this while anyone watched. Admittedly, there was a sheet obscuring him, but the motions were unmistakeable. He turned to his side when he came, wishing he'd thought to flip back the sheet so he could try to target Peter, but this was probably better. His semen spurted, striping Peter's side of the bed, marking it and claiming it in a primal way. Parting his eyes and adopting a lazy, satisfied smile, he looked up at Peter.

"Not cool, man," Peter said, but his expression was slack-jawed lust. "Not cool." He went around the edge of the bed towards the bathroom, collecting himself. "You're doing the laundry today."

"You watched the whole thing," Sylar crowed. If that was Peter's only objection, then … wow.

"You were covered," Peter snapped. "There was nothing to see."

Sylar snorted, talking to Peter's back as he left the room. "You knew exactly what I was doing." The bathroom door shut firmly. Sylar's smile broadened as he murmured to himself, "Just like I know exactly what you're going to do now." He stretched out on his side of the bed, luxuriating as he wondered how long it would take Peter to jerk himself off in there.
"Nothing ever changes with you!" Peter said, his exasperation clear.

Sylar rolled his eyes. He'd had enough of this argument five minutes ago. "Fucking me would change things," he said, flippant, but true.

Peter stared at him. It was hardly new – the offer, that is – but to have Peter really latch onto it was. "You think it would? Huh?" Peter's voice started out hard, then changed.

Sylar blinked and straightened as Peter advanced on him. He was grabbed and hauled off-balance in the open-plan penthouse they'd taken up residence in. Shoving and pulling, Peter got him to the bed and fairly threw him on it. Sylar rolled to his back and lifted to his elbows, mouth agape, a bewildered smile fighting its way onto his face.

"You really," Peter said huskily, sliding his knee between Sylar's legs, parting his thighs with it, and nestling it firmly but gently in Sylar's crotch, "really think it would change things?" Peter shoved him flat on the bed and leaned over him, exhaling heavily.

Sylar's eyes were huge. This was totally unexpected. It had his blood pumping with the possibilities. "Yes."

Peter smirked at him, dropping his knee off the edge of the bed and letting his thigh and hip roll into and against Sylar's groin. "How?" he asked as he rubbed up and down, feeling Sylar's growing hardness under him.

Sylar didn't want a conversation. He pulled Peter down and kissed him, trying unsuccessfully to bring Peter flush against him. Peter pressed him to the bed, returning the kiss passionately, but refusing to be drawn down. When he broke the kiss, he scoffed, "No," and pulled away entirely, leaving Sylar unsatisfied on the bed.

Sylar's head popped up immediately. "What? 'No?' You fucking tease!" He sat up, outraged and flabbergasted to be led on so strongly and then dropped like a moldy donut.

Peter laughed, low in his throat. "It's hardly a tease when I've told you 'no' for months, Sylar. If I say 'no' nineteen times and then the twentieth I say 'maybe', and I think about it and say 'no' again, that's not a tease. That's me checking my options."

"No, that's you being a fucking cock-tease and you know it!" Sylar was on his feet now, simmering with anger. He wouldn't put up with being treated like this.

"You didn't give me a good reason."
"I'll give you any reason you want!" He was nearly yelling, looming over Peter now.

"You're not offering anything I want, Sylar!" Peter growled up at him.

"The things you want," Sylar ground out, "no one can give you."

"Exactly."

"That's not fair!"

"Tell me how killing my brother was fair, huh?"

"I'll give you your fucking good reason!" Sylar grabbed him, and this time it was Peter getting thrown on the bed. Sylar was on him in a moment, aggressively crawling over him and flattening Peter out. He needn't have bothered – Peter wrapped arms and legs both around Sylar, pulling them together and not trying to get away. "Yeah!" Sylar huffed out before Peter turned his face and kissed him. Peter hunched against him and Sylar responded, humping between his legs, the alternating pressure working for him. Peter freed a hand and put it between them, finding the bulge of Sylar's cock and massaging it expertly.

"Come on," Peter whispered in his ear, air puffing against Sylar's disarrayed hair. "Fuck me. You gonna come for me? Come on! Show me!"

Sylar groaned. The dirty words, the lewd commands, the sudden cooperation went all through him. He bucked harder, Peter's fingers somehow finding him even through the denim, pinching, pressing, and stroking. After a moment of fumbling, he felt Peter drop Sylar's zipper. He was taken in hand with nothing but cotton briefs between them. He came almost immediately.

"Oh yeah," Peter growled, grinning smugly. He kissed Sylar again, deep and probing. He released Sylar's dick and pushed the flaps of his fly closed.

Sylar reached down to return the favor, but Peter pushed his hand aside. Confused, Sylar asked, "What? That's-"

"Fading already," Peter interrupted him. "I don't need anything from you."

Sylar's eyes widened. Peter had just jerked him off to shut him up. That was all it was. There was nothing mutual to it, no desire, no nothing. He'd been…used. His jaw dropped.

"Except a kiss," Peter murmured. "I want another one of those before you blow up." He raised himself quickly to claim one, covering Sylar's open mouth with his own, prompting Sylar to return the kiss, too befuddled to do anything else. When it ended, Peter began to scoot away backwards across the bed, apparently aware of how much danger he was in. Sylar finally came to his senses. He lunged after, brought up short by Peter grabbing a handful of shirt with one hand and cocking back the other as a fist. Sylar paused long enough to establish that Peter wasn't going to hit him. Then he pushed forward slowly, eyes on Peter's lips. Peter let him.

"You need kisses." Sylar turned his head and let their lips meet. It was soft, warm, and almost chaste. His eyes were open and on Peter the whole time, all the fury, humiliation, and despair of the last few minutes warring with a tiny flame of hope. When he pulled back, he said, "Then I will give you kisses." He looked at Peter with an expression of pleading. There was a way between them and Sylar could see it through all the sloppy, interfering emotions. Peter had asked a question, opened a door, taken an action, and expressed a need. Everything else – the taunting, the teasing, the threats – was a distraction, a Petrelli smokescreen. Or so Sylar hoped.
Peter swallowed. He released Sylar's shirt and lifted that hand to touch lightly at the moisture on
Sylar's lips. He met Sylar's eyes with something like wonder, then pulled back, finishing his escape over
the opposite side of the bed.

Sylar heaved a sigh and went back the way he'd come. He got a new pair of underwear from the
dresser, then went to the bathroom to change and clean himself up. When he came out, Peter was
curled up on one corner of the couch, bare-footed and staring at a book. Peter set it aside immediately
and looked at him. It wasn't a challenging look. It was wide-eyed and encompassing, as if he were
taking Sylar in for the first time, or trying to memorize his appearance. Sylar met his gaze. It went on
for more than a minute, before Peter finally dropped his eyes to take in the rest of Sylar. Sylar slid
onto the couch, in the middle, near Peter's end. He wasn't there a second before Peter stuck out his
foot and wedged his toes under Sylar's thigh near the knee. Sylar smiled and stroked the foot more
familiarly than he'd ever done before.

Peter reached out and touched a few fingers along the top of Sylar's hand, giving him tiny strokes.
"Good reason," he said. "Good change."

"I told you it would work," Sylar said softly, a fluttering in his gut as he realized he'd been right.

Peter smiled and made a dry chuckle. "Yeah, you did. Sometimes you've got to hit me with a
sledgehammer to make me listen."

Sylar looked at him with complete innocence. "I will be your sledgehammer whenever you need it."

Peter blinked. "You did not just say that."

Sylar looked down, smiling away his mischief. Peter laughed, then rolled to his back and set his
lower legs across Sylar's lap. "Okay," Peter said. "We'll try it your way."
"I never finished that book."

Sylar looked over at him questioningly.

"That book: Alive! I said I'd finish it in three or four days. Didn't."

Sylar had never expected Peter to keep his word in the first place. It was weird how the man would point his own failings out like it was some sort of confession. He shrugged dismissively. "Petrelli promises."

Peter whacked him in the face almost immediately, the motion so fast it took Sylar a moment to figure out what had happened. Sylar touched at his stinging upper lip and blinked at Peter in surprise. Having jumped up and now standing at arm's length from him, Peter seethed and glared. "Don't talk about my family like that!"

Sylar licked the sore spot on his lip and rose to his feet slowly. "I'll talk about them however I want," he said resentfully.

"No," Peter got in his face, "you won't!"

Sylar drew himself up to his full height, realizing they may well be on the verge of another throw-down. Growling, he said, "I've earned the right to say whatever I want about them, Peter. I paid for it in blood and more."

Peter couldn't have gotten any closer without kissing him, but that seemed to be the last thing on his mind. Pity. "Fuck that! You lost the right to say anything about anyone in my family – especially you!"

Sylar blinked once, not entirely sure how Peter meant that, aside from insultingly and angrily, which was clear as day. Was he saying Sylar was part of the family? He tilted his head and leaned backwards as much as he dared without risking losing his balance. He refused to actually step away first, so he snarked, "You might not be so sensitive about it if there wasn't so much to be said."

Peter's brows climbed. Honestly, Sylar had expected to get hit again, but Peter seemed to be actually thinking about what had been said. "Yeah, maybe so." Peter backed off, then rallied with, "You know I'm sensitive about it, there's nothing I can do about it other than shut you up, so don't start anything to start with!" He paced uneasily, but it looked like working off tension rather than building up to another outburst.

"Your articulation could use some work," Sylar said quietly, slowly calming down as he realized there wasn't going to be a fight. Peter grimaced at him and returned to his seat glumly. "I suppose it's
not your fault you're related to them," Sylar offered, settling himself down as well. He was going to count this conversation as a win on his side, even if it resulted in him saying less about the despicable Clan Petrelli in future. It was nice to have Peter admit they were fucked up.

Peter just shrugged. "I'll read the book next."

Strangely, Sylar believed him this time.
"No wonder your name means 'redundant rock', Peter Petrelli!" Sylar leaned forward, fists on the table, scowling at the source of his frustration. "You are the very essence of the immovable object!"

Peter smiled at him, all sweetness and innocence, his response so quick and glib that Sylar was sharply reminded the man was brother to a professional politician. "No wonder. Your name refers to the passage of time, Sylar, and like you, it's an irresistible force."
Warm Fuzzies

Title: Warm Fuzzies
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Words: 1,100
Rating: PG-13
Warnings: None. A little POV-flip-flopping. I don't know if that sort of thing bothers anyone.
Summary: Set in the Wall. The boys routinely sleep together to help Sylar deal with his anxiety about being alone. After they argue or fight, they usually separate. This is a time when they get back together and start to share a little more than just the same bed.

Peter slid into bed, facing Sylar's side and waiting for a long moment. It had been a while since they'd been together. Sylar glanced over at him, aware even in the dim light that he was being stared at. Peter exhaled sharply and turned away, rolling to his other side. It had been a while, yes, but he just needed to go to sleep.

Minutes later, he rolled back over. Sylar's eyes were shut, but Peter doubted he was already sleeping. Quietly, he scooted closer and stuck out his foot until it touched Sylar's calf. He heard the slight shift in Sylar's breathing. Peter shut his eyes and relaxed for a while, feeling that human presence through the pads of his toes where they bent upward a little at the point of contact. It was nice. He valued it. He wanted more.

He snaked out his hand, finding Sylar's bare bicep. He touched it lightly. It was such warm, dry, lovely skin – soft, even. Smooth. Peter curled his fingers and rested his knuckles against it. It felt right. He relaxed, feeling himself drowse.

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Two. Two points of contact. That was new. Sylar controlled his breathing (or tried to) and lay very still. Peter had never shared that much with him. Some nights, especially when they'd fought or argued (assuming they slept together at all after such), Peter didn't touch him at all. But now twice. He couldn't stop his mind from playing over and over again the way he'd woke up a few days ago, the last time they'd slept together, curled around Peter's body, spooning him. And how Peter hadn't reacted badly to it. Peter had blown it off, said it didn't matter, and given Sylar a freaking massage like it was a consolation prize for not fucking him. That had been intense and inexplicable all by itself, but here he was touching Sylar again, and more.

He kept wondering if Peter was going to do something else, if this was the start of putting moves on him, but it just seemed like Peter was going to sleep. That was frustrating. So typical. Peter would arouse his curiosity, then check out. Sylar would have been aggravated, but this time was charming. Sweet. Sylar took matters into his own hands. That was always how it worked, wasn't it? He rolled to his side, facing Peter, and slid his hand over Peter's side. He moved his knee up and in so it was touching Peter's, their shins resting next to one another.

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Peter went still, not even breathing. Was this going somewhere? Was Sylar about to do something? Had he made a bad mistake by putting his hand on the guy and making it seem like he was open to anything? But seconds passed and nothing more happened. Peter sighed. It was warm between them. He felt safe here, perverse as that was given Sylar's history, but he felt it anyway. He scooted forward a few inches until his lower forearm was folded against Sylar's chest and his upper mirrored
Sylar's by loosely holding his back and side. They'd probably get too hot to hold the position for long, but maybe Sylar would throw off the covers and it would be okay. In any case, Peter didn't care. He fell asleep long before that happened.

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It started the same as the night before – Peter flounced into bed, then flipped to face away. He often did that, but nearly always ended up facing Sylar sooner or later. Sylar was facing him, watching. He wondered what would happen if he started it instead of Peter. Again, he obsessed over how he'd felt spooning Peter. It had been so nice. Equally as nice as holding Peter in his arms had been the night before. The amazing thing about that was that Peter had allowed it, moved into it, cooperated. There was no excuse that he'd been asleep and hadn't known what was going on. Of course they didn't speak of it the next day, but it had happened regardless. No denial.

He wouldn't wait anymore. No waiting until Peter rolled over and deigned or did not deign to touch him. Sylar moved across the foot or two that separated them and intentionally, deliberately, positioned himself around Peter's very-still form. He settled in. He took a deep breath and waited. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this. What he was doing now was … more platonic. He wouldn't mind sex, but that wasn't what he was angling for. He wanted what he'd taken – possession, contact, intimate proximity and a right to touch as he wished. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this. What he was doing now was … more platonic. He wouldn't mind sex, but that wasn't what he was angling for. He wanted what he'd taken – possession, contact, intimate proximity and a right to touch as he wished. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this. What he was doing now was … more platonic. He wouldn't mind sex, but that wasn't what he was angling for. He wanted what he'd taken – possession, contact, intimate proximity and a right to touch as he wished. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this. What he was doing now was … more platonic. He wouldn't mind sex, but that wasn't what he was angling for. He wanted what he'd taken – possession, contact, intimate proximity and a right to touch as he wished. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this. What he was doing now was … more platonic. He wouldn't mind sex, but that wasn't what he was angling for. He wanted what he'd taken – possession, contact, intimate proximity and a right to touch as he wished. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this. What he was doing now was … more platonic. He wouldn't mind sex, but that wasn't what he was angling for. He wanted what he'd taken – possession, contact, intimate proximity and a right to touch as he wished. He wasn't hard or erect like he'd been that morning when Peter had woke up to find him like this.

Sylar let his forehead move forward until it touched the back of Peter's head. He was ridiculously thankful and pleased at the acceptance. He breathed in the scent of Peter's hair and found that he did, indeed, want one thing more. Nuzzling Peter's hair out of the way (and Peter still tolerated it!), he planted a single, chaste kiss against the side of the man's throat. Lip-kissing, Peter had resisted and warned him off about several times before. It was strictly off-limits and when Sylar did it, it was to aggravate. This, though, wasn't meant for that. Maybe this would pass since so much else was going well.

He felt it when every muscle in Peter's body tensed. Kissing, perhaps of any kind, not wise. He felt a stab of remorse and regret that he might have spoiled things with that gesture. It wasn't fair! He'd just wanted to … he wasn't sure why he'd wanted to do it, but he had and so he'd done it. But wait … Peter was settling back down. His hand on Sylar's, which had lifted, came down again. It smoothed over his hand, not quite petting it but at least resuming gentle touch, and then rested. Sylar relaxed. It was going to be okay.

And it was.
Title: Underscored
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Words: 1,100
Rating: PG
Warnings: None. A single POV flip.
Summary: Set in the Wall. The quote is from Thomas Hauser's book, page 164 in my version. The guys are hanging out in the rec room of the Pegasus building, reading and passing the time, when Peter causes a stir.

Peter underlined a portion of the Ali book very carefully, with neat, straight lines of blue ink. He was almost done when Sylar ripped the pen out of his hand, hissing, "You don't write in books!"

"What?" Peter looked up at him in bafflement. He started to reach for the pen, only to have Sylar yank his book away as well. "Hey!" Peter bolted to his feet, shoving Sylar in the process. Sylar was fumbling with the dog-eared, soft-cover book, trying to close it safely. It had been beat up like that when Peter got it from the library, so that part at least wasn't Peter's fault. Sylar stumbled back, keeping his feet only because Peter didn't push it further. "I want to read that part again! It's important. That's why I marked it. You don't get to take my stuff!"

"You don't write in books!" Sylar snarled back at him, clearly willing to fight over this.

"It's my book," Peter said levelly, calming somewhat. He backed up a step, giving Sylar more space.

"It's a book. And it's not 'yours', Petrelli! It's a library book." Sylar half-cradled it now, protecting it from Peter the despoiler of texts. "It belongs to everyone."

Peter drew in a deep breath and rolled his eyes on the exhale. "Okay. I got it. Don't write in the books. No highlighting, no page markers, no tabs." He frowned heavily, scowling, but he went on, "I've met people like that," he said, tight-lipped. "I can do that." He put a hand out for the return of what he saw as his, no matter what Sylar said about it.

Sylar regarded him suspiciously. "That easy?" he shrugged, not believing Peter. He still clutched the book to himself, no matter what Peter said about it.

Peter let his hands fall to his sides. "That easy. Yes. I will not be your motivation, or your trigger. If you won't give me the book, then fine. I'll find something else to read, or nothing at all. Whatever it takes." Sylar looked confused. Peter gave a small shake of his head. "Read what I underlined. I'm going to go upstairs and get something to drink." He stalked off with a huff, leaving Sylar alone in the rec room.

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A few moments later, Sylar pocketed the pen (why the hell was Peter carrying a pen, anyway?) and sat on the couch. He flipped carefully through the pages, easily finding the part Peter had desecrated. He hadn't realized how much Peter had managed to underline before Sylar had looked up and seen what was going on. It was most of a paragraph. He scanned through the previous near-two-hundred pages, finding not a single mark. Peter had noted only this bit - just this one, only this part, had said something to him enough to pull out his pen so he would be able to come back to this again and again. Sylar read it once and then a second time:
'What's my name!' It wasn't a question. It was a demand. Ali was determined to make Terrell say it, and the fight was absolutely horrible. If Ali was an evil person, that's the kind of person he would have been all the time. It was a side of him - and let's be honest, it's a side that lives in each one of us with [and here, Peter had underlined the next few words twice] different motivations, different triggers - but somebody really pushed the wrong button that night because it was a side of him so out of character that to this day I find it hard to believe it was him. It wasn't really him, which I guess I shouldn't say - I guess it shows my affection for him - because he did it. Hey, I can't tell you he didn't do it. I saw it. I was there, and it was evil.

Sylar blinked away the burning feeling in his eyes. He was breathing harder. His mind was buzzing with the words that eerily paralleled portions of his own life. He didn't remember telling Peter about how he'd screamed at Noah that his name was Sylar, or how he'd clung to his identity when Danko had ordered him to cast it aside. He'd never had to make a big fuss about who he was with Peter, because Peter had painlessly accepted the name and everything that went with it, even if he didn't like all of it. Sylar had not realized how extraordinary that was, all by itself. What was really strange was that Peter knew 'better' just as much as Noah or Danko. He'd mentioned the future where he'd met 'Gabriel' and he knew Sylar's history well enough to know Sylar wasn't his original name. Sylar looked at the picture of the handsome, dark-skinned man on the cover of the biography - Muhammad Ali: His Life And Times. Just like Sylar, the famous boxer had been born with a different name (which he'd called his 'slave name', Sylar picked up from the surrounding passage). Obviously, Ali's ownership of his own identity had not been accepted by everyone. He'd had to fight for it against all comers just like Sylar had, but that was a struggle he'd never had with Peter.

He read the underscored text a third time, committing it to memory. What was it Peter had said? 'I will not be your motivation, or your trigger.' Those were the words he'd double-underlined. That was the reason he'd walked away from a fight when Sylar had taken something Peter regarded as his. Sylar had been utterly certain it was about to go down, because you didn't steal from a Petrelli without retaliation. Yet Peter had promised to drop it. He'd said he wouldn't be the reason why Sylar did something bad. "You didn't make me evil, Peter," he muttered to himself. His fingers caressed the page. Even if Sylar thought it was futile for Peter to try to unstick the 'wrong button' that had been stuck, he didn't mind Peter trying. Maybe Peter thought all the killing could be ... out of character for him? 'I guess it shows my affection for him.' Sylar's lips tried to smile, but the sentiment was too much to hope for. He swallowed and shut the thick tome, staring at the floor as his thoughts raced.

When Peter came back down with a couple beers, generously setting one down next to Sylar unasked, the book was waiting for him on his seat.

But Sylar kept the pen.
Title: First Blowjob
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: None
Word count: 1,500
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar and Peter have been sexual for a few days. Prior to that, Peter had disclosed that one of his fantasies was looking down at Sylar while the other man gave him head. Sylar helps that fantasy come true.

"May I?"

So fucking polite. It was ridiculously unnecessary. Sylar gave Peter an exaggerated glare, followed by a roll of his eyes. How was he supposed to answer the stupid question anyway, with Peter's dick in his mouth?

Peter seemed to get the message. He continued with where he'd touched Sylar's hair, now running his hand into it and making a fist. Peter groaned, eyes glazing over. Sylar sucked at him, inexpertly he was sure, but they'd talked about this enough that Peter knew he wasn't dealing with a professional cocksucker. Sylar's talents lay elsewhere, but this was one he'd readily develop if it kept Peter happy with him.

"Oh yeah," Peter whispered, pistoning slowly in and out of Sylar's mouth. They were shallow thrusts, easy to adjust to without triggering the gag reflex. It made suction impossible, though. Sylar had a new and previously unanticipated appreciation for the skills of porn stars. How they managed to make something so messy and … intrusive (he wouldn't call it a violation, it was the wrong nuance and Peter had been oh-so-careful with him so far) look good, even enjoyable for the person doing it, was a mystery to him. If Peter minded the suck-broken suction-slobber-suck-slurp-drool-broken suction routine, he didn't let on.

"Oh!" More moans of pleasure came from Petrelli's throat. Sylar liked those noises – loved them – maybe even adored them. They were so rare, so special. This was something Peter didn't give anyone else. If they ever got out of this hell of Parkman's making, then Sylar would do his damnedest to make sure Peter never wanted to give these precious responses to anyone else. He would pleasure Peter for hours a day if necessary to keep him satisfied. He knew he was capable of it. It would be a small enough price.

He looked up, having been distracted by dealing with Peter's moving penis. Part of Peter's stated fantasy was Sylar looking up at him, so he'd been trying to do that before Peter got his hips in on the action. It was a lot more difficult than he'd thought to keep his eyes rolled upwards at that strained angle for any length of time. (Again, porn stars deserved their salaries.) Peter was looking at him now, lust writ on every feature of his face. Sylar drank it in – all this passion for him and him alone. He was valued. Peter wanted him. And he was fairly certain Peter really wanted him, and not someone else, not him as a stand-in or substitute. The way Peter talked about sex, about being with him, about him was very focused on the person he was with. Peter was a very 'in the moment' kind of guy. Despite being a rose-colored glasses-wearing daydreamer, he was also very present at all moments, very reactive and responsive to what was going on around him and what he could sense. It made for bad planning and poor strategy, but it also meant when he fucked Sylar, he was totally there for it. Sex with Peter Petrelli was a full contact sport. For someone like Sylar who needed
connection, it was a perfect match.

Peter turned Sylar's head back, lifting his face. The hand not buried in his hair stroked fingertips across his temple and cheek, tickling across the skin. Unable to suck at this angle, Sylar swirled his tongue around the rigid member, tensing his lips so he could hold it in his mouth such that it wasn't touching his teeth. Peter's fingers skimmed his jawline, then his chin. Peter ran the pad of his thumb along the side of his own shaft before tracing it over Sylar's top lip. Sylar paused in his work to dart the tip of his tongue out to brush that thumb, tasting the different texture and flavor of skin.

"Ah!" Peter said, pulling free. He went to his knees in front of Sylar, cupping his chin with one hand and the back of his head with the other. He planted lips where his cock had been only seconds before, kissing Sylar deep and hungrily. Sylar made his own groan of pleasure. He liked kissing a lot more than giving head (not that he had any more than this one episode of head-giving to compare it to). It was more comforting, more familiar, less straining to his jaw and eyes and tongue and sense of self. He lost himself in the kiss, drowning in it and pulling Peter down with him until they lay side-by-side on the bed, entwined. Maybe that was all the blow job Peter wanted.

"God," Peter panted when they finally broke from one another. Sylar planted smaller kisses along Peter's cheek, hoping he wouldn't move away, or up the bed to bring his hips back to Sylar's face. "If I could only have both at the same time," Peter murmured. "You're so good."

Sylar kissed him again, appreciating the compliment and not sure what to make of the rest. He assumed Peter meant he wanted to receive both kisses and fellatio. Sylar put his hand between them, gripping Peter's still-wet dick and pumping at it. Perhaps if he gave Peter enough attention there, he'd continue the kissing. The excited moan from Peter confirmed he was on the right trail. Sylar slid over him, pressing Peter flat to the bed and sliding his leg between Peter's. They'd done this before – made out, hand jobs, assisted masturbation. Peter's hand found Sylar's dick, but Sylar paused to firmly push it away. It was a distraction he didn't want. It was bad enough to feel how heavy and full it was, bouncing against Peter's body, rubbing with every shift and wriggle Peter made (and he made plenty).

Sylar bore down, plunging his tongue inside of Peter like he wanted and couldn't wait to plunge his dick in him. He was pretty sure that was available, too. Just not yet. They were only getting started at this sex thing, taking it a bit at a time between them. He worked Peter's cock faster, curling his other hand under Peter's back, carrying his weight on his elbow and Peter's muscular chest. Peter was kissing back with all his being, arms wrapped around him, hips shifting under him, legs twined around his thigh. Sylar had him. Peter was his. Totally. Possessed. Belonging. Open. Vulnerable. Available. Peter's breath began to stutter and Sylar knew he was on the cusp. He turned Peter's head to the side and bit him lightly, teasingly on the cheek. Peter arched under him, flexing. Another bite – this time to his neck and harder. Another arch and an open-mouthed moan. Peter's dick felt like it went up a size in Sylar's fist. He sank his teeth into the man's shoulder, biting hard enough to leave a bruise to match the handful of others he'd already decorated Peter's skin with over the previous few days. Peter made a noise even rarer and more unique than the others. Sylar collected it, burned it into his brain. It was a choked, impassioned cry, inarticulate but completely understandable nonetheless – it translated to ecstasy in any language. Hot fluid erupted in Sylar's hand. Completion. He was the one who had gotten Peter there, delivered him to this sublime moment. He, Sylar, had done this thing and brought forth semen instead of blood, cries of pleasure instead of pain.

He stopped biting the man and sat up, taking himself in hand at long last. He stroked himself almost nonchalantly as he looked down at his spent partner. He only jerked himself off, he told himself, because otherwise Peter would do it. Peter had this weird idea that their couplings should be mutual or egalitarian. That was as ridiculous as the politeness and just as unnecessary. But Sylar didn't mind. He certainly wasn't going to pass up the chance- And there it was! He came so easily with Peter. It
was almost premature, but Sylar was glad of it. It was that much less work for his companion. He gave a grinning snarl as his come shot out, spattering over Peter's abdomen and chest, marking him in the most debased, licentious way Sylar knew. A particular wad of come landed on a bite mark from the day before, over Peter's right pectoral.

Sylar bent down, being a total pervert, and licked that spot, smearing the jism over the bruise. He scraped his teeth over it and probed at the tender spot with his tongue. Peter shifted and made a slight noise of protest. "Come here," Peter said quietly, pulling Sylar down to lie next to him. Sylar's head ended up on Peter's shoulder. It seemed clichéd, but Peter had done this, too, to him before after they'd made out. It was nice (at least until sweat formed between Sylar's face and Peter's skin, but when that happened, he'd move to the pillow). For now, he lay quietly where he'd been put, listening to the pounding of Peter's heart and considering their combined tastes upon his palate.

"So," Sylar asked, "was that as good as the blowjob you fantasized about?"

"Better," Peter said warmly, giving him a firm, one-armed hug. "This one was real."
Title: Pillory
Characters: Peter Petrelli, Sylar
Rating: PG-13
Warnings: Non-sexual, consensual corporal punishment
Word count: 2,500
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar has invited Peter to vent his anger on Sylar's body and they jointly settled on a standard whipping.

Peter wound, unwound, and wound again the flat leather strap around his hand. "You do not know how much I've fantasized about this for the last few months. Ever since I found out what you'd done." Sylar eyed him without comment, his face blank and unreadable. Peter gave him a cruel smile, jerking the leather tight between his hands. If he could scare Sylar into backing out, this was the time to do it. "Still ready?"

In answer, Sylar turned, presenting his bare back. He leaned over and braced himself against the pool table.

Peter uncoiled the strap. It was a little over a yard long, originally intended as a belt. He'd removed the buckle and wrapped that end with gaffer's tape to make a handle. The other end trailed along the floor. "When do I stop?"

Sylar looked over his shoulder at him. "When you're done."

Peter tilted his head and frowned. It wasn't the answer he wanted, so he substituted his own. "Then I'll be done whenever you say 'stop', whenever you let go of that pool table for any reason, or when I get tired of hitting you." Sylar's expression stayed just as unreadable as before. He looked steadily at Peter for a long moment before turning away. Peter stepped up close him to him, putting a gentle hand on Sylar's shoulder. In a low voice, he said, "I need something from you here. Are you sure you're okay with this?"

Sylar looked at him again and this time Peter saw something flicker across the man's features. It looked like gratitude, if Peter had to label it. "I'm ready," was all Sylar said.

Peter rubbed Sylar's shoulder a few times – bare, warm, smooth skin that would soon be hot, angry, and welted. He'd chosen the back because it provided the smallest chance of injuring Sylar in any serious way, while allowing Peter to really put his strength into it. He studied Sylar, meeting his eyes for a very long count of seconds. As much as he wanted to hurt Sylar, he didn't want Sylar to think less of him for this, or fear him, or hate him more than Sylar probably already did. Those were damages Peter didn't want to inflict, not even now. Sylar did not flinch from his gaze or anything behind it. It was like he knew what was going on in Peter's head and didn't blame him for it - at least, that was what Peter hoped he was seeing. Peter gave Sylar's shoulder a squeeze before taking a few steps back. Slowly, reluctantly, he allowed his long-suppressed wrath to fill him as he flicked the end of the belt behind him, into position for the first lash. "Then I'm ready, too."

When he first swung the belt, two things struck Peter. First was the sound. The dull smack made by the leather strap against Sylar's exposed back sounded … off. Like it hadn't hit right, or on edge instead of the flat, or something. He didn't know exactly how such things were supposed to sound,
having only movies to guide him. He'd never even been spanked as a child, although he'd been hit plenty (both as a child and an adult) with hands. The sharp whack made by a fist in real life wasn't anything like the ridiculous smashing sound given to such strikes on film, so he supposed the lash, lacking the crack he'd expected of it, was just as different.

The second thing was how much it hurt his shoulder. He'd put a lot into the swing and damned if it didn't feel like he's sprained or torn his rotator cuff on the very first blow. With a perturbed look, he rubbed at his shoulder joint and wondered if this would end up hurting him worse and more permanently than Sylar. Wouldn't that be ironic? Sylar, for his part, had virtually no reaction – a tense exhale upon being hit and nothing else. His skin told a different story, though – a white stripe had appeared instantly. It was reddening now.

Peter swapped the belt to his left hand and gave it a few practice waves in the air. When he brought it down on Sylar, he did so clumsily, hitting the man on the back of the head with the end of it, which broke nearly all the force before it ever hit his back. It didn't even make the weird smacking noise. It just sort of thudded against him. "Sorry," Peter muttered compulsively. Sylar shifted his weight, which was more of a reaction than he'd given the first time, when it had probably truly hurt.

The next blow, Peter focused solely on technique and targeting. It landed where he'd aimed, the end licking over the top of Sylar's shoulder simultaneous with the rest of it slapping diagonally across his back. This time, Sylar tensed slightly, shifted his grip, and let his head fall forward.

The silence was unnerving. This whole world was too quiet even under normal conditions, but now, with nothing but the occasional whap of leather on flesh and Peter being hyperaware of Sylar's every puff and gasp and shift, it was deeply unsettling. He wanted to throw down the lash and pull Sylar away from the pool table, apologize for doing something so sadistic, and fill the air with better sounds, maybe music while Sylar healed or at least the tones of their voices in friendly conversation.

After a few more blows, he realized he couldn't continue this without feedback. "Tell me about Nathan's death." With a roll of his right shoulder, he passed the lash back to that hand. It felt better now. He didn't think he'd done any permanent damage to it. He'd just need to be careful.

"Old news," Sylar said, voice tight. "I already have."

"Tell me again," Peter bit out, giving Sylar a light stroke of the whip that nonetheless made the man twitch.

"What?" Sylar shot back. "I killed him, alright? You know that!" Peter hit him again for being insubordinate, then just stood there, hands on hips, letting his shoulder rest. Sylar's back was a crisscross maze of red, welted lines. After a few more seconds of silence, Sylar got the message that continuing was mandatory. "You and he came into the suite at the Stanton Hotel. I threw Claire out so she'd be safe." Peter cocked his head, wondering why the hell Sylar cared about Claire's safety (especially given that she was nearly indestructible), but he didn't interrupt. Sylar was speaking quickly, getting the story out efficiently. "We fought – the three of us. I had you down. I was electrocuting you. Nathan bull rushed me out the window. He and I fought in the air, then I blasted him into another window a few stories down. I followed him into the room. He picked himself up and I slit his throat before he could get to me. That's what happened." Sylar's voice was rough.

Peter hefted the lash, then struck with it once, twice, and a third time, alternating sides. Sylar gasped and trembled. The swollen flesh was far more sensitive than it had been when they started. Peter could see that he'd broken the skin in a spot over Sylar's right shoulder blade. He wondered if he should stop. "If you cut his throat, then you could have held him there just as easily."

"I can't hold people who can fly."
"What?" Peter stared at the back of Sylar's head, feeling stupid. He remembered heading into the hotel room with the expectation that Sylar would just swat them both out of the air. He'd never known there was a reason why the man didn't bother, and had preferred to hit them both repeatedly with lightning.

"His ability allows movement regardless of gravity, air pressure, or any other resistance. That's how it works. I couldn't have held him; I can only interfere a little. But that's not why. I cut his throat because I wanted him dead."

"Why?" This, too, Sylar had answered before, but Peter still couldn't fathom it. He knew Nathan was an asshole, he was selfish, flawed, had to be stopped sometimes, but he didn't deserve to die and so Peter couldn't get his mind around Sylar's reasons.

"Because I didn't like him!" Peter could hear the snarl in Sylar's voice, the frustration at having to explain this again and again. "He had everything and he threw it away, spat on it, tried to destroy it!" Peter lifted the belt to swing, moved by how petty Sylar's motivation seemed, but Sylar was still speaking. "It was all given to him free – the name, the title, the money, the political office, even his ability was a gift! And what did he do with any of it? He tore apart his family, sent the government after you and his mother and his daughter! He betrayed everyone who was ever close to him – you don't know the half of it! He wasn't even a good fucking politician! He was going to kill millions, just to secure his career; and later blot out an entire sub-species of humanity because he was disgusted to be different from what anyone expected of him. He didn't deserve his pathetic little life and you're better off without him, Peter!"

Peter brought down the belt as hard as he could. Sylar staggered and blood ran. He hit him again and again until his arm ached and Sylar's knees finally buckled. The man still clung to the pool table, but it was enough for Peter. It wasn't really Sylar he was angry at anyway. He screamed wordlessly and flung the piece of leather across the room, his shoulder making a final, blindingly painful ache. Tears ran down his face and for once, he didn't want to hit Sylar, throttle him, or beat him senseless. There was no target for his grief or his rage. Everything Sylar had accused was true, even the last of it, and what Peter wanted to rail against was how damnably accurate it all was. The world was not as he wanted it to be. His brother was not the 'most likely to' man of honor and conviction Peter had always tried to make him be, wanted him to be, pretended he was.

No. Nathan was dead. Peter was trembling. And Sylar was watching him out of the corner of his eye, otherwise immobile where he knelt next to the pool table, breathing hard and waiting. Blood dribbled down the man's back, disappearing into the black elastic waistband of his underwear, beneath his jeans.

Peter looked up at the ceiling and slowly raised his hands to scrub at his face. Nearly staggering himself, he moved to the bag of supplies he'd prepared earlier. With difficulty (his hands didn't seem to want to work right, aside from the residual shaking), he got out an aerosol can and took it to Sylar. "This is going to feel cold. It might sting just a little, then it will numb … numb the skin. It should … help." He exhaled heavily, waiting for a sign of understanding from Sylar, who only turned away and rested his forehead against the table. Peter decided that was good enough and sprayed the man's back, neck, and shoulders with even, overlapping passes. Sylar shuddered slightly.

Peter tossed the can at the bag and slipped an arm under Sylar's. "Come on. Up. Let's move you to the couch."

"I'm fine," Sylar said quietly, clearing his throat. He got to his feet with only token assistance from Peter. Peter stayed with him and guided him anyway. "I'm fine," Sylar repeated at a normal tone now. "I've had worse."
"Right," Peter tried to joke. "I don't measure up. I get it. Way to tell a guy his performance sucks." He wasn't sure that was funny. He was trying to make an analogy between sex and torture. They weren't things he wanted to be drawing a comparison between. Sylar apparently agreed. At least he gave Peter a very odd look. But then they were at the couch and where Sylar wanted to go wasn't where Peter wanted him to be. Peter told him, "You need to lie face down."

"I'll take up the whole couch then," Sylar complained. There was enough strain in his voice that Peter was sure he was still hurting bad.

"Good. Do it. I'll pull up a chair and sit right next to you."

Sylar looked at him again, sharply this time. They'd discussed aftercare in only the most general terms, with Sylar's sole condition being that Peter not abandon him. Now, apparently he had other conditions. "I want you on the couch."

"I want you to lie down," Peter countered, nudging Sylar to turn and follow his instructions.

"Those aren't exclusive," Sylar said. With surprising strength, the man spun him and pushed, with Peter ending up sitting at the end of the couch whether he wanted to or not. Under other circumstances, Peter would have taken that as the start of a fight and bounced up off the furniture swinging as he went. As it was, he merely gaped at Sylar, who was stiffly climbing on the couch by hands and knees. Sylar settled himself facedown as Peter had specified, except that his head was on Peter's lap, face turned to the side. Peter swallowed and tried to figure out where to put his hands. One went on his thigh. The other ended up on Sylar's folded elbow, the one wedged between Sylar's body and the back of the couch sticking out from where Sylar's forearm was folded under his upper chest.

It was calm after that. Sylar's words kept running through Peter's mind, but the rage had worn off. He just felt tired now, so very tired and depressed about it all. Even if Nathan had been a lousy brother, he was the brother Peter had had. Now he was gone forever. Peter would have cried, but he was too wrung out. Instead, he sat with Nathan's murderer, a gaping hole torn in his soul that no balm seemed able to soothe.
Power From The People

Title: Power from the People
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Word count: 750
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar and Peter are sitting on the couch in the rec room, reading their respective books, when Peter sees something on page 286 of the biography of Muhammad Ali that he wants to show Sylar.

Peter pointed at a passage in the book he was reading. "That. That's my ability, my original ability. That's how it works!" He was excited and pleased to have found someone else talking about something he'd felt and not had the right words to express.

Sylar asked for the text with an outstretched hand. Peter gave it to him, rising and circling behind so he could not only indicate the passage, but also read it aloud. Sylar glanced up during the unnecessary narration with an annoyed expression, but then sighed and listened tolerantly.

"'He draws strength from the people,' wrote Richard Durham, one of Ali's biographers. They nourish him and he keeps what they give him. Some men cannot take from the people. If the people give to them, it doesn't get through or it just seeps away. He has the power to keep it. It strengthens him the way a parent's love strengthens a child. And when he has enough of that strength, he can do anything the people want of him.'"

Peter looked at Sylar with bright expectation. Sylar said, "That's … interesting." He shifted the book over so he could read the words himself rather than having them read to him. He skimmed the parts above and below while Peter continued wait (patiently) for a more substantial response. Another bit caught Sylar's eye, "As far as [Ali] was concerned, people were people, and all people were meant to be loved. 'I think it's his secret wish to be seen by every man, woman, and child on the planet earth.' … He believes God put him on Earth to be good to people." It fit Peter so well that he hedged, "If he did have an ability like yours, perhaps it was to replicate the athletic prowess of others – a lower-powered cross between muscle memory and empathic mimicry."

Peter's brows drew together. "Um, yeah? I guess. I wasn't saying that he had an ability necessarily. I was saying that the way this Durham guy wrote about Ali's power is the way I felt about mine. It … came from other people. It was about other people. And I couldn't use their power without that … emotional intensity, the connection, that I had with them."

The word 'connection' captured Sylar's attention, which had wavered during the touchy-feely part. "And here you are," Sylar said quietly, "learning to reconnect."

Peter took a half-step away from him and looked around. The world was vacant other than Sylar, as Peter well knew. "I just need to focus – get rid of the distractions." Peter sounded unsure.

"There aren't any distractions here. You know what you have to do to draw strength." Sylar handed back the book with a look of resignation. "That's why these passages speak to you so much."

Peter took the book, dipping his head in a nod. "Thank you." Still looking down, he added as if
compelled, "I get it. I know. It's … hard, hard to let go of the past. For both of us, but maybe especially for me. I know what you're saying about how I know what I have to do." He looked down at the book, fingers rubbing along the spine and pages uneasily.

"That's not what I was saying, either." Sylar stood up. He reached over and grasped Peter's shoulder in Nathan's fashion. "The past isn't going to let go of us. I see no reason why we should let go of it." Peter looked up, his hair falling across the left side of his face. His smile at Sylar's humor was warm and genuine. Sylar suggested, "Make the past pay, Peter."

"What, beat the crap out of it and make it wish it never crossed me?" Peter looked amused.

"Use it. Channel it. Make it yours." Sylar tilted his head. "Like you've told me so many times – own it."

"Don't let my past dictate my future?" Peter looked doubting.

"Yes."

Peter nodded slowly, assessing Sylar. "That's … tough. Especially with you. But I'll keep trying." Peter stepped away, returning to where he'd been reading earlier. "You keep giving me strength and I'll keep trying." After opening the book again, Peter asked, "Do you really think Ali had an ability?"

Sylar settled back into his end of the couch. He shrugged. "He always did say he was the greatest. Perhaps he was right."
"Enough of this," Sylar growled, grabbing Peter by the shoulder and pulling him around. Peter wasn't quite done with the backswing on the hammer; the momentum assisted Sylar, just like he knew it would. He shoved Peter up against the brick, where Peter landed with a startled look and a 'whuff' of expelled air. Sylar didn't give him a chance to recover his equilibrium. Instead, he planted his lips over Peter's, pressing him fiercely and passionately into the wall.

"Nnng!" Peter made a noise, acting like he was trying to scale the wall backwards. The sledgehammer clunked loudly to the ground, the metal head ringing once on the asphalt before the wooden handle whacked against the ground. It featured no more in the scene. Sylar breathed out hotly against Peter's cheek and sucked in air just as fast as he continued to work his mouth on the struggling Italian. He pressed his body against Peter's, both of his hands roaming up and down Peter's sides, alternately grabbing and caressing. Peter's resistance was laughably insincere. His hands caught at Sylar's arms, but he made only the most token of shoving motions. At least half his efforts had been wasted scrabbling at the bricks behind him – like that would do him any good. Sylar didn't believe Peter was that unaware.

Peter had known it was coming, Sylar was sure of that. He could feel Peter's body responding as Sylar wedged a knee between Peter's legs and pushed it up. Peter gripped it with his thighs. His next half-swallowed sound was a moan. Sylar finally stopped kissing him to grin in victory.

"No," Peter said faintly, pushing at him half-heartedly.

Sylar leaned against the hands on his shoulders, panting open-mouthed in Peter's face, his eyes inches away from Peter's. He put his hand to Peter's groin, cupping the hardened flesh. "Yes." He kissed him again and for a moment, Peter kissed back. The thrill of success ran through Sylar a second time.

Peter twisted his head aside, breathing fast and shallow. "I can't-"

"Fine," Sylar snapped. "Then don't. It's on me. That's what you want – deniability, a clean conscience." He rubbed firmly up and down on the bulge in Peter's pants. Peter's breath caught and his eyes half-rolled back. Sylar knew he had the man. He purred, "Let me be the dirty one. This is all my fault." Peter shut his eyes entirely and turned his face away. Sylar pushed the ineffectually interfering hands out of the way. He kissed Peter's exposed throat, continuing to massage his dick through his pants. His own erection was straining at the fabric, but he neglected it for now. The occasional inadvertent contact with Peter's hip would have to do. He would break this stallion to saddle if it were the last thing he did.
He bit the side of Peter's neck – warm, solid muscle. He nibbled at the delicate tissue in the front, scraping his nose on some imperfectly shaved and heretofore unnoticed bit of scruff under Peter's chin. He moved his knee higher and braced it on the wall, letting Peter ride him, while at the same time he opened the man's pants and pushed them out of the way as much as he could. It didn't free Peter's shaft entirely, but there was enough to work with. The flesh was hot and thick in his hand. It was dry until he spat liberally on his palm and took hold of the tip. Peter shuddered. The man responded to every touch like a finely tuned instrument. The sounds he made were things of pure beauty. Riveting. Peter's hands had settled on Sylar's sides, clinging to the fabric and occasionally grabbing deeper to dig into the skin. His eyes were glazed with passion. Sylar cradled the back of Peter's head and kissed him full on the lips again, pumping at his erection with sure, rapid strokes. Peter twitched in time with them, like his dick controlled the nervous system for his whole body.

Sylar's tongue was exploring the inside of Peter's mouth when Peter's demeanor changed. The Italian breathed out, relaxed, and extended his arms around Sylar. His tongue engaged and his lips started moving in tandem. Sylar was doubly surprised – first that he really hadn't noticed until now how unresponsive Peter was being (aside from noises and irregular grasping), and how good it was to connect like this. If he'd been so inclined, his own eyes might have rolled up in pleasure. He growled into Peter's mouth and pressed harder against him in rhythmic thrusts. His hand on Peter's dick moved faster still. Peter drew him closer, moaning with every shove that pinned him to the brick, quivering with the constant stimulation to his genitals. Peter's orgasm shook him, his breath stuttering and huffing. A moment later, hot ejaculate surged over Sylar's hand.

Sylar grinned down at him with the height of smug superiority. "Ah," he whispered to Peter, "we finally made true what you said – you came for me. How sweet." Still grinning, he kissed a dazed-looking Peter on the lips. He finally released his own cock, jerking himself only briefly before stripping Peter's abdomen and dick with Sylar's jism. "There. You dirty boy. But it's still all my fault. Not yours." Sylar tucked himself away and buttoned his jeans. Peter's face seemed to be clearing, some awareness coming back to it. He looked overwhelmed. In one act, Sylar had catapulted their relationship from never-ending sexual tension into something very, very sexual. He'd won; Peter had lost. But it wasn't like Peter hadn't enjoyed it. Sylar clapped both hands to the wall on either side of Peter's head. He leaned in. "Was it good for you, dear?"

Peter gave him a wary look and an oddly chaste peck on the lips. Then he scooted sideways out from under Sylar's looming presence. "Fine, yeah. Good." He tried to put his now-floppy dick away without touching any of the slimed parts. It was impossible. Peter huffed and touched it anyway, buttoning his pants over the mess and then wiping his hand furiously on the side of his pants leg as he continued to move away.

Sylar was watching him intently, brows drawn together. Something was not right. "That doesn't sound like a ringing endorsement."

"Go fuck yourself." Peter was now well out of arm's reach and seemed to have put himself back together mentally. Sylar's brows drew together even more. He cocked his head in puzzlement. But instead of giving answers, Peter spun on his heel and left.

The next day, Sylar woke earlier than usual to the ringing sound of metal hitting brick. He'd heard it enough that it made his skin crawl. He hated it. He and Peter had been finally working things out between them, making progress, seeming to develop an actual friendship, until they'd had a final stupid fight. Peter turned away from him. Then and there, the wall existed. From that point on, Peter did nothing but eat, sleep, and pound on the damn wall. There was no way he could go back to sleep with the constant reminder going on of what might have been. He stomped downstairs after seeing to his normal morning routine to find Peter doing exactly what it sounded like he was doing – beating
pointlessly on the wall, yet again.

"I thought yesterday might have convinced you to bang something else for once," Sylar called out as he sauntered down the alley. Peter didn't answer. Sylar sighed and rolled his eyes. *This better not be another silent act.* He leaned against the wall a few feet away from where Peter was hitting it, and leered at Peter's already sweaty body. "Did you even have breakfast this morning? You're going to need your energy for everything I'll be doing to you later." No reply. Except that Peter was obviously hitting the wall harder and louder than he'd been doing before. Sylar shook his head and made an exasperated sound, shoving away from the wall and throwing up his hands. "Fine. Be that way. You'll change your tune when you get horny again." He walked off, trying to find a part of the city where he didn't have to hear the incessant racket. Even though he could find places where it was muffled, he could never completely escape it. It drove him mad.

It was the fourth day when Sylar's patience broke. When Peter's break for breakfast or brunch or early lunch or whatever lasted only a precious seven minutes before he was back at the damn wall, Sylar threw his own hardly started meal in the trash and stalked down to the alley. He'd avoided it before, since Peter wouldn't talk to him, interact, or even look at him whenever he was in one of these moods of his. For a while Sylar stood there, glaring at Peter, letting Peter know he was there, he was fed up, and he wasn't going to take this for much longer. If Peter cared, he didn't show it. He swung the hammer with the same mechanical precision he'd used all along.

The next time Peter cocked back, Sylar stepped up and yanked it out of the man's hands. Peter spun, grabbing after the wooden shaft in surprise, like for a moment he'd thought he'd merely dropped it. When he saw Sylar, he scowled. Sylar spat out, "I'm done with this!" He strode forward, forcing Peter to back up until his back was against the wall, or else be in direct contact. Sylar held the hammer up and to the side. "No more hammering! I could shove this up your ass. Is that what you want? Is this some plea for attention? You're obviously not going to-" *get out this way,* was how Sylar had intended to finish. But Peter shoved him, then hit him across the face with a right cross. The taste of blood was delicious. It was on, now.

Sylar dropped the hammer. Despite the threat, it would feature no more in this scene, either. Sylar bodily slammed Peter into the wall, taking another tag on the face along the way. Peter was in a bad position to be swinging punches—no wind-up or maneuvering room meant his blows were half-strength at best. Sylar had survived the worst Peter could do before. These were mere love-taps. Sylar kissed. Peter bit him, hard. Sylar grabbed Peter's crotch and squeezed even harder. Peter let him go before his sharp teeth did more than bite through Sylar's lip. Peter's willingness to throw everything into this was making Sylar high on adrenaline. His grip on Peter's parts loosened and rubbed. Peter whined and looked away. Sylar growled and ravaged his neck, leaving smears of blood from his own bleeding mouth matched by hickeys and rapidly darkening bruises from his teeth. If he broke the skin, he didn't care. Peter had set the bar with trying to bite off his lower lip.

But Peter wasn't fighting him anymore. The Italian's dick was hard, begging to be let out to play. Sylar's own was just as eager. Sylar kissed over Peter's jaw, then his cheek, then, throwing caution to the wind, he turned Peter to face him so they could kiss on the lips. But this time, Peter didn't savage him. Peter winced, possibly at the blood, and acted confused about the taste. "Are you okay?" he asked, like he hadn't been the one to have caused the injury.

It was the first thing Peter had said to him in days. Sylar didn't let it throw him. "Not yet." He opened Peter's jeans and pushed them downward. "Let me fuck you and I will be." 

Peter just stared at him, mouth open, breath coming in pants. He looked so beautiful, so surprised and innocent. Sylar kissed him again, scooping up balls and shaft in one hand, kneading for a moment, then sliding his grip up so he could pump methodically. "Yeah," Sylar purred, feeling Peter's arms
slip around him as they pressed close. Peter nuzzled at his hair, hips moving with the motions of Sylar's hand. "I want everything you have," Sylar whispered into Peter's ear, before pushing away and turning Peter to face the wall. He jerked Peter's jeans down to his knees, cupping his bare ass against Sylar's clothed groin, and resumed jerking him off with a reach-around. One of Peter's hand braced himself against the wall. The other caressed Sylar's forearm. When he seemed close, Sylar let go, stepping back and opening his own jeans. He didn't need to push them down as far. Slapping Peter's hand away from his shaft (he didn't want Peter finishing without him), he tugged back Peter's pelvis and positioned him for rear entry.

He spat repeatedly, slathering his saliva onto Peter's asshole. Taking Peter this way for the first time, out in an alley without lube, wasn't the best choice logistically, but Sylar wanted what he wanted. It was here for the taking. He took.

Peter cried out when Sylar shoved inside of him. He'd been plenty aroused, but ready – perhaps not. Peter's knees wobbled, then he found his footing and pushed back. Sylar slammed in the rest of the way, eating up the secondary cry of passion and pain. He knew it hurt. It was tight and hot and Peter sounded like he was hyperventilating. The Italian had both hands on the wall to support him, fingers digging into the crappy mortar between the bricks. Sylar rode him hard with every intention of breaking him and from the sound of it, a fair degree of success. Peter moaned and hiccuped and gasped. Sylar buried a hand in Peter's dark hair, twisting his head around so he could see the face. Peter's mouth was slack and smeared with Sylar's blood. His throat was blotchy with marks he would be sporting for a week, at least. Sylar cupped a hand around Peter's delicate neck, completely owning him. He would have gone further, but he came at that point. It was sooner than he would have liked. He'd intended to plow Peter more thoroughly, but he had to admit the man was his in any case.

His own aftershocks having passed, Sylar reached around front to finish Peter off. What he found was limp and dripping. A good look determined that Peter had come earlier, staining the wall with his emission. Sylar bent forward, delicately moved Peter's shirt to the side, and bit his shoulder hard enough to break skin. Peter cried out and twisted away, pulling his body off of Sylar's still somewhat engorged cock, then stumbled on the jeans bunched around his ankles. He fell, landing on the rough pavement. Sylar smirked at him and put himself away. "That's for the lip," he said, reaching up to explore just how many holes Peter had put in him. He counted only two – made by the incisors, he was sure. In the meantime, Peter tugged at his jeans and underwear like he didn't know how they worked.

Sylar looked down at the lack of Peter's progress. "Did I break you?" he asked incredulously. Peter finally seemed to have worked out how to get himself dressed again, and was struggling to his feet. He made no answer. He kept his head down as if he really needed to see to button his pants. Sylar thought about that strange little kiss Peter had ended the last session with. He reached out to take Peter's chin in his hand, only to have Peter flinch away so hard he nearly fell down again, catching himself against the wall and giving Sylar a wild look. Sylar stiffened and stayed still, aware for the first time of how wrong everything had been, right from the beginning.

Peter still didn't speak. When he recovered his footing, he circled wide and strode away fast (while walking funny – Sylar wasn't sure if he should be amused by that or worried). Sylar blinked after him. Worry infested his gut.

Sylar woke abruptly to the sound of silence. His head snapped to the side. It was past eight. For the last few days, since their first coupling, Peter had been starting his daily exercise in futility well before now, as if the sex had kicked him into overdrive somehow. Sylar scrambled out of bed and threw on his clothes. Something was definitely wrong. He'd thought so the day before, but now he
was certain. He hurried down to the alley to find exactly what he'd expected. It was the same as the
day before, when he'd fucked Peter. The hammer still lay to the side, discarded. The day before, he'd
left Peter alone for the rest of the day. Both of them had gotten off and despite the weird vibes, Sylar
had wanted to be left alone to bask in his achievement. Now he knew he'd fucked up.

Peter wasn't at the breakfast diner. He wasn't at his apartment (and Sylar broke in, searched it, and
came up empty-handed). He wasn't in the park or the library or the rec room. He wasn't at the Y or
the penthouse or back at the alley. Towards the end of the day, Sylar caught sight of him on edge of
the roof of a tall building, some thirty stories up. It was too far for yelling to carry, but Sylar spoke
anyway, "Please don't jump." Nathan had watched Peter step off a building about this tall – step right
off and fall through the air, just to prove a goddamn point. He suspected, very strongly, that Peter
had a point to prove now. When minutes passed and Peter just stared down at him, Sylar went inside
and headed up to the roof. When he got there, Peter was gone. All he could be sure of was that Peter
hadn't jumped (or if he had, he'd flown, because the pavement below was clear).

It was harder to find Peter after that. Sylar stopped his crazed searching halfway through the next
day. It was just burning up energy. A proper stalking was relaxed. He waited where he could watch
the door of Peter's apartment building, but Peter couldn't see him until he stepped out. There were
two doors. After Peter saw him the first time (and ran – literally ran half a block to put some distance
between them), he varied which door he'd use, so Sylar saw him less often. Sylar quit following
when he realized he was, again, driving Peter to adopt new strategies to avoid him. He felt miserable
– confused and angry. He couldn't make heads or tails of Peter's behavior during the sex. That the
man's words didn't line up with his actions was nothing new. That he would be so traumatized by it
now didn't make sense, but there it was. After a week, Sylar withdrew. He waited. Loneliness would
bring Peter to him eventually. Chasing him would only make him run all the faster.

Sylar was sitting on the ground by the wall, keeping company with the neglected hammer, when
Peter stepped around the corner and stopped. They watched each other across the distance for a few
minutes. Sylar dropped his head and examined the bunched folds of the denim of his jeans. A few
minutes later, footsteps scuffed along the pavement, coming towards him. Peter stopped some twenty
feet away. Sylar glanced up at him. Arms crossed, Peter's nose was wrinkled in disgust. The marks
Sylar had put on him had disappeared in the weeks since they'd been together here. "Go fuck
yourself!" Peter said vulgarly. "Get the fuck out of here."

Now it was Sylar's turn to be quiet. He nodded, got to his feet and slunk away. The sound of
hammering filled the afternoon. It was strange, though, that after so long without it, Sylar actually
welcomed the noise.

He came back the next morning. Peter hit the wall harder while Sylar was there. He stayed most of
the day, making no attempt at conversation and doing nothing other than enjoying being in the
presence of another human being. Peter didn't tell him to leave until the end, but when he did, Sylar
went.

The morning after that, Peter was waiting for him in the alley, the long-handled sledgehammer held
in both hands. He glared at Sylar. Sylar walked closer than he'd dared before, hands held loosely to
either side. It was like he was trying to soothe a wild animal. Peter lunged forward when he got too
close, moving faster than Sylar had expected, even though he'd known an outburst was coming – it
was how people worked. The head of the hammer slammed into his breastbone, knocking the wind
out of him. He let the weapon's momentum and Peter's force put him to the ground. It had been a
simple thrust, not a swing. It was the only time Peter had hit him with the hammer, despite those
frequent feelings that one of these times, Peter would paste him.

Sylar kept both hands on the ground where he’d caught himself and made his body language inoffensive. He’d been mentally prepping for this since Peter had started talking to him again, or at least all twenty or so words he’d delivered in the form of barked orders for him to get out of Peter’s sight. Peter menaced him, but didn’t swing. Sylar kept his head down and stayed still. Instead of continuing the attack, after a moment of tense shifting of the hammer from one grip to another, Peter pointed the head of it at Sylar and said roughly, emphasizing every word, "I was not willing!"

"I've figured that out," Sylar said promptly, tight-lipped but calm. And he had, as confusing as the whole thing was. Unmistakeable signals had somehow been misinterpreted. There was no other explanation. He, who prided himself on knowing how things worked, had fumbled what might have been the most important moment of his life, aside from taking abilities in the first place. He thought they’d been playing a game – it was all, always a game, right? - but he’d been wrong.

"Oh yeah?" Peter pulled back as though to swing after all. Sylar ducked his head and made an elaborate, slower-than-it-needed-to-be cringe. He’d done this often enough to know how to unwind someone, and he knew Peter well enough to know which buttons to push. One of which was to give Peter absolutely no shit, no matter how tempting it might be to do so. Peter shifted again, changed his stance, and let the hammer fall to his side. He came a step closer. "When?"

"Right after the second time." Again, tight-lipped. Sylar still wasn't looking at him. Eye contact might be dangerous. He didn't expect Peter to be well-behaved about this. He didn't require it (not that he was in a position to require anything of Peter). He was fairly sure Peter would let him survive it, which was more than Sylar could say were their positions reversed. He was on full damage control mode here.

Peter sank to the ground, holding the hammer to him. Sylar glanced up at him now – a brief, steady look, not furtive or sneaky. Peter met his eyes for a moment, then they both looked away at the same time. He could see in his peripheral vision that Peter looked back at him almost immediately. Peter said, "You have the Hunger. You should know."

Sylar kept his eyes on a particular bit of asphalt between them. "I should know what?" He let his voice relax a little.

"The- my ability-" Peter shook his head.

Sylar's head came up as it clicked for him – finally! "You have … a Hunger … for empathy?"

"Contact," Peter choked on the word, then cleared his throat. "Maybe … intimate … contact. I think."

"You can't stop yourself," Sylar said quietly, looking away as the impact of that hit him. His kills. The impulse. His inability to stop it once it began. But Peter never had to kill anyone to get their abilities. He just touched them, was near them, with them. Peter practically gave off pheromones – his chemistry with everyone and everything was so good. But once triggered, if that were a compulsion as all-encompassing as Sylar's Hunger? It fit with Peter's pathetic inability to push him away once Sylar had forced the issue. It was just a fusion of Lydia's erotically-powered empathy and his own acquisitive compulsion.

"I didn't want it!" Peter stiffened, tensing as if to rise.

"I know," Sylar said quickly, adding in a respectful nod of his head. It was sincere, which was different from how these scenes usually played out. "You said I should know. Now that I
understand, I do. I know. You didn't want it, but it happened anyway."

"You did it!"

"I did it." Sylar nodded, giving a little more eye contact as he owned his responsibility – also new.

Peter huffed and eased back down. "I didn't understand what was happening, but it's the only thing that makes sense. I've had it before, with your ability. That's what it felt like."

"Why didn't you say anything?" Sylar asked carefully and quietly, doing his best not to make it sound like an accusation.

"I didn't know. I've never …" He shrugged. "The only other times I was that close to people while I had my ability, I wanted it. The first time with you … I thought I must have done it on purpose … somehow … triggered it, or something."

Sylar nodded. As crazy and vague as that was, Sylar was well familiar with it. "Why is your Hunger at work, but not mine?"

"I don't know!" Peter's tone was offended. Sylar didn't look away, but he kept his expression blank. Peter scowled and looked away instead. "Maybe because I'm using my ability to be here and you aren't? Or," he grasped at ideas, "because you've had your ability a long time and can control it? I've always had a problem with that – control. I've never …" He trailed off again.

Peter had started that sentence twice now and left it unfinished both times. An odd thought occurred to Sylar. "You've never had sex with a man?"

"No, it's not that." Peter shook his head dismissively. Sylar relaxed a little more. Much as Nathan's memories indicated Sylar wasn't Peter's first experience in that manner, he couldn't be absolutely sure without Peter's input. "I've never been unable to stop myself like that. When everything in me said no, but I was doing it anyway. Except there at Kirby, and that was Ted's power, not … this."

Sylar's brows lofted with a melancholy look. "I know what you mean."

Peter shot him a put-out look in response. "Yeah, I get it. I fuck people and you kill them. But I have a choice in the circumstances and so did you. You might have noticed the last few weeks I stayed the fuck away from you." Peter pointed at him. Sylar made a pained wince. It was for show, but he felt it, too. He hadn't liked being alone, especially because he felt like he and his actions were the reason for the solitude. Peter finished, "If I can do it, you can do it."

Sylar considered those words, wondering if that was a threat to stay away longer still. Damage control mode again: "You don't have to leave. I won't touch you again."

"That's good to know. Not what I meant, but good to know." Sylar watched him patiently until Peter continued, "You don't have to be a killer. I went years without even knowing this about myself. We can find your triggers and avoid them."

"Easy as that?" Sylar said dully.

Peter rolled his eyes and got to his feet, still hanging onto the hammer. "No, of course it's not. But it's a place to start!"

"We can start there," Sylar said agreeably, inwardly hoping Peter wasn't going to leave. This was the most conversation he'd had in nearly a month. "We could start now," he added, trying not to sound desperate.
Peter looked down on him, giving him half a smile. "I know it's not as easy as all that." He went to a knee in front of Sylar. Peter grabbed the front of Sylar's shirt, making a fist in the fabric. Sylar stiffened, successfully fighting the urge to defensively grip Peter's hand or wrist. He'd just promised not to touch him, after all. "And the first thing we're going to do is find my limits, my triggers, and map them out." He tugged and pushed on Sylar, moving him around a few inches apparently just to show he could do it. Sylar went with the motions. Peter continued, "Are you game for that?"

"Anything."

"Good," Peter said. "We're going to sleep together tonight. Go clean up your apartment, wash your sheets, whatever you need to do. I'll be over after dinner."

Sylar gaped at him. Peter let go, and reached out to touch Sylar on the nose with the tip of his index finger. Sylar shut his mouth, staring down at the weird touch. Peter turned his hand, rubbing the side of his finger now against the top of Sylar's nose, from root to tip. Then he patted him twice on the cheek. It was a mostly familiar Petrelli family caress, though the nose thing was new and far more affectionate than Sylar thought he deserved. He hurried to his feet as Peter headed over to the wall to inspect the brick. "We're going to sleep together?"

"Yep. Unless you tell me off." Peter sounded cheerful about it.

"But I-" Sylar tilted his head. "Why have you forgiven me?"

Peter turned to regard him soberly. "The signals were mixed. I know that. It's not like I can't remember what happened. You didn't know. Now that you do, things are different. I know what I need from you and I'm going to take it." He looked at the wall again, choosing a spot to spend the rest of the day pounding on. "Also," Peter said as he hefted the hammer, "you're using proper lube next time. I bled for two days after that. No more." He swung forward, hitting the wall with a crack of sound, but not of brick. "No blood anywhere else, either. I don't do blood."

"Mm," Sylar hummed, moving clear of the hammer's arc. He would readily give up blood if he got more of other things, but he was still having trouble wrapping his mind around Peter's sea change. "You enjoyed it." He must have. It was the only thing that made sense – and it was certainly gratifying to think.

The sledgehammer bounced off the wall with Peter's next swing, and Peter recovered it smoothly to pivot and face him. Sylar was so sure he was about to be struck that his flinch was real. "You take that the fuck back," Peter said with deadly seriousness.

"I take it back," Sylar intoned the same way, thinking that taking it back wasn't the same as claiming it was untrue. It just seemed … unwise to say at the current moment.

"Everything that idea leads to is … bad. I get to say what I enjoy and I don't enjoy being raped."

Sylar nodded twice. The r-word had finally come out. He didn't argue it. It was, after all, the essence of 'not willing'. Consent did not have a direct relationship to pleasure, as he well knew. People were twisted, perverted monsters inside – every one of them, including Peter, he reflected as he looked at the intensity on the Italian's face.

Peter's stance relaxed a little. "Listen, we've already fucked. I'm not going to pretend it didn't happen. Instead, I'm going to learn how to control this thing and I'm going to use you to do it. Unless you don't want it. Speak up if that's the case. I'm not going to force you."

"I'm willing."
"Okay." Peter nodded decisively. He gave Sylar an overt, head-to-toe ogling. "You want me."

Sylar smiled and leaned his shoulder against the brick, crossing his arms over his chest and his feet at the ankles. It was a sexy pose and he knew it. He lifted his chin as if in challenge. "Yes."

"Good." Peter reached out and touched his face again, this time to stroke his cheek and lightly grip his chin for a moment. "I'll see you tonight then." He turned back to the wall. It was much more polite than the 'fuck off' Sylar had received the last two times Peter had told him to take a hike. He went now, parting on a good note while it was offered.

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He lifted the freshly laundered sheet and light blanket so Peter could slide into his bed. Willingly. It still blew Sylar's mind. Peter had opted to wear boxers to bed, or at least leave on the boxers he'd had under his jeans. They were different jeans than he'd been wearing at the wall. He smelled clean and fresh, which was better than Sylar had expected. Many of his expectations were wrong, he realized. For example, he'd stripped naked only to find Peter wasn't going quite that far. Sylar had climbed into bed as he was, letting it look like that was how he liked it instead of neurotically putting on his pajama pants.

Peter settled in more than a foot away. It was a narrow bed, a twin, but Peter still managed to be as far away as possible. It was easy enough as Sylar had done the same on the opposite side. Sylar swallowed. He kept his distance and his hands to himself. He didn't want to screw this up, even if Peter was repeatedly demonstrating that he wasn't the fragile creature Sylar had supposed him to be. He could be broken, but he obviously didn't stay that way. Sylar found a lot to respect in that. It was oddly practical.

Peter touched him. First, it was along the smooth skin of his shoulder and deltoid. Then it was the hairy part of his chest. Sylar watched Peter's face. It showed interest and wonder and caution. Peter looked at Sylar looking at him, and scooted a little closer. He leaned in to brush Sylar's lips. The touch was so slight that Sylar shivered. He wanted more, but Peter seemed to be testing him. Especially with the way Peter looked at him from only a few inches away. Coming to some decision, Peter reached up to stroke his cheek, whispering, "You can touch me," before kissing him again, firmly and for real this time.

Sylar shivered again, kissing back as he slid a hand over Peter's side, pausing over the waistband of his boxers. Himself, he'd been erect since the moment Peter knocked, not that he was certain he was getting any. A fitting torture, he'd thought, would be for Peter to literally only sleep with him, making him pay penance for being so rash by requiring him to lay with Peter without truly 'laying' with him. Apparently that was paranoia, or at least Peter was going to give kisses. They hadn't kissed much before. Doing it now was lovely. It gave him feelings, warm ones. He moved his other hand to Peter's face, touching at it gently as they continued to explore one another's mouths. Peter's toes stroked along his shin and the top of his foot. He almost laughed at the sweet novelty of playing footsie while making out.

In a moment, Peter was cuddling up to him, rolling Sylar onto his back and letting one leg ride up over Sylar's. Their chests pressed together as they became even more involved. Sylar sank his hands into Peter's hair, fondling it and using the opportunity to position the man's head where he wanted it for further osculation. Peter smelled great. His body was firm and he was hard elsewhere, as well. His groin pressed to Sylar's hip. Sylar growled, devouring Peter mouth-first. If he was this lost in it, he couldn't imagine where Peter was, but apparently the Italian wasn't as far gone as Sylar had thought. Finally, Peter pulled away, panting. His expression was flushed and glazed. Sylar bared hungry teeth at him, eyes lingering on Peter's unbitten lips before going to his eyes. He had let Peter pull away, all the while knowing that if he held him, Peter would let him have his way as much as he
wanted. It was such a temptation, but it would break the trust between them – a trust Peter so casually assumed was there, that Sylar wanted it to be there as well.

"Stop, stop," Peter whispered to himself, and then threw himself facedown on his side of the narrow bed. Their shoulders still touched. Sylar stroked himself idly a few times, briefly considering the pros and cons of excusing himself to the bathroom to jerk off. If Peter was going to do this a lot, as he’d implied with the whole 'find my limits and map them out' thing, then patience and tolerance on Sylar's part would be necessary. Both would be easier to achieve if he wasn't suffering from constant blue balls. With the scent of Peter on his skin and the taste of him in his mouth, it would be simple to get off right now. But he waited. His hand fell away from himself. He wanted the real deal and he wanted it willing and eager. If it took long and aggravating testing to get there, then that was what he’d do.

Peter lifted himself to an elbow. "I can stop," he said, sounding happy about it. He smiled. "I wasn't sure I could."

"Hm," Sylar said. He made a yearning sigh.

Peter touched along Sylar's arm, then thought better of it. He turned in place to face away, adjusting the pillow under his head. "Maybe we should just go to sleep."

Lying on his back, Sylar exhaled deeply, rolled his eyes, and looked at the ceiling. This was going to be rough. Minutes passed. Then more. His body, aware of his own nakedness and the nearly-naked state of his bedmate, insisted on maintaining a constant level of readiness. Just in case. It left him keyed up and awake. He stayed still though. Peter, on the other hand, shifted. A lot. Sylar had every indication that Peter was discomfited in the same way, but too stubborn to do anything about it.

More minutes. More shifting. Sylar might have been able to calm down if Peter had drifted off, or showed any sign of drifting off. But Peter Petrelli was either an enemy or a lover and at the moment he coded as both, and he was just as alert and awake as Sylar was. Since he knew Peter wasn't going to end this, he finally spoke. "When I … first manifested my ability … I used a rock to hit a man in the back of the head. I was … driven. It was right in my own shop. It was stupid. The windows were glass. Anyone could have seen. I … did it right there on the floor. I didn't even move him until after." He swallowed, mouth dry. His erection had magically disappeared. His balls ached, but Sylar ignored it.

Sylar sighed. "He had telekinesis. It sank into me so deep that it imprinted on my DNA. All the other abilities, I knew how to use them after I'd seen what I needed to see, but that one became part of me. It was the first time I sated my hunger." He left it hanging there, unwilling to speak aloud the possible parallels between abilities. He didn't know for a fact how Peter's worked, but it would go a long way towards explaining why Peter was in bed with him after everything, if Peter had imprinted on him the same way.

Peter lifted his head slightly. "Yeah?"

"I'm telling you this because of what happened next. I didn't understand what I'd done, or rather, why I'd done it, any more than you say you did after I … raped you … the first time. I tried to kill myself. It didn't work. The Company found me. They gave me another victim. They told me to take him. They set me up, made it irresistible, or at least hard to resist. They told me it was okay. They … encouraged me." He turned his head in Peter's direction. "I'm not going to do that to you. I'm not going to encourage you to do something you don't want to do." Sylar swallowed again. "When I said I wouldn't touch you again, I meant it. If you ask, I will leave you alone, or at least not tempt you like that again, ever. Even if you're lying here next to me." Sylar looked away, at the ceiling once more. "But I want you to know, that if you genuinely want, you, and not just the Hunger, then it's here."
He hesitated for a moment before adding, "I … am here."

Peter was quiet and still. Sylar relaxed, glad to have gotten that off his chest. Finally off high alert, he thought he could manage to get to sleep now. He pulled up the covers and tucked himself in. He'd no more than done it when Peter rolled over, studying him in the dimness. "I suppose I've proven my point," Peter said.

"That you can stop yourself? Clearly." It had elements of being disappointing, but it also established there was a line between what Peter wanted and what his ability wanted. Without that line, there could be no free choice. Without that line, Sylar would never know if he was truly desired as the person he was.

"At least … that far."

Sylar ran his fingers along the delicate tissues of Peter's throat. "You've always been a temptation to me. More would be no different."

Peter caught his hand, then twined fingers with Sylar. "I want different. Things have to change between us. They already have. The only question is," Peter paused to swallow, and then slide over and lift himself so he was straddling Sylar, "whether I let things change, or I change them." Fingers still twined with one hand, he caught Sylar's other wrist with his free hand and held them both to the pillow on either side of Sylar's head. He leaned in and kissed him, deep and slow and sensuous. Sylar moaned and arched gradually, lifting and shifting Peter on top of him. He liked the feel of his weight. It was the same and different from Elle, which still ranked as the most intense sex he'd ever had with a woman.

"Change me," Sylar whispered as Peter left off his mouth and worked down Sylar's neck, nipping and sucking gently enough to be a tease. Sylar arched again in a slow writhe. "Give me a way out, Peter. I'm trapped." He wiggled his hands, but he meant something a lot bigger than the way Peter was holding him down. Peter rubbed his face on one side and then the other in the dark hair at the top of Sylar's chest. He must have shaved mid-afternoon, because there wasn't any scruff. It was delightful – the sensation, but even more the idea of Peter primping and preparing for him, for this. Sylar grinned, shyly at first, then bigger, because what was happening was so incredibly good. Peter squirmed his hips down over Sylar's groin, where Sylar's newly erect organ was mashed beneath something soft and almost hot. Peter's balls, Sylar suspected.

Peter let go of Sylar's hands, letting his own trail down Sylar's forearms, then down his sides. Peter scooted further south, his mouth continuing to work its way down Sylar's sternum. It was only then that his ultimate destination became clear. "Oh," Sylar said.

"Ohhhh," Peter echoed much more sexily, having reached his navel. He poked his nose into it. Sylar chuckled. This was the exact opposite of fucking someone hard and dirty up against a wall, out in the open. He wouldn't say it was better or worse, but definitely different. Peter's hands slid over Sylar's hips, traveling a little down his thighs before circling back up. He adjusted so his knees were between Sylar's legs and did another stroking sweep with his fingertips. He kissed the baby-soft skin directly above the start of serious pubic hair, Sylar's erection only inches to the side. Peter's hair brushed it.

"Mmm," Sylar purred, giving a hopeful roll of his hips. He touched Peter's hair, winding it through his fingers. Peter lifted his head, found one of Sylar's hands after it was free from his mane, and sucked on two fingers. Sylar chuckled again. "Wrong appendage."

Peter spat them out. "Sometimes you've got to try new things. Sample something different. Like this." He inhaled deeply over Sylar's cock and then the tip of his tongue teased along it, leaving a wet
trail from base to head. Sylar breathed out in a huff, his fist tightening reflexively when Peter took the glans into his mouth and began to suck. "Mmm," Peter hummed throatily.

It felt fantastic – hot, wet, moving stimulation, suction hard then soft then harder still. Sylar panted. He fistxed Peter's hair. At this angle, it looked like he was the one bobbbing Peter's head up and down on his cock, but in reality he was letting Peter do it. That Peter wanted to do it, was doing it, was a deep and continuing thrill all of its own.

"Peter … Petrelli … is sucking … my cock," Sylar said, smirking down at the scene. A second later, teeth menaced him and Peter seized his balls. "Oh, fuck yes," Sylar hissed. Peter tilted up his shaft and sucked more determinedly, kneading the balls in his hand. Sylar hung onto his hair, tugging on it experimentally. Peter growled, pulling back and growling up at Sylar, hair strewn across his face. It was such an image. Sylar felt a surge go through him. He was close. He let go of Peter's hair, cupped his head and nuded downward. Peter got the message. He sucked harder still, now focusing only on the tip. His other hand held the shaft steady.

Sylar felt the orgasm lighting him up from inside. "Suck me," he breathed. "Take me." He didn't have a chance to be more articulate or to navigate Peter's possible preferences regarding spitting or swallowing. He just knew he wanted Peter to take every part of him, no matter how disgusting or abnormal. To his credit, Peter did not lose a drop.

After, Peter let go of Sylar's cock and knelt with his forehead on Sylar's hip. He shuddered, breathing hard.

"Are you in control of yourself?" Sylar asked with languid curiosity. Peter shook his head after a beat and began climbing up Sylar's body, picking a side rather than continuing to straddle him. He shucked off his boxers on the way. Peter kissed Sylar's shoulder and put his dick into his hand. Sylar stroked it idly, still high from his own release. "Can you tell me no, could you stop and walk away if you had to? Do you want to?"

"Fuck, Sylar," Peter whined. "I don't know." He put his hand over Sylar's and tried to move him faster. It didn't work.

"How easy you are to abuse. How much you must trust me," he mused. "You said you remember what happens? Then remember this: beg."

"Please," Peter said immediately, shameless in his need.

"That's beautiful," Sylar murmured. "You're mine. You're so much mine. I take very, very good care of what's mine, Peter." With that, Sylar shifted downward to return the favor of fellatio as Peter knelt next to him. Peter's dick was hot in his mouth and surprisingly acceptable as far as taste went. It didn't take long, which he suspected was more a testament to how turned on Peter was than his own skills. He swallowed, just as Peter had, and laid down with him. He went to Peter's head, kissing him open-mouthed. They fell asleep entwined around one another.

In the morning, they went at each other again, ending just as wrapped up. The need for food didn't drive them out of bed until near noon and after several more bouts. Sylar wondered if things had flipped between them, because now he felt like he was the one who didn't want Peter out of his reach. Too far away to touch was suddenly too far. Strange things were happening to his heart, like the sort of things that had made him willing to face Noah Bennet without powers, just to give Elle a longer head start. "How long can we do this?" Sylar asked over a steaming cup of black coffee, irrationally jealous of the open refrigerator door between himself and Peter.

Peter looked at him for a moment, then shut the fridge and poured himself a glass of orange juice.
"Eventually we have to go back."

Sylar didn't have to ask what he meant. Peter's beliefs about 'out there' were unshakable. Although Sylar wouldn't believe until he saw it himself, one thing he knew was that it was pointless to try to talk Peter out of it. For Peter, there was another world 'out there' where people needed to be saved and Sylar was supposed to do the saving. It had been preposterous before. Now he was willing to do anything Peter asked of him. "How long until you go back to trying to get out?" He'd been jealous before of the attention Peter gave the wall. He couldn't imagine how he was going to react when Peter took up the hammer again after all of this between them.

Peter took a drink of juice. "How long do you want it to be?"

"Why are you asking me?"

"Because if we're together, then I want to be together."

"We're talking about being together now?" Sylar's mind buzzed with possibilities about what Peter was implying. Among other things, there was that Peter wasn't going to turn his attention away from Sylar and to the wall, and instead have both of them work as a team to a common goal. But more urgent was that Peter was proposing they were … together.

"What we just did," Peter gestured in the direction of the thoroughly mussed bed, "that's being together."

Sylar's lips pursed. He looked from the bed to Peter. He felt himself flushing all over again, being aroused for the fifth or sixth time already this day. He tried to keep a damper on his excitement. "We're connected now. You see that? That's what you're saying?" He felt like that moment when he had just felt where an ability was in a person's brain, but hadn't quite copied it yet. It was there; he was touching it; it was real; he knew it. But this thing between them wasn't his yet until Peter agreed.

Peter exhaled heavily and said with a serious voice, "Yes." He crossed the one step between them and set his juice on the counter. He cupped Sylar's stubbled cheek and kissed him. "Yes, I see that. And I know what that means to you."

Sylar swallowed and had to remind himself to keep breathing as evenly as possible. He doubted Peter knew … entirely, because he'd never shown his hand quite that much, but Peter wasn't stupid. Certainly, Sylar assumed his expression was communicating all sorts of things he wouldn't intend if he were trying to guard himself. He kissed Peter back, carefully, not wanting to show the intensity of emotion that was filling him. His eyes were burning all of a sudden. He turned away and put his coffee down. "I thought this was just until … you got the Hunger worked out." His throat was malfunctioning, too. It was harder to speak than it should have been.

Peter leaned on the counter next to him, facing the opposite direction. Their elbows touched. "I have it worked out as much as I need."

Sylar looked at him, a stab of worry leaving him concerned Peter didn't need him anymore. That didn't fit with Peter's other words, though. "What do you mean?"

"You," Peter provided.

Sylar relaxed. "Me?"

Peter looked down and scuffed at the floor. "I like you," he said quietly. "I think this can work."

"With me?" His eyes were burning again. He wondered if Peter would believe him if he said the
coffee fumes were irritating his eyes. He didn't think so.

Peter shrugged. He looked embarrassed. "Yeah. The last few times I've been with people, it didn't work out well, but I don't know how to deal with this except to try. I just … when I have to, I throw myself into things. Sometimes I fly." He looked into Sylar's eyes. "It's always scary, but this feels right."

Sylar turned to face him. "That's what you meant by 'eventually'? That we're going to work on this … together … before we try to leave … also together?"

"As long as it takes." Peter reached up and gently wiped away a tear that had escaped the corner of one of Sylar's eyes. "You know how I am."
"I was terrified for the third one." Sylar sat on the loading dock, legs hanging over the edge as he idly watched Peter uselessly pound at the brick wall with a sledgehammer. "Well, terrified might not be the right word, but I was really nervous. Anxious is too mild. I was afraid I'd get caught, that it would go wrong, that the fact that I was doing this meant I was wrong, forever, and I was really fucked up by how okay that was with me. It felt like … like I was finally admitting to a truth I'd been denying for too long." He laced his arms through the metal pipe railing and leaned against it, listening to Peter's staccato hammer blows for a few moments.

"You see," Sylar went on, "the first time was all about need. I was overwhelmed, in a hurry, and I didn't know if I'd ever get the chance again. The second time … well, it's complicated, but basically it was greed. I wanted to show off and I wanted to do it a second time, with witnesses this time, and get away with it. Somehow I knew that would make the first time okay – for other people to know, and for it not to matter to them. Maybe it did – I don't know, but it made me sick. I hated myself after that. Really, truly hated myself. I never used his power. I didn't like it. It was a stupid ability. No finesse.

"Not that the third power was all that great either. It was the ability to control insects." Sylar waved a hand derisively. "Theoretically, it allowed me to summon or repel them, direct them to do my bidding, that kind of thing." He frowned. "It was nice not to have to worry about mosquitos anymore. I suppose I could have used it to attack people, but I preferred being more direct for that sort of thing. Or if I was going to be indirect, then I still wanted it to be in a way that showed I was in control, like I'd outsmarted them. I was superior. I knew that. I wanted them to know that. Having them bitten to death by a cloud of beetles lacked a certain … panache." He sighed, staring off into the distance as he contemplated his preferences in ending lives.

The lack of regular hammer strokes jerked him back to the moment. Peter was looking at him. "Do you realize," the empath began, "that you haven't told me anything about the people you took those powers from?" Sylar silently recounted what he'd said. Peter went on, "And this last one - not whether they were male or female, young or old, rich or poor, race, religion, what they were wearing, where it happened – not anything?"

"That's … not important?"

Peter snorted. "Maybe it was a guy, 23 or 22 years old, mixed race, longish brown hair with a scraggly beard, always eats TV dinners because he's the youngest of eleven kids of a black ex-marine widower and he never learned to cook for himself. He has the long hair because his dad was a freak about the opposite so now that's the guy's idea of personal freedom. He lives by himself in a tiny apartment because he dropped out of college and that's all he can afford, and he works a couple
blocks away as a clerk in a convenience store."

Sylar blinked at him, wondering where such a bout of creativity had come from, then recalling Peter was the day-dreamer of the family.

"My point is, you mention nothing about who your victim was as a human being, Sylar! You murdered someone and all you tell me about them was the ability you got."

"Wait." Sylar glanced down, face loosening in wonder. "Matt Parkman said something like that to me. I told him the abilities had consumed me – they defined me. And he said … that we're people first."

"We're people first, second, and last, Sylar. With or without my ability, I can be a hero. And so can you." Peter turned back to the brick and resumed swinging. Sylar didn't argue. He had a lot to think about. He rested his chin on his folded hands where they were curled around the metal pipe railing and watched as Peter worked at his self-imposed Sisyphean task.
Sylar found Peter in the park. It was a brisk morning. Petrelli had hauled a mechanical baseball pitcher out there and somehow gotten it to work – no mean feat. But of course he'd had a lot of free time lately, with the way he'd been avoiding Sylar. He didn't run off now; having set up his chosen activity, Peter was more or less committed to staying there. Sylar took advantage of that and walked over.

Sylar watched Peter swing at a couple balls, knocking them out into the open area of the Frisbee golf course. "I could have pitched for you if you'd asked," he said wistfully. "I used to-" Sylar cut himself off. He'd never thrown balls for Peter when Peter was a boy. That hadn't been him.

Peter paused to glare at him for the slip, because he knew as well as Sylar what he'd been about to say. The machine spat out a ball that whizzed by unimpeded. Peter turned back, settling himself for the next one.

"I'm not fit for human company, is that it?" Sylar said in gloomy defeat. He glanced off the way he'd come, wondering if he should just go back and leave Peter to it – maybe fix some watches and hope that loneliness would eventually effect Peter as much as it already chewed at Sylar.

"It's not like you can't do something about that," Peter grumbled quietly before swinging at the next ball.

Sylar's head came around. It was the first thing Peter had said to him in nearly two weeks. He immediately complained, "It's kind of hard when the only person I have to interact with, won't interact with me!"

It was the wrong tone to take. Sylar knew that. Peter rounded on him, bat in hand but held off to the side. Sylar was still hyperaware of how easily he could be brained by that thing, and how justified Peter would be to do it, just on general principles. But instead of hitting him, Petrelli got right in his face like he always did when he was pissed at him. It was so often that Sylar should have gotten used to it by now. Peter snarled, "You start by not blaming others for your situation, acting like you had nothing to do with causing it!"

Lifting his chin slightly, he said loftily, "It's always my fault, is that your answer?"

Peter snorted. "Yeah, it is. And whether or not you do something about it is your responsibility, too. I'm not here to fucking change you, Sylar, or to fix you! That's your job!" He wheeled and went back to where he could take his anger out on baseballs.

Sylar was relieved that he'd been yelled at. It was attention. It was interaction. It was painful, but better than the maddening silence. Even negative attention was better than that. After Peter's back was turned, he sank to the ground, crossed his legs, and sat quietly through the next dozen balls. It
was nice to listen to them. It was nice that Peter hadn't left. He needed more of that – the interaction – but if this kept up, Peter wouldn't even give him the negative kind. "How do I fix myself?" he finally asked meekly.

Peter looked back at him long enough to miss another ball, then turned away again. The expression on his face was thoughtful, though, not dismissive, so Sylar waited for the reply. Two more balls were slammed further into the park before the mechanical pitcher made a couple hollow clicking noises and stopped functioning. Its supply of balls had run out. Peter took the bat in both hands, one on either end of it, and turned to face him. "You can't change who you are, but you can change what you do." Then Peter walked out to the machine, fussing with the settings.

Sylar rose and followed, watching. Peter stuck the bat in the empty basket, then picked up the handle for the machine and started hauling it behind him like a cart. He headed out to collect the balls. Sylar trailed along behind him. "There's nothing I can do to change the past, Peter."

"Didn't ask you to."

"But that's what you want."

"It's not what I want out of you."

"You want me to change." At Peter's look, Sylar added to prove he'd been listening, "How I act."

"Yes, Sylar," Peter said loudly and with emphasis. "That's not unreasonable. It's not inauthentic or fake. People all the time are changing how they act around other people. They don't like them; they act worse. They start to like them; they act better. They fall in love; it brings out the best in them."

"They're enemies …?"

"And I want to take this bat," Peter jerked his thumb at the item in question, "and cave in your skull with it. But I don't, because that's wrong. Because I can control how I act around you no matter what you've done. Because I. Can change. How. I act." Peter stared at him fiercely for a long moment. "So can you." They had reached the area where the balls were scattered across the short grass. Peter bent to gather them up, tossing them into the basket.

Sylar watched him do it for a while, then picked one up and studied it before adding it to the basket. Peter glanced over at the clunking noise of the extra ball falling into the wire frame basket. Defensively, Sylar shrugged and said, "I'm … helping?"

Peter eyed him for several more seconds, finally giving him a single, deliberate nod before turning back to the work of recovering the baseballs. Sylar smiled slightly, inordinately pleased by that tiny sign of approval. He hurried to find more balls and get that, or something like it, again.
Title: Influence
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: PG
Warnings: None
Word count: 1,100
Setting: The Wall

Summary: MBU doodle. It makes sense in context. I'm not sure it does without the setting. And because I'm going to post this as a Brick anyway, the context is that Sylar has stripped his shirt off and is/was taunting Peter with how damn sexy he is. It made Peter mad, so he decided it was time to sort sheet music instead of drool over what he wouldn't allow himself to have. When Sylar tempted him some more, Peter said he'd better back off or else Peter would kick his ass.

Sylar felt a warm delight at the situation. Peter was just beside himself, so hopelessly aroused and off-kilter that he was threatening violence should Sylar push him any further. That sort of thing never worked – the threat only made the act that much more irresistible to Sylar. But pushing Peter right now was just too easy. It would take no more than the pressure of a single fingertip, metaphorically speaking, to send Peter over the edge and see him leap up swinging, kissing Sylar's face with his fists.

While that had its appeal, they had only fought yesterday and Sylar's back still ached. He would not give a satisfactory accounting of himself if things turned physical. He never wanted Peter to see him as a disappointment. There were other ways to handle it, in any event. It would be an even greater display of control if he were to defuse the overly roused Peter.

Sylar pushed off from the piano and with only one graceful step and a pivot, he sank to the floor right next to where Peter was squatting in front of the bench, lid up, a piece of sheet music held so tightly in his hand that he was crumpling it. Peter recoiled from him faster than most people would have moved after the sudden discovery of a venomous snake. Sylar gave every appearance of ignoring the reaction. "What is it we're looking at here?" He made a show of peering at the piece of music Peter was gripping.

Peter yanked his hand back, paper with it, off to his right where Sylar couldn't see it. He was stiff now in body, though probably no longer in groin. Pity. Sylar didn't look. Peter had already commented on the power of perception. Also, Sylar didn't want to get hit. The whole point was to get as close to the angry, young lion as possible without being mauled.

The tension fairly rolled off of Peter. His breathing was fast and forced. Sylar casually looked into the drawer of the bench at the other sheet music there. "Didn't you say something about picking songs fit for the guitar?" He made a slow, deliberate gesture at the contents, not touching them for now. Peter might have jerked away when Sylar had joined him, but he'd refused to flee.

Lightning fast, Peter's left hand shot out and struck him on the shoulder with the heel of his hand. It jostled Sylar hard. Peter rose up an inch or so in his squat, body language clearly teetering on the edge of combat. It was delicious to Sylar. He longed to look Peter in the eye, sneer, laugh, and get tackled for it – but that wasn't his goal. He rocked with the blow, glanced Peter's way only briefly, and kept his head and hands down. Peter had hit him trying to start a fight, or perhaps just exploring Sylar's intentions. Slowly and calmly, Sylar said, "That one in your hand looked like a traditional
hymn.” He gestured with no more than a movement of two fingers, otherwise staying very still.

For several seconds, there was silence between them. Sylar waited patiently, keeping himself relaxed with all visible indications of serenity. Finally, eventually, Peter took a deeper breath and looked at the sheet in his hand. He huffed slightly and turned to look at the other papers, sorting through them with his left hand while he still held the other in his right. He adjusted his position back to squatting where he'd been to start with, putting them only an inch apart.

It was an excellent sign. Sylar put a hand on the edge of the bench drawer and lifted his head enough for it to be clear he was watching. Peter shot him a few small glances, but otherwise ignored him. Since Peter seemed to have settled down, Sylar touched one of the pages on his side. "What about this one?"

Peter bristled again, but it was only a subtle shift of weight and tucking in of his chin. His bicep flexed, but then after only a moment, he pulled the page Sylar had indicated over to himself and looked at it. He didn't speak, but something about the sheet led to Peter looking around uncertainly. The next moment after that, he was gathering up all the music, emptying the drawer.

Sylar wanted to ask what Peter was doing, but he was fairly certain he wouldn't get an answer. He shifted to watching Peter directly. It was probably safe, and he needed to know if Peter was going to do something bizarre like bolt from the room. As it turned out, no. Peter removed all the papers, then removed himself to a few feet away, where he settled to sit cross-legged on the floor. Sylar mirrored him a few seconds later, sitting directly across from him.

Peter looked up at him. Sylar put on his most guileless, inoffensive face. Peter's lips pressed together and he looked aside. A moment later, he handed Sylar half the stack of papers. Sylar held them carefully, not sure what to do. Peter spoke. "Help me sort them. Put all the church stuff over here." He set down the crinkled first page he'd been looking at. "Put anything slow, complicated, or boring over here." Peter pointed next to the church stack. "Anything that looks interesting or you want to hear, put over here." He indicated the other side of them. "I'll look through those and see what I can do."

With that, Peter began sorting the sheets he'd reserved for himself, keeping his eyes on the task and off of Sylar. He'd lost his blush and the adrenaline-fueled glow of battle-readiness, but he was still interesting to look at. Sylar could smell him more definitely, too. He'd made Peter tense, hot, and sweaty. Sylar smiled to himself and sorted papers. He had succeeded. And in addition, he realized as he finished parsing the sheet music he'd been given, he would have some input on the songs Peter chose to serenade him with this afternoon. It was more than he'd hoped for.
"Whoa!" Sylar's brows climbed up his forehead as he read the computer screen.

"What?" Peter looked over from where he was curled on the couch with a comic book. He squinted, looking past Sylar at the screen. "Wait, what are you looking at?"

Sylar remained fascinated by what he was reading. "It was open to this when I sat down."

Peter realized and tossed down his comic. In a panic, he hurried across the room, reaching around Sylar to grab the mouse. Sylar lifted his hands slightly to show he wasn't going to interfere. Peter clicked the window closed.

"That's rude!" Peter exclaimed. "Don't look at that stuff! It's personal!"

Sylar raised his brows. "Then it would help if you wouldn't leave those windows open. I don't know what I'm not supposed to see until I see it." The corners of his lips curled in amusement.

Peter snorted. "It's been a long time since I was living with anyone and had to worry about that!" He ran his hand through his hair, then shook his head in exasperation as he walked away. "You didn't read any of that, did you?"

Sarcastically, Sylar answered, "Of course not. I just said, 'Whoa,' because the computer had a few windows open when I turned it on."

Peter rolled his eyes from the entrance to the kitchen. "It doesn't mean anything."

"Of course not, Peter," Sylar said diplomatically. "But I would have never guessed."

Cheeks hot, Peter snapped, "Just forget about, okay? Don't mention it!"

"Why ever so?" Sylar purred, swiveling in the office chair to cross his arms as he surveyed Peter's discomfort. "Is there something to be ashamed of in liking werewolf knot porn or mother-daughter ... dub? What is 'dub' anyway?" Peter buried his face in his hands, not answering. Sylar grinned and continued, "From what I read, the 'knot' doesn't refer to tangled hair, either. I can't wait to hear the explanation."
"It doesn't have to mean anything," Sylar huffed. "There's no mystical significance to it."

"Oh really? Then why do you keep bringing it up if it doesn't matter?"

"You want it."

Peter's brows rose in disbelief.

"You'd enjoy it. I'm just trying to make your time here more … pleasant," Sylar said with the beginnings of a sultry purr in his voice.

Peter snorted at the change in tone. "Yeah, right. You know what else I enjoy? Music. I don't see you getting on the piano to accompany when I'm playing guitar. I like to eat good food, too. I don't see you jumping in there to show me how to cook better. You know I like working out, but are you ever there for racquetball, or even to spot me weights? Never."

Sylar squirmed.

"You want it because it matters," Peter insisted. "Sex is close. It's friendly. It's intimate. You'd literally be inside of me. There's no closer you can get. Talk about under my skin!" Peter gave a rough chuckle and shook his head, mouth open. "Sylar, you have hurt me, killed me, and left me emotionally eviscerated." Cold and serious now, Peter concluded, "There is no way I'm letting you in."
"Did Nathan ever kill anyone?"

Sylar put down his book and gave Peter a level stare, as though he'd asked a rude question.

"You have his memories," Peter pressed.

Sylar raised one solitary brow. "Which you have told me in no uncertain terms not to use."

Peter rolled his eyes. "Use them."

"That's very hypocritical of you."

"I want to know."

Nastily, Sylar said, "Is that all I am to you? A traveling repository for your brother's memories, for you to tap or stifle as suits your whim?"

Peter pursed his lips and drew his head back. "As a matter of fact," he said tightly, "I was asking because I thought it might help us talk about you and the people you have killed."

Sylar stared at him, eyes widening just a fraction. Peter didn't back down and he wasn't prone to lying. "I don't want to talk about that."

"Then tell me about Nathan." It was delivered as an order.

Sylar took a deep breath, hunching his shoulders slightly and looking around as though for a way out. "What difference does it make if he did or not?"

"I want to know."

Now it was Sylar who rolled his eyes. "You're not going to give this up, are you?" Peter just looked at him expectantly. Sylar went on, "What do you think? He's a man who seriously contemplated killing most of New York to further his political career, tried to establish a concentration camp to exterminate his own kind, and calmly stood over his father's corpse after, as far as he knew, you'd killed him. He served in the military in several armed conflicts. Do you seriously believe he got as far
as he did in his career without having a few skeletons in the closet?” He snorted dismissively.

Peter considered for only a moment before asking, "None of that answers my question – did he kill anyone, himself?"

Sylar's eyes narrowed and he gave Peter a side-eye for long seconds. Finally, softly, he said, "No one who is willing to take life so cavalierly has any personal experience of doing it. If you're looking for a shared experience between your precious brother and I, look elsewhere. As a living man, he never knew he'd killed anyone."

Peter's brows drew together at the last. "You … what? As a living man?"

Sylar made a put-out sigh. "He killed a girlfriend when he was … a teenager or something. It was an accident – drunk, stupid, but not intentional. It's not one of his memories, though." Peter turned his head like a confused puppy, so Sylar had to elaborate even further, "His memories were wiped."

"Then how do you know?"

"In an act of stunning prescience, your mother fed me a special back when I worked briefly for the Company and thought I was her son. The ability let me read the history of objects, something that was invaluable much later, when I, again, had reason to believe I was her son. It's almost like she knew, even years before, what I was going to do … or more accurately, what she was going to do."

Peter studied Sylar for long moments, until Sylar tired of the scrutiny and picked his book back up. Before he could get started on the text, Peter said, "There is something you share with Nathan."

Sylar looked up at him, but didn't ask. "Her."

"I don't want her as my mother," Sylar said with a faint snarl.

One corner of Peter's mouth turned up in an otherwise humorless smile. "We don't always get that choice."

Sylar snorted softly, looking back at his book. He obviously wasn't reading it though, as he asked, "And who have you killed, Peter Petrelli, with your own hands?"

"My father. My brother. You. The woman I loved more than any other." He had Sylar's attention now. Peter gave a brief tilt of his head. "Those are the ones on purpose, knowing what I was doing, with my own abilities or by instrument. Versions of me have killed nearly everyone in existence, so I get to live knowing that's not outside the realm of possibility either."

Reluctantly, Sylar admitted, "There are some … similarities between us, but we're not the same. As I said before, I don't want to talk about it."

Peter tipped his head in silent concession and picked up his sketchbook, leaving both men to their many thoughts.

"Tell me about a time when you killed someone."

At the question, Peter looked back at where Sylar was tagging along a pace behind and to the side of him. "What? When?"

"Any of them. Whichever you feel most … responsible for."

Peter turned away again, continuing their walk towards someplace to grab dinner. He shrugged his
shoulders uncomfortably. After as long a pause as he could politely manage, he answered, "Caitlyn, then. I stranded her in the future."

Sylar scoffed. "Leaving someone behind isn't the same thing as killing them with your own hands."

Peter shot him a look that was murderous enough by itself. "It mattered," he said hotly, stopping and turning on Sylar. "How many of your kills involved strangling the life out of someone or beating them to death with your own fists, huh?" He glared, then added, "If that's what you want, then you, in that cell on Level 5. I broke your neck, hands-on."

Sylar's brows rose slightly. "Yes," he purred. "Now we're getting somewhere."

"Fuck you," Peter spat, turning on his heel and continuing on their way.

"Tell me more," Sylar said quietly several steps later. But it was loud enough to carry.

"You were there," Peter said over his shoulder.

"This isn't about me."

"No, this is about me asking you about Nathan earlier."

Sylar's shrug went unseen. "It was a good question. Which you're evading."

"No more than you were earlier."

"I answered it," Sylar said with an edge of irritation.

Peter gave a voluminous sigh. "Okay, okay. I get it. Fine. I had your ability. I-" He paused when Sylar picked up his pace rapidly to walk next to him, where he could watch Peter's face more carefully. Peter looked at him for a long moment, then seemed to recenter himself. His tone became more serious. "I showed up angry. You know that. I'd just … killed …" He looked away, but then back, "Nathan. In the future. Because of your ability." He stopped speaking, waiting for Sylar to say something, but Sylar was silent, absorbing this. "You said we were the same; we were brothers. I … didn't want to believe that." He quieted again.

Eventually, Sylar said, "You haven't gotten to the part where someone dies."

"I broke your neck. You died. There."

"How did you feel about that?"

"What?" Peter looked affronted at the question.

"Both before and after," Sylar probed, unfazed.

Peter rolled his eyes and shook his head, but answered anyway. "Before, I was angry. I wasn't thinking. I wasn't caring. I wanted you gone. I'd just killed Nathan because of you, so it didn't matter … I didn't care if I killed you, too." He frowned heavily. "After …" Peter watched his feet as they walked. "I still didn't care. No regret. No horror. Nothing. I turned on Ma. It seemed like her fault, too. I was going to get to the bottom of it, of all of it. Then you …" He shrugged one shoulder and glanced over at Sylar, who was still watching him with undisguised attention.

"Do you regret it now?"

"Yes. Sort of." Peter gave Sylar another glance. "I mean, it happened, but you're alive, so I don't
know how to count that. Sort of like killing Nathan myself – I got to go back to a world where he was alive. I got to see him again, be with him, in a place where I'd never done that and never told anyone that I had, so I don't know how that works." He stopped in front of a likely restaurant. They'd been here before.

"Would you have regretted it if I never came back? If I hadn't regenerated and recovered?" When Peter gave him a speculative look, Sylar hammered home his point with, "Like most of my victims?"

Peter swallowed and looked inside the diner, away from Sylar. "Yes. You didn't .... That version of you that I killed – you," Peter turned back and nodded at Sylar, "this version of you – didn't deserve what I did. You hadn't done anything to me. Even the other one, Gabriel, didn't 'deserve' to die, but I guess someone could argue he started it, or should have done more to stop it, but his son had just died ..." Peter pursed his lips and shook his head. "No, the only person at fault was me."

Softly, Sylar asked, "Is that what matters? Who shoulders the blame?"

"No." Peter answered that one immediately, straightening a little. "What matters is what impact it has on people. I killed you; I hurt you. If you'd stayed dead, that would have mattered not because I did it, but because you'd be gone. You didn't, so that's not an issue but ..." Peter's brows pulled together. He stepped forward and put his hand out, palm downward over the center of Sylar's chest. "Even if there isn't any consequence in this world, like when I killed Nathan in that other place, it still hurts ... the person who does it."

Sylar looked down at the hand, then up at Peter. He didn't move away. His face was carefully blank.

"That's why I asked," Peter said finally, after having stood there touching Sylar's chest for most of a minute. "That's why I asked about Nathan. Because maybe you could see how killing had affected someone else and then maybe it would," Peter dropped his hand away, "let us talk about how killing had affected you."

Sylar fingered his shirt where Peter had touched. "How it affected both of us."

Peter gave a single, slow nod in confirmation.

They stood in silence for long moments before Sylar spoke. "I need to think about it more."

"That's okay," Peter said with another nod, this time with a jerk of his head at the restaurant door. "Let's go eat."
"I know daddy issues when I see them."

Peter kept his nose buried in his book. "This psychoanalysis crap is getting old." Sylar had been having a field day picking apart everything wrong with the Petrelli family. Peter agreed they were fucked up, but he was related regardless.

"Have you ever considered an inappropriate relationship with a family member?"

"Sylar, I have all the time in the world here," Peter said, putting the book down in exasperation, "but I still don't have time for this shit."

"Yes," Sylar mused. "It would probably take longer than eternity to sort it out."
"That's that," Peter said as the last of the carnies packed up for the night. A few members of the police and other agencies still loitered in Central Park, watching, but the show was over. Peter didn't feel he needed to be part of the clean-up. "I guess I should check and see if I have work tomorrow," he muttered.

"Mm," Sylar hummed in assent from beside him, eyes lingering warily on the various members of law enforcement.

Peter followed the man's sight line, wondering what warrants were out for Sylar's arrest. "You have somewhere to go tonight?"

"Your place," Sylar answered. He looked to Peter, brows raised in question.

Peter turned away, looking around the city. He licked his lips, thinking over Sylar inviting himself back to Peter's apartment. They'd spent a really long time together behind the wall, trapped in Sylar's head. Peter had forgiven him as much as such a thing were possible. His mother's words of warning rattled around in his head: 'One isolated act doesn't make him a savior.'

Quietly, Sylar said, "I need an anchor, Peter. I need a connection. You trusted me with Emma's life." He reached out and put his hand lightly on Peter's forearm. "Can you trust me with more?"

It was an interesting question – ambiguous in meaning. Could be a literal question. Or could be pointing out Peter had already trusted him with the thing he valued most. But Sylar probably had no other place to go – certainly not where he'd be basically safe. Peter sighed and jerked his head in the direction of the nearest subway outlet. "Let's get going, then."

The trip back was quiet. Peter watched Sylar as Sylar watched out the window or stared at his hands. It seemed surreal to walk inside his apartment after such a feeling of years gone by. He chuckled as he tossed his keys on the counter. "I almost expected dust and cobwebs and all the furniture moved out again."

"You do seem a little light on the furniture. I remember when this place was crammed to the-" He cut off, pursing his lips, brows drawing together.

"I understand," Peter said gently. Sylar's memories of Peter's apartment from before it had been cleaned out were not truly Sylar's. Peter had finally realized Sylar might never be able to tell the difference.

Recovering, Sylar took a seat at the dining room table, the same one he'd sat at to consume an entire pumpkin pie while Peter and Angela, trapped, had looked on. His fingers stroked the surface of the table, ignoring the pile of bills on the corner. His face was pensive.
Peter took up the chair he'd sat in before, refusing to be cowed by memories. "What are you thinking?"

Sylar swallowed, glancing up. "How do I go on from here?" He glanced down, then back up. "There must be a way."

There was hope in Sylar's face – and faith, faith that Peter could help him. "You said you needed an anchor. What do you mean?" Sylar shrugged and looked aside, a little exasperated. Peter asked, "Do you mean you need someone to keep you in place? Like … tie you down and keep you from hurting people?"

Sylar smiled and gave Peter a side-eye. "Kinky, Petrelli. I like the way your mind works."

Peter chuckled again, leaning back in the chair and relaxing. "Seriously."

Sylar nodded. His gaze was distant. "Someone who would know told me that people who live a lot of different lives needed to find something that acted as a foundation for them, an anchor for their self-identity. I've been a lot of different people, Peter. I need someone to help me find myself." He looked up at Peter with that same expression of hope and faith.

This time, it was Peter who nodded. "Let's work on that then. Who do you want to be?"

The man looked surprised to be asked, or maybe he just hadn't expected Peter to launch right into it. "Gabriel … Sylar," he said after some hesitation. It was as though he'd settled on the name only right then.

"Gabriel?"

"Yes." Sylar made an uncertain face. "It's the name I grew up with."

"Okay. And Sylar?"

This time the other man's expression was slightly more predatory. "You know why."

Peter elaborated. "I mean, is that your legal last name right now, or will we need to get you identification?"

"I'd need … identification," Sylar said, again having trouble putting together the words.

Peter nodded. "Okay. What do you want me to call you?"

"Either." Sylar swallowed.

"Works for me." Peter rose. "Let's start on that tomorrow, after I see what tours work has me scheduled for." He shrugged off his jacket and hung it on the back of the chair.

Sylar's brows drew together slightly. "You don't have to work, Peter." He picked up one of the envelopes, turning it to gold sheets that slowly crumpled under their own weight. "See?"

"Hey!" Peter pulled the metal from him, trying to lay it out flat again. "That's my electric bill. How do I pay it now?"

"With that." Sylar gestured to the envelope.

Peter stared at the ounce or so of gold. Even if a pawn shop or metals broker took a ridiculous margin, he would still have enough to keep the lights on for a year. "That's … thank you." He sat
back down. "But that's not who I am. I use my abilities to help people, others, not for me to get ahead in the world. I'm ahead already, just by having the choice." He thought a moment, then said, "I work because that's my anchor. It's how I connect with people. It gives me purpose – a place to go, people who want my help, people I can save and make a difference for. That's what matters to me. You need to work out what matters to you."

Sylar looked at him steadily for a while, then said, "Very well. You have one bed. May I sleep with you?"

"Uh," Peter looked in the direction of the mentioned furniture. When they'd been here last and faux-Nathan had passed out, Peter had stayed up all night. There had been no need to share. "Sleep with me …?"

"In whatever capacity you wish."

Peter's head snapped around and he blinked. Shit was getting serious. "Are you suggesting what I think you're suggesting?"

"You're not straight," Sylar said blandly. "You said I need to work out what matters to me. I have. I need to establish a connection who won't turn on me and who will help me through this process of finding myself. As Nathan knew and entirely underappreciated," Sylar dipped his head, "you are loyal to a fault. I will do whatever I need to do to secure that loyalty." Peter's eyes were big. Sylar said softly, "If you allow it."

"Um …" He stared at the bed again. "I don't think I've ever had someone proposition me quite like that."

"I promise you - my lovers have always been satisfied."

Peter laughed, loudly, the spell broken somewhat. "Yeah, yeah, okay, I get it. Years alone. You're kind of hard up. Got it." He stood up.

"It's more than that - so much more."

Peter turned to give him a piercing look. "I know. It's been a long day. Especially for you. Let's get some sleep. We can work out," he waved his hand restlessly, "the rest later."

Sylar didn't argue.

T-shirts and boxer shorts served for both of them as bedclothes. Peter settled in, but couldn't stay facing away. Turning, he saw Sylar was facing him, eyes open. Peter smiled a little. He shut his eyes and tried to sleep, but a few minutes later, he opened his eyes again. Sylar was still awake, gazing blankly at the mattress between them. Peter put out his hand, open. Sylar reached out his own a moment later, touching delicately. Fingertips stroked one another softly. It was ticklish and soothing at the same time – an innocent pleasure.

"If," Peter said slowly, quietly, "I was with you somehow, it wouldn't be a condition of helping you on other things. You know that, right?"

Sylar made a tiny nod. "I know that. I know you." He waited a beat before continuing, "And I know it would help us both, if we had someone to hold."

"You make it sound so practical." His fingers moved on to petting Sylar's palm and allowing the same in turn.
Sylar's brow twitched. "It can be. I know how things work, Peter. Some things are more complicated than others. This doesn't have to be complicated."

"I hardly know you."

"Then let me fix that." Sylar scooted closer, one hand going to Peter's hip as the other found his face. He still there for a moment as Peter made up his mind and disregarded the insanity of what he was doing. Peter leaned forward and kissed him lightly. Sylar kissed back just as carefully. Peter shifted, one knee sliding forward to nudge against Sylar's, then lifting it to slide over the top of it. They kissed again, a little more involved. Sylar's hands went to the small of Peter's back and the side of his head. Peter pushed, slowly rolling Sylar to his back and climbing on him, still kissing, inhaling Sylar's scent, running his hands through the man's hair. He sat over him, knees on either side of Sylar's hips. Sylar's hands ran up and down his thighs, then to his rear, gripping and kneading through the thin cloth of the boxer shorts. Peter moaned against his lips.

"Oh yes," Sylar whispered, nibbling down Peter's stubbled cheek to his throat. Peter reached down between them and rubbed Sylar's shaft through the shorts, up and down, cupping it and caressing. Sylar rocked his hips with the motions, biting and sucking with his mouth at the tender skin of Peter's neck. He pushed at Peter's boxers, so Peter took them down as much as possible, snagging them under the curve of his ass in back and his balls in front. Sylar's fingers danced up and down his exposed penis immediately, drawing a hiss and another moan from Peter. He cupped Sylar's head to his neck and upper chest, thrusting into that hand.

A few moments later, Sylar adjusted himself and his clothing so his dick rode up between Peter's butt cheeks. His fingers probed at the seam of Peter's ass, opening him bit by bit.

"Oh fuck," Peter groaned. "You're going all the way, aren't you?"

"I will fuck you into oblivion, Peter Petrelli," Sylar said in a deep, seductive growl. He bit Peter's pec hard enough to leave a bite mark, hard enough that Peter arched away from him with a pained yet pleasured sound.

Peter scrambled off of him for a moment, shucking his boxers and shirt entirely and retrieving a bottle of lotion from next to the bed. It wasn't the best for their purposes, but it would work fine. He squirted it out and applied it liberally, first to himself and then to Sylar. He climbed on to straddle Sylar's thighs, slicking him up and giving him a brief hand job.

"Yes," Sylar said simply, looking down his body at Peter, naked and pumping at him.

A few moments later, Peter moved up Sylar's body, pausing to stroke their cocks together in both his hands. Sylar's hands trembled on his thighs, urging him on. Peter moved up further and finally, Sylar's hands could reach his buttocks again. They snaked around and curled into him, fingers probing immediately, made slippery by the lotion. Peter was entered without hesitation, stretched and opened as he laid flat on Sylar's chest and let the man finger-fuck his ass with progressively more digits. Finally, two fingers on either side crowded his opening and pulled him as wide as he would go. He groaned and squirmed, begging to be entered. He could feel Sylar's cock rubbing and bumping against him, but for now it was only fingers tugging him wide. Peter sat up, leaning back into the pressure and trying to spear himself on Sylar's cock. It felt so good to be so open and vulnerable. It was a relief when the fingers pulled out and he felt Sylar's flesh penetrating his. Peter sat back and down, feeling the slicked organ sheath itself within him. "Ah!"

Sylar grunted, shifting his hips to thrust, holding Peter at thigh and waist. Peter held his forearms, letting the man pound him from below. "Fuck," he whimpered as the man surged in and out of him. One of Sylar's hands went to Peter's dick, stroking it fast and furious. It lit him up inside, like he was
going to pop only seconds into being fucked. "Ah!" he repeated, his knees tightening against Sylar's sides as his toes curled. Sylar kept hammering him hard, his fist and hips matching pace so that Peter felt like he was being fucked and fucking at the same time. He was swept up in the sensation, his sense of self flying apart and leaving nothing but the overwhelming awareness of sex and arousal. He caught Sylar's free hand, twining their fingers together as he felt his peak coming. A stroke later, Sylar rammed into him even deeper than before, balls deep and pushing Peter back on him. He was skewered so tightly and thoroughly that he felt the base of the man's cock as it throbbed, pulsing semen inside him in orgasm. Peter shuddered in shared ecstasy. His own fluids spurted and spilled over Sylar's belly and hand.

"Guh, huh," Peter panted, frozen in place as Sylar emptied inside of him. It felt fucking magical. It took a while for his sense of reality to settle. "Oh, fuck. Okay."

He watched as Sylar released his hand and dragged a thumb through Peter's ejaculate on his hairy stomach. Sylar had Peter's full attention as he put his thumb in his mouth and sucked it clean. "Whenever you want more …? Next time I'll make it last longer."

"Yeah, yeah," Peter said, climbing off and using his discarded t-shirt to clean up his ass, then Sylar's junk, followed by his stomach. With several breaks in the process for a surprising amount of kissing and nuzzling. "I didn't know you were like this," Peter said once they were both somewhat clean and lying together.

"This is what I would like to be."

Peter stroked Sylar's forearm. "You're right. This doesn't have to be complicated."

XXX

It was a kiss that woke him. Time, space, and his sense of self were all blurred together, but the physical sensation was clear as crystal. Sylar jerked back, eyes wide. A bright light was directed straight at his face, so startling and brilliant that he couldn't even see who had woken him. A glimmering of understanding came over him in the span of his first inhalation – he was still in his shop. He'd come here, today. Now. It had been empty. It was empty. But then who were these people?

He lashed out, an instant's internal debate between electricity and telekinesis going on as he raised his hand, half confused that he even had abilities. It didn't seem normal. In light of the uncertainty, his old favorite won out. He snagged the source of the light and flung it away. The room was dim without it, but not impenetrable. For now his eyes were still dazzled. Unfortunately, he didn't have time to adjust.

Noah's voice called out: "Peter, get out of the way!" Noah was here? And Peter? Was that who had kissed him? Peter was kissing him in front of Noah? He sorely wished he had time to understand and evaluate. At the sound of a scuffle, Sylar's hand lit up with electricity. Someone yelled "No!" and a shot rang out, but before the sound had even finished processing, Sylar had instinctively grabbed at the projectile with his ability, using his free hand. It hung in midair, less than a foot away from the person in front of him (Peter?), who'd interposed himself between Sylar and the gunshot, facing the shooter (Noah?).

Sylar's eyes widened even further as more pieces of his present state of reality fell together. Peter was not bulletproof. And yet, Peter had just tried to protect him. His vision had cleared enough to make out Noah and Claire fifteen feet away behind a counter, Noah with a gun out, with Claire looking every bit like she would spoil Noah's next attempt at a shot. Slowly so as not to provoke anything rash, Sylar snaked an arm around Peter and pulled him flush back against him. Even if it looked like
he was using Peter as a human shield, it gave him a better view of the threats and the best option for defending his defender. He kept one hand upraised, Elle's electricity arcing between his fingertips. The bullet wavered in the air as he split his concentration. Peter stared at it and helpfully didn't complicate things by resisting. That told Sylar a great deal, mostly that Peter was on his side.

"Let's go," Claire told her father insistently. Noah gave her a questioning look, but he lowered his gun. He looked pointedly at Peter, who said and did nothing. Yes, definitely on his side. Noah went. Claire retrieved the flashlight and sent Peter, or maybe both of them, an apologetic look before following him. Sylar heard the back door shut behind them. Only then did he let the electricity die from his hand, vanishing with a dull snap. The bullet pinged to the floor. Sylar buried his face against the side of Peter's neck – not to kiss, but merely to press against him and feel another human being, maybe wordlessly express his gratitude that someone had stood up for him.

"You were willing to take a bullet for me," Sylar murmured against Peter's skin.

Peter reached up and touched at Sylar's hair, then turned in place slowly to wrap his arms around Sylar. "I should have tried harder to make sure they didn't come. They were worried about me. We didn't know what we were going on. Didn't know. Are you okay now?" He stroked a finger along Sylar's jawline.

The touch drew Sylar's attention, reminding him of the relationship he was trying so hard to build. He slid off the shop stool he'd been sitting on all this time, cradled Peter's face with both hands, and kissed him hungrily and thoroughly, plundering Petrelli's mouth for himself. Peter's hands laced around the small of his back, then curled up his back as the kiss went on and Sylar's passion increased. The idea of gratefully fucking Peter on one of the counters came to mind, but even the workbench in the back room might not be sturdy enough for both of them. He pushed the tall chair out of the way and took Peter to the dusty floor, rubbing against him firmly enough to feel Peter's hardness through his jeans. "It feels like it's been years … again." Sylar paused, gazing down at Peter's face and looking for answers to all the memories of this place that seemed so fresh in his head.

"My mother said you were lost in the past. Noah said your family owned this place. You worked here before your abilities." Peter's voice was breathy. His eyes were searching. His hands gripped Sylar's shirt as he waited to see what would happen next. "Are you going to fuck me on the floor here?" It was half surprised and half hopeful.

A grin split Sylar's face at how much Peter must have enjoyed their previous episode of sex to ask such a question (or was he making a request?) He kissed Peter fiercely in answer. His telekinesis popped Peter's fly and took down his zipper in the same motion as Sylar reaching for him. Peter moaned and arched against him, hands fisting in his shirt so hard two of the buttons popped. After only a beat of hesitation, Peter tore the ruined shirt off of him. Sylar took him in hand and jerked him off while Peter buried his face in Sylar's chest hair, then his neck, then lay flat to pull Sylar in for more kissing.

Sylar pumped Peter until his toy was squeaking, Peter's head was thrown back, his back bridging up from the floor, his legs tight around the one of Sylar's that was knee-down on the floor between them. That was when Sylar stopped, relaxing his grip to the gentlest and not moving it at all. Peter
panted, chest heaving, and then his back flattening against the floor as he progressively eased off from the brink of orgasm. He looked up at Sylar in a daze and moved his hips. Sylar's hand moved with him, giving Peter not the least friction to get himself off.

"You want me to fuck you?" Sylar asked softly.

"Yes!"

Sylar let go of Peter's dick so he could tug down Peter's jeans and expose that lovely ass. Peter lifted his butt and shoved down his underwear with them. Sylar pulled everything to Peter's ankles and then looped it over the back of his head so Peter's rear sat in Sylar's lap. "How much does she know about us?" Sylar asked. "Claire, that is. Noah was surprised, but she wasn't."

"Everything."

Sylar lifted his hand, calling to it the most suitable lubricant the shop had. It was a better choice than lotion – definitely slicker, but probably harder to clean. They could worry about that later. What was important now was lubing Peter up for a good, long fuck. "I don't have to be a secret," Sylar mused at the novel idea, letting the fingers of one hand trail down Peter's still-engorged shaft, tickling over his balls. Peter shifted and arched, his feet pulling on the fabric bunched across the back of Sylar's neck.

"You're not going to be hidden away."

Sylar opened his fly, releasing himself for the first time from cramped confines. With his erection leaning against the back of Peter's thigh, he ran his thumb down Peter's crack, stirring the hairs and eliciting the smallest gasp. He dribbled oil and smeared it up and down, pressing in with his thumb until the found the exact spot where Peter's body would accept him. He pushed, greased, and pushed again. Peter put his hand to his own dick and squeezed, stroking slowly as he was probed. Sylar rumbled at him, "You don't get to come yet."

"Not until you're inside me?"

Sylar chuckled with a deep, amused sound. "Not until I'm coming with you."

"Oh yeah?" Peter laughed. His hand sped up on his dick. "You better hurry up then!"

Sylar smirked. He oiled himself quickly and thrust against Peter. The man's pained grunt and gasp almost made Sylar pause to see if he'd misstepped, but Peter's hand was still stroking himself, if slower. "Just imagine me," Sylar said to distract him, "fucking you forever. Every night. Every morning. Every day. That's what we should have been doing in Matt's head all that time." He could feel Peter's hot hole yielding before him as he forced entry. Peter's head was flung back again, mouth open and askew. "I will fill you. I will take you. I will keep you satisfied. Whatever it takes." Sylar pulled Peter's hips back against him, his length entering Peter as far as the position allowed. Peter's hands left his dick to lay over Sylar's, clenching at him. Peter was biting his lip now and Sylar smiled again as he realized why. He might talk about going it alone, but he was waiting for Sylar to catch up.

Sylar leaned forward, bending Peter up and adjusting their position so he could fuck him harder. Peter's knees were to his chest, feet over Sylar's shoulders. Sylar plowed him deep and thoroughly. The slick oil kept Peter wet and open, making it easy to slide inside all the way, over and over. He watched as Peter's face gradually contorted with the effort of holding off the orgasm that had to be on the edge of tearing him apart. "I will fuck you every chance I get," Sylar said hoarsely, watching as Peter's eyes rolled upwards. "Now, and always."
"Ah! Please," Peter whimpered. His feet turned to curl behind Sylar's head and his hands gripped Sylar's bare shoulders, digging in.

The euphoria of that much obedience, so willingly and easily granted, made Sylar snarl in glee. He felt the build inside of himself as he pounded Peter a few more times, watching the delicious torment on Peter's features as he struggled not to come. One of these days Sylar knew he'd have to find out just how much control Peter had, but for now he was already to bursting himself. "Now, Peter. Now!"

"Ah, ah!" Peter came almost immediately, his body jerking with the release. He called out with every spurt of semen across his belly. With every spasm that racked Peter, Sylar slammed his seed home inside of him. It was the darkest, most delightful fantasy-come-true Sylar had ever imagined.

Both spent, the disentangled themselves and pulled up their pants, which was more of a struggle for Peter than for Sylar. Not only did Peter's pants start out wadded around his ankles, but he seemed genuinely disoriented from being fucked silly. It was flattering and endearing. Sylar laid himself down on the dirty floor next to Peter, curled towards him. He smiled softly and smugly to himself as he inhaled the curiously mixed scents of sweat, sex, Peter, watch oil, and dust. Peter swabbed off his belly with the remains of Sylar's shirt. Their hands entwined.

"Your mother," Sylar said slowly after a while, his forehead pressed to Peter's shoulder and one arm crooked under his head to pillow it, "said I was lost in the past?" Peter gave his hand a squeeze in confirmation. "You went to her about me?" Sylar asked.

"She found you before," Peter said.

"She knew where I was?"

"Not really. That's all she really said – you were lost in the past. I couldn't get a location from her. I was starting to think you'd been thrown back in time or something."

"Ah." Sylar slowly crept his leg over Peter's, quietly marveling at how much intimacy Peter allowed, and how wonderful it was to experience it. He thought about what Peter had said earlier, trying to put together the story that had brought Peter to the store. "You told Claire, but not Noah, but Noah was the one who knew about this place."

"Yes." Peter gave his hand a squeeze again. "Somewhere around here is some motion detector from years ago. Noah said he got an alert yesterday from one of the Company's automatic systems."

"Yesterday?"

"Yeah." Peter turned his head to look in Sylar's direction. Sylar raised his head to look back. Peter said, "It's Monday."

Sylar's face blanked. The carnival had happened Saturday night. Sunday, Peter had gone off to work and Sylar had come here, since there was no way he could make progress on legal identification until a business day. Plus, he'd promised to get groceries and dinner. "No wonder it felt like years. I've been drowning in memories for more than a day." It felt like he'd relived his whole life up to the point where he became Sylar.

Peter chuckled. "I came home and you weren't there. I got worried."

Wonderingly, Sylar said, "You came looking for me. And only for me. Not for Nathan, not to save thousands, not to save Emma. Just for me? After," Sylar hesitated for a moment, imagining Peter's situation the evening before, "after you must have thought I'd abandoned you."
Peter turned on his side and kissed Sylar on the forehead. "Loyalty is not a fault," he said quietly.
Enjoying the afternoon had been Peter's idea. It was the first warm day of spring and Sylar had found himself trooping along behind his companion to the top floor of an upscale apartment complex. They were sitting on deck chairs in front of a tarp-covered pool, with a bottle of Scotch between them and a couple of glasses, still full. It was definitely fancier than anything Sylar had personal experience with. Nathan knew more of this kind of life, but he didn't want to think about Nathan – Peter didn't like the subject and besides, such a removed life was largely meaningless to Sylar. Nathan was boring. He focused his thoughts elsewhere, trying to pick out what of the situation he had a personal frame of reference for.

He thought briefly about the crowded nightclub he'd frequented with Danko. It was swanky and expensive, but not the same. More similar was the time he'd woke up to find himself reclining on the beach with Candace. It wasn't a good memory. He glanced over at the untouched Scotch. It was no fruity drink with an umbrella, so there was at least that. And the skyline that Peter was staring off at was no ocean vista. Sylar turned to regard it himself, smiling a little at the humor that Peter was the one who thought all this was fake, and yet it was still Peter who wanted to see it. Languidly, Sylar reached to the table between them, retrieving his drink to take a tiny sip of it. Sharp, cutting liquid burned across his tongue, filling the roof of his mouth and his nose with the alcoholic vapor. The subtleties of the flavor were largely lost on him, although he was sure Peter had picked out a premium product. The easy way Peter had taken a single glance at the label had assured him of that. It was a high enough alcohol content to relax him straight away. That was nice.

He settled his shoulders against the chair and let his thoughts wander to the rest of that twisted episode with the illusionist in Mexico. He remembered how she'd tried to lure him and satisfy him by catering to his imagined appetites. Each thing she'd offered had struck him as more repugnant than the last. It was the presentation that was offensive, because the choices themselves weren't all that bad, if lacking in creativity. He set down his glass, taking the opportunity to run his eyes from Peter's heavily-shoed feet, neatly crossed at the ankles, up his jean-clad thighs, over his waist where the fabric of his shirt bunched and wrinkled, begging to be smoothed, across his chest which filled out the cloth so nicely, then to his corded neck and the utterly fascinating way it joined with his jaw, ear, and skull … Sylar's gaze lingered there longer than the rest before going on to admire the wave of hair and the set of his head … Peter glanced over.

Sylar dropped his eyes, withdrew his hand from the drink, and went back to looking at the skyline like he hadn't just been ogling his companion. Peter, just sitting there doing nothing, was far more
appealing than all of Candace's forced seductions. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Peter take a sip from his own drink and then replace it, going on with absorbing the sunlight, surveying the landscape, and not making an issue of Sylar's probably inappropriate interest. It was comforting for Sylar not to be pushed or questioned. It wasn't like he had any answers, anyway, and that was what made it a stressful subject. It was unsettling enough just to realize that he was attracted to Peter, much less to be called on to explain it.

"What-" Sylar started, the words dying as soon as Peter turned to look his way. He pursed his lips and tried again. "When-" He tensed, still lying perfectly still as he ran through several degrees of internal tension without moving.

"Yeah?" Peter asked casually, picking up his drink for another small sip, turning to look at the city instead of watching Sylar.

Sylar breathed out slowly in relief. Peter's nonchalance helped him pull his thoughts together. "What do people … see in other people?" Peter looked at him blankly. Sylar avoided meeting his eyes and made a small wave at the world to explain. "When I went to them for abilities, it was the power I wanted. Everyone wants power. I understand that. But …" He tensed again, this time not able to stop how it drew his head in and shrunk his posture. Peter was still watching without interrupting, letting him get it all out. "There are other things people want from each other, things that aren't power. Or aren't power, exactly. Like …" He shrugged helplessly.

"You mean love?"

"Yes. Sort of. And … other things." He had to work to keep breathing evenly. He wasn't sure now why he'd even broached this topic with Peter. It was stupid. He felt like he was an ignorant teenager asking questions of a parent. It wasn't like he was a virgin and he certainly knew how it worked, but the whole 'feeling' side of things was difficult to understand. It just happened to him and then stopped happening and he didn't know why or how to manage it. Like how he felt about Peter, now, all of a sudden. Or maybe he'd felt that way all along and just hadn't realized it?

"Other things, like sex?"

Sylar nodded, glad he didn't have to verbalize that. "Uh-Attraction. Why are people attracted to each other? What … about them, is attractive?" He turned to Peter, wide-eyed, as if sure Peter had the answer to that. Peter Petrelli had had enough dalliances and affairs, girlfriends and boyfriends, to be in a better position to answer than Sylar was.

Peter blinked at him several times and gave him an uncertain smile. He cleared his throat. "Um. I don't know that we get a lot of choice in what we're attracted to. It's sort of … biological. It's part of who we are."

Sylar's expression settled into a small frown. That sounded like a non-answer, a dodge. "That's too simple."

"What?"

"What you said is too simplistic to explain what I've seen." And felt.

Peter sighed. "Okay. It is. I'll agree with that. Who someone's attracted to is pretty complicated."

Sylar loosened up a little. Peter seemed to be taking him seriously, even if he wasn't giving the perfect solution Sylar wanted to hear. Since Peter wasn't continuing, though, Sylar probed again with a hypothetical. "Like … in the stereotypical example of a singles bar, a man might have … several
different people to choose from. Why does one appeal to him more than the others? Why do some not attract at all?"

Peter sighed again, taking a sip of his drink and looking over Sylar's face. "I don't know. Of course there's some things about attractiveness that are common across most people – fitness, symmetry, hygiene, nice clothes, smiling, that sort of thing."

"Smiling's not necessary."

Peter raised his brows at Sylar and said nothing.

"Okay. I suppose it could be. I mean, I think of it more as a sign of cooperation, compliance maybe." He tried to explain, as otherwise it sounded serial-killer creepy. As he reflected on his words, he suspected they still sounded creepy. "Maybe that's … attractive, I guess …" Sylar trailed off uneasily, realizing that was part of the problem with Candace, and part of the appeal of Peter. If it was too easy, he wasn't as interested.

Peter waited a long beat, then shrugged one shoulder, setting down his glass and putting his hands on the armrests of the deck chair. "I can see that. Some people like it easy, some like a challenge."

"Yes. That's what I meant," Sylar said quickly, too quickly. He snapped his mouth shut, not sure how to deal with the snarl of emotions he was having about this. But he was relieved Peter didn't disapprove too much about the smiling thing.

"Okay," Peter agreed easily. A few minutes passed quietly. The breeze ruffled Peter's hair and Sylar's as well. If Peter noticed the occasional sidelong glances he was getting, he didn't do anything to show it.

Peter was pretty, in his own way, Sylar mused. Healthy, symmetrical, fit, and clean – yes, he had all that. He also had an inner beauty that manifested not as smiling compliance with the world, but a defiant desire to oppose those who would ruin the happiness of others. He wanted to protect; to lift people up; to make things and people greater and better than they had been. Peter saw people as special – every one of them – and somehow the broad application didn't diminish how desirable Sylar found that to be. "What about you? Specifically?"

"What about me, what?" Peter asked with a calm innocence that under other circumstances might have fooled Sylar into thinking he didn't know exactly what Sylar was asking.

Sylar smiled slightly at that feigned ignorance. Since Peter wouldn't be doing that if he was willing to answer about himself, Sylar obliged by taking the topic general again. "You said there were things that were common across people for attractiveness, but that doesn't mean every guy I describe at the theoretical singles bar will always pick the same person. Maybe he has a certain type that's different for him than it is for other guys. You say that's … biological, like hair color, but … from what I've seen … people have choices. They make choices. Right?"

"Right."

"Then how do they make those choices?"

"That's … really broad."

Perfect, he thought. Peter had walked right into this one: "Then tell me about you. You know your own preferences, right?"

"Yeah." Peter eyed him suspiciously. Sylar was the very model of innocence. Apparently it worked,
because Peter answered. "Well … I choose people based on eye contact, mostly. How they're looking at me. Or if they're not, depending."

"Depending on what?"

"Well, if they're not looking at anyone at all, I might try to draw them out, talk to them. I like getting people to open up, relax, have a good time. Not necessarily to have a good time with me, but I guess what I'm doing is imagining I'm that guy you're describing at a singles bar – what would I do?" He paused for a moment, staring off into the distance as if visualizing it. "I'd see who was checking me out, then go talk to them."

"Regardless of what they looked like?"

"Yeah, maybe. Sort of. I mean, I …" Peter shrugged. "Really, back in college, I was usually looking to hook up and get laid. There's a certain kind of look people give when they're interested. I was good at picking that up." Oh shit, Sylar thought, worrying over his own 'looks'. Peter went on, "So that's where I'd go."

Sylar sat there for a moment and stressed over how transparent he'd been, then asked the obvious question, "Were there ever people interested in you whom you didn't go to?"

"Yeah," Peter said, drawing it out as his eyes slid over to Sylar slowly enough to make it crystal clear he knew what the subtext was here.

Sylar sighed, but didn't back off. While it was disappointing, he found it wasn't the core of what he wanted to know. Leaning forward, he said, "Tell me how you made that decision."

"Um. " Peter pulled his head back a little in mild consternation, double-checking with Sylar a few times. "Well, I … I don't know what you mean."

"Imagine two people. Both give you the same 'come hither' eye contact you want. How do you pick between them?"

"I go to whichever one's alone."

"Okay," Sylar nodded. "They're both alone. Now what?"

"I'm in a singles bar, right?" Sylar nodded again. "Which one has a drink?"

Sylar blinked. "Why is that important?"

"Which one can I buy a drink for?"

"Ah." That made sense. "Neither."

"Okay. If I'm just looking to get laid, then which one is dressed most revealingly?"

"Woman?"

"Or man. But that depends on what kind of singles bar I'm in." Peter shrugged a little. "We've already said whoever it is is making eyes at me, right?" Sylar nodded. "Then regardless of gender, there's ways people dress that say how confident they feel about themselves and how interested they are with getting with someone else."

"Isn't that … stereotyping? Like … can't a woman wear a short skirt without you thinking she's easy?"
Peter rolled his eyes briefly. "I'm not saying she's easy. 'Easy' is the shy person in the corner who
doesn't think anyone will ever pay attention to them. What I'm saying is that someone who's
advertising is advertising. They're out for a good time, they feel good about themselves, they look
good, and they know it. If they're already looking me up and down, then I'm going to go to the one
who's being the most out-there with their outfit, trying to attract attention. She's, or he's, already
looking at me like they want to get to know me. We've established that. I'll go over, try to introduce
myself, and ask if I can buy them their next drink. If they say no, then I go on my way."

Sylar pursed his lips. "So it's not the clothes; it's the attitude."

"Right."

"It sounds like you've cherry-picked characteristics for who will put out."

"Well … that's the point of this scenario, right?" Peter's brows drew together a little. He took another
sip of his drink, making a small gesture towards Sylar's.

_We're drinking together? While talking about sex?_ Sylar picked his glass up and took a bigger gulp
than he should have, struggling for a moment not to cough as the surplus liquid burned at the back of
his throat. Choking it down, he cleared his throat a little and set the glass back. "Yes, that was the
point. So attractiveness is based on who will have sex with you?"

"No, no … well … not …" Peter pressed his lips together and looked away. "That's not really true,
because who will have sex with me isn't necessarily … Okay, I think I see what you're getting at."
He put down his glass. "There are things I like in a person that keep me interested, that mean I want
to be with them more, I'll call them back, want to talk to them more than to anyone else, that sort of
thing. That's … that's really what you're aiming at, isn't it?"

"Yes, exactly."

Peter eyed him, a tiny frown on his face. "Why do you want to know all this?"

Sylar sagged a little, looking down. While yes, he wanted to know Peter's preferences, it was broader
than that. "I want to know if I'm … normal."

"Normal?"

Sylar hunched a little, tensing back up. He stared down at his overly hairy arm on the armrest,
expecting at any moment to be told he was asking for 'too much information' or that this was an
inappropriate topic of conversation. He'd found Peter to be extraordinarily open with him so far,
though.

"Okay," Peter said agreeably, looking away and breathing out. Sylar relaxed a little, hoping the
answer passed muster and didn't reveal too much. A lot of people wanted to be normal, right? While
he wanted to be special, he didn't want to be a freak. He definitely didn't want to be so much of a
deviant that Peter would never be with him. Or anyone, rather. His mind fingered gently over why
his first instinct had been Peter's interest alone, because it seemed rather deeper than the fact that
Peter was the only one here. Peter said, "You seem pretty normal."

"I don't want to talk about me, though," he complained, trying to steer the conversation away
immediately. He thought he was pretty inoffensive, bland even – he'd take anything, anyone, no
preference mattered, he just wanted … anything. And it was an 'anything' he wasn't getting. Despite
Peter's politeness, the boundaries were observed fairly closely – intimate touching was strictly off-
limits and more casual touches had a frequency and intensity threshold beyond which Peter would
pull away and discourage further contact. Clearly, Sylar wasn't attractive (or attractive enough) to Peter. "Tell me about you. You seem 'pretty normal' yourself."

Peter gave him an unhappy, level look, along with a huff, but settled back to think about it. "I … have to think people respect me, that I mean something to them. If it's just a quick fuck, that's great, but I probably won't call them back later. That's okay, but it's not … attractive. You know what I mean?" Sylar nodded. This was what he really wanted to know. He wanted to know why he'd killed Elle and why Lydia had turned him off and why Candace had been repulsive even while she offered up his wildest fantasies on a platter. And especially why Peter was now the wildest fantasy of all. "I gotta think it will work between us. That they care for me. There's got to be a connection. That's what keeps me coming back."

"You could have that with anyone." It seemed so basic and dismissable. It hardly counted as real criteria. It was practically normal interaction for people who weren't monstrous serial killers.

"Yeah."

Sylar frowned. If it was that easy to achieve … then why hadn't Peter achieved it? Why didn't everyone achieve it (other than himself, of course)? There had to be something else. "But … you don't have it with anyone. There's a selection process, right?" Peter nodded hesitantly. "What's the appeal of being with a … a man? Or a woman? The way you've said you are, you can pick. I understand if someone is one way or the other, they don't get to pick, but that's not the case for you."

"You think you're like me?"

Sylar set his lips together and said nothing. He didn't know his own 'orientation', which was embarrassing to admit. He just knew that he hadn't been getting what he needed so far in his paltry love life.

"You ever been in love with a man?"

This was getting way too personal. "Have you?" Sylar's voice was challenging and irritated. How was he to answer that when he wasn't even sure what love was? He'd felt things towards people – was feeling them now, towards Peter – but the emotion didn't come with a label. He didn't know what other people felt when they called something love.

Peter glanced over pointedly, obviously noticing Sylar's shift in mood. Then he looked away quietly for a while. "Nothing long term, no."

Sylar blinked. "Never?"

Peter shrugged. "I've crushed on guys, hard. Never …." Peter held out his hand like he was waiting for the universe to drop something into his palm. "It never really worked out. But that's probably because I never thought it could."

"Why not?"


"Being gay?"

"Not that I am, but yeah, it would be a gay relationship and I didn't think that was allowed. I thought if my dad had to choose between having a son in a gay relationship and not having a son, that he'd choose not to have a son. It's not like he'd be losing Nathan, after all."
Sylar frowned, hearing echoes of Virginia claiming he wasn't her son, that by being different from how she'd wanted him to be, he'd lost her love. Sylar hadn't known he'd lose her by gaining abilities. Peter knew his father would reject him for deviance from the Petrelli ideal, and so despite his rebelliousness, he'd never gone quite that far. Clearly, he wanted to. He had to resent being forced to keep that side of himself closeted. Sylar turned in his seat to face him more fully.

Peter went on, "I already knew what happened when I brought around a girl who wasn't from the right family. She dumped me. And I always thought, even not knowing about abilities, that my dad had something to do with that. Then there was how he reacted to me being a nurse. It was like it was the end of the world. He almost fucking disowned me over that." Peter snorted and looked over at Sylar. "Now how do you think he'd react if I brought home a guy?"

"He's dead now. You don't have to worry about what he thinks." His eyes were steady on the handsome profile of Peter's face, seeing the frustration there, imagining the hurt he'd feel if his mother had known about abilities and preached against them, forcing him to choose between her and his own happiness. Was that something Peter had been living with all this time? No wonder he'd shot the bastard.

Peter exhaled huffily. "Yeah."

Since it seemed like Peter wasn't going to continue, Sylar prompted, "If you were in love with … someone … what about them would you love?"

Peter gave him an odd look. "Whatever about them is loveable."

Sylar tried a more poetic approach. "What makes love stay? Or grow?" When Peter still hesitated, Sylar said, "Why didn't I love the people I wanted to love?" Peter's sympathetic eyes on him made him blurt out, "I should have. I wanted to. But then I didn't and it …" Sylar's breath came harder. What if it was because Elle wouldn't let him be the person he wanted to be? What if she was like Virginia, wanting him to be something he wasn't; or like Arthur with Peter, wanting him to fit an ideal that he didn't? What Elle wanted Sylar to be and what Sylar wanted himself to be weren't the same. She, none of them, saw him as himself as special. Not the way Peter seemed to see him even now … sometimes, at least. "Then it was too late. And I didn't want to go back. It was over. It hadn't worked. I didn't want to try again. It …" He shook his head and finally shut his runaway mouth.

"Sometimes it doesn't work," Peter said softly. "Was it a man?"

"No." Sylar stewed, retracing what he'd blurted out and trying to see if there was anything he needed to do damage control for. It seemed okay – not like he was confessing to a murder, after all. "Is it different for a man?"

"No, I don't think so." Peter was quiet for a moment. "I don't know what makes love work sometimes and not others. People have to be compatible; they have to be friendly; they have to be willing. It helps to be kind and patient and accepting. And then circumstances have to be right. It's one thing if you're Romeo and Juliet, and you're fourteen or whatever and willing to do anything to be with someone, but most people try not to get too involved if it's not something you're going to be able to act on."

"Like you and … men. Before your dad died, you mean."

"Before I had abilities, yeah."

"What difference do they make?" Sylar knew they made a lot of difference, but he wanted to hear Peter's reasons.
He chuckled lightly. "They changed everything. My family … already wasn't accepting me for who I was. They lied to me about abilities. People could have died. Some people did. My family's opinion on who I'm with became meaningless after that."

Sylar glanced over, noting Peter's use of present tense for that. Not that Peter thought he was 'with' Sylar, but it meant Peter didn't see his romantic possibilities entirely in the past tense. But if his family's opinion didn't matter, then why was he still alone? "Do you think you'll be in love with someone again, sometime?"

Peter shook his head. "Now that I have abilities, it wouldn't be fair to anyone I tried to be with. It's too dangerous."

Sylar tilted his head slightly, settling back in his seat to face the irregular skyline again. It would be just his luck to be trapped here, falling for a guy who thought 'it wouldn't be fair' to give him a chance. "Life isn't fair for anyone, Peter," he murmured.

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"So what do you like, physically, about men? What's their appeal to you?"

They were now leaning against the edge of the building, or at least as close as they could get without climbing over planters and other design features there to keep people from perching on dangerous ledges. Peter had been disappointed at how little he could make out of the flight of their previously released paper airplanes. The breeze wasn't right for it, but no matter how much Sylar had pointed that out, Peter had to find out for himself. Then they'd run out of notebook paper. Sylar didn't like the way Peter was eyeing the patio rooftop and speculating it would support his weight if he climbed up there. (Seriously, it was a marvel the guy hadn't gotten into base jumping as a hobby.) It was time for a change of topic and Sylar's question certainly brought Peter's attention around.

"Tell me you're not asking just to better your chances of getting in bed with me."

"I'm not asking just to better my chances of getting in bed with you," Sylar answered flatly. Not 'just'. Peter frowned at him anyway.

Annoyed that Peter was probably on to him, Sylar tried to throw him off with, "You should at least entertain the possibility that somewhere, there is someone who doesn't want to bed you, or be bedded by you." Even if that someone doesn't happen to be me.

The frown broke. Peter snorted and laughed. "Yeah, I sound like an asshole who's really stuck on myself, don't I?"

"It's a serious question."

"What, if I sound like an asshole?" Now it was Sylar's turn to make a face at Peter being a smart-ass. Peter's smile broadened and he pushed off from the planter he was leaning against. He strolled over to the pool they'd uncovered and sat next to it, unlacing his shoes. "Okay, what is it about men that I like?"

"As opposed to women." Sylar pulled over a deck chair to join him, sitting on the end portion of it, forearms resting on his knees as he watched Peter. At least he wasn't endangering himself with heights anymore.

Peter nodded, pulling off a shoe and following it with a sock. "Men are stronger. They're more straightforward."
"You value strength?"

Peter shrugged. "It's masculine. I like that. Women are easier to talk to, or at least that's how I've found them to be. I'm making some really, really broad generalizations here." Sylar nodded and made a brief, dismissive roll of his eyes at Peter's attempt to reconcile his very human mass mental aggregation of people's traits versus the fact that everyone was different. "Women expect me to initiate more. That means I have a lot more control over what happens."

"You like control?"

Peter shrugged. "Honestly, if I could have more control with men or women, I'd rather it be with the men, but I don't get to pick."

"Why not pick men who are willing to let you be in control?"

"Um." Peter blinked at him, thrown by that for a moment. "Well, I … Yeah, well, I just don't. I mean, I end up with who I end up with, if we click and it works for us, and sometimes that means I top and sometimes I don't."

"Top?" From the context, Sylar could derive the obvious meaning of dominance, but there were a lot of possible, implied meanings – did it mean those, too?

"Yeah."

Sylar exhaled forcefully. He didn't like having to ask these sorts of questions, because it illustrated an ignorance he'd rather not advertise. But Peter didn't seem to judge. "What does that mean?"

"Topping?" Sylar nodded. "Usually the one who's 'on top' is in control. Between two men, that's the one who's penetrating as opposed to penetrated, assuming you're doing that. If you're not, then it's just kind of generally the one who's calling the shots, picking positions, that sort of thing." Peter finished taking off his other shoe and sock, setting them aside before rolling up his jeans up to his knees. "It doesn't mean literally on top."

"What happens when you … top?"

Peter turned and put his feet in the water, back partly to Sylar. He looked over his shoulder at him. "I don't want to answer that."

Sylar huffed and nodded. "Too personal," he murmured. "Then … do you prefer to top?"

Peter shrugged, turned away, and looked down in the water where he was kicking his feet back and forth. "I dunno. Sometimes. Depends on the guy."

Sylar pursed his lips. Peter was being coy, so he suspected the answer wasn't the truth. But he wasn't sure why Peter would lie and why be so ambiguous if he did. If he didn't want to answer, he had no problem with saying so … Peter was weird, that's what it came down to. "Aside from control issues," that you're not willing to answer, "what else do you like about men as opposed to women?"

Peter shifted back and forth, kind of squirming in place and rocking on his butt cheeks. "Why are you asking about all this?"

Sylar frowned at the whining tone. Peter didn't like the questions – fine. He didn't have to like them. He just had to answer them. Or rather, Sylar just wanted him to answer them, as he knew he couldn't force Peter to do it, which meant he needed to think of a reason to make Peter happy enough to keep talking. "You have a choice, Peter – men, or women. It's much easier to be with women. That's
natural." He held up a hand to stop Peter's burgeoning objection. "Okay, not 'natural', then –
'normal', the majority is that way." He waited a beat while Peter shut his mouth and settled down,
watching attentively for Sylar to go on. "You're not choosing what's easier, so there must be things
that particularly attract you, that make it worth it."
"I've been with a lot of women." Sylar tilted his head slightly with a 'so?' expression. Peter sighed.
"Sure, well. I-" He shrugged. "I don't know. Some men are really sexy."
"In a way women aren't?"
"Nn … Women are sexy differently."
"How so?"
Peter leaned back, putting his arms out behind to prop him up. "I don't know, Sylar! They're
women!" Sylar was silent, not knowing what to say to that non-answer. Then Peter elaborated, "I
like feminine and masculine – extremes maybe? Ideals? Just … clear. I don't like flat-chested women
or twinky guys."
"Twinky?"
"Twinky or effeminate. Either."
"What's 'twinky'?"
Peter glanced back at him. "Me, ten years ago. Young guys, no hair – I mean no body hair, or not
much – slender, maybe immature-looking."
"You like men who are," hairy, like me?, "more mature-looking?"
"Yeah. I'd prefer they didn't look actually old, though. You know, within five or ten years of my
age."
Sylar pooched out his lips briefly and raised his brows in a considering way. No one would ever
confuse him with a woman, so it sounded like he fit Peter's admittedly broad preference category.
That was good. "Tell me about … attraction."
"What about it?"
Sylar rolled his eyes slightly and shrugged. He didn't know how to put into words what he was
trying to ask. At least not in a way that he was willing to.
Peter sighed, kicking his feet slowly in what must have been pretty cold water. "So I see a guy, or a
woman, and I want to be with them. Kind of like how I would rather go talk to people than …" he
shrugged, "be by myself. You know how sometimes you see a person walking a dog and you want
to go up and say hi to the dog?"
Um, no.
Peter was looking forward, talking out loud. But Sylar had seen the phenomenon Peter was referring
to. Certainly there were dogs more interesting to talk to than some people. Peter continued, "When
I'm attracted to someone, I want to talk to them. And maybe I'll talk about their dog, but it's them I'm
interested in. When I'm not, I want to talk to their dog. I like dogs. Dogs are friendly. I'll talk to the
dog's owner to get permission to pet the dog and that's all."


"It's just something that happens," Sylar said slowly.

Peter shrugged. "Yeah. There's things that influence it. Like I said before, eye contact, interest, what's going on – that sort of thing – but the spark's either there or it isn't."

"You'd tell me … if that spark wasn't there, wouldn't you?"

Peter prided himself on being honest, but instead of answering, he snorted and shifted forward. He reached into the cold water and splashed some haphazardly back at Sylar.

Sylar sputtered at the unexpected attack, even though all he suffered was a few drops hitting one lower pant leg. *That's not a no. But what does it mean? He was being coy before … "Are you saying you're attracted to me?"

"I'm saying you're attractive, that's different."

"How?" Peter splashed him again and this time Sylar accepted it stoically even as more than a cup of water hit his legs, shirt, and arms in a much better aimed spray. More important matters were afoot than getting wet. "How is it different, Peter? Is the spark there, or not?"

Peter got to his feet and stood over him threateningly. "I will throw you in the water if you don't shut up."

Sylar hesitated, giving one slow glance between the frigid water and Peter's glowering face. Peter's answer was clear enough – he wouldn't be this defensive if he didn't have something to hide. "That would be one way to top me."
Sylar watched as Peter ran, muscular legs flashing in even strides, feet flying over the treadmill. His black compression shorts showed off the swells of thigh and buttock. His white t-shirt rippled and shifted with each surging step. He must have been running nine or ten miles an hour, maybe more. It wasn't record-breaking stuff, but Peter was pounding it out as hard as he could. He'd obviously been at it a while. He wasn't a natural runner; his bandy legs didn't favor it; but he had heart, he was strong, and he was fit. It showed.

It was the first time the raw physicality of Peter Petrelli had made an impression on Sylar. Prior to this, it had been his mere physical presence Sylar had noticed, although it had proven difficult to accustom Peter to sharing that presence with him. It wasn't like Peter had invited him here to work out with him. Sylar had been wandering, looking for the man like he usually was (seriously – what else was there to do? Stalking Peter was way more interesting than repairing yet another watch), and saw him going into this building from nearly three blocks away. By the time he'd gotten here and found the right room, Peter had worked up a sweat.

Peter had been running long enough that his form was starting to suffer. His feet didn't come down as evenly as before, but he was too stubborn to give up right away. With a grimace, Peter threw his head back, stuck his chest out, and redoubled his efforts. For a while, it worked. Then he nearly went down when a tired foot landed wrong. Peter flailed at the settings, but it didn't help. He had to yank out the magnetized clip to activate the emergency stop. Then he staggered with the precipitous drop in speed, grabbing the support bars to either side as his chest heaved with exertion.

Sylar smirked. He snagged a white towel off the stack next to the door and sauntered across the fitness room. Peter saw him coming, although it was the first Peter had noticed him. The one-time empath stared, too blown to glare and too breathless to speak. Peter watched Sylar's face all the way, never glancing towards the towel. With no indication that Peter was even aware of the cloth, Sylar had the option of putting it between them and offering it like a supplicant, or he could do something more direct.

With an amused smile, he reached up and blotted the perspiration from Peter's brow, swiping the plastered hair out of the man's eyes. Peter smelled good, he noticed. He was sweaty, yes, but he'd only just begun to sweat so there was as yet no underlying funk to it. It was that first flush of pheromones people gave off as they became active. It was the sexiest scent Sylar had ever come across.

The realization must have shown on Sylar's face, because Peter rolled his eyes and snatched away the towel. Sylar didn't mind. Towel gone, he didn't withdraw his hand right away. Instead, his fingers caressed down Peter's temple, over his cheekbone, then his jawline, following that to his chin,
where Sylar's thumb curled up to hold it gently. Peter had frozen, his eyes widening slightly at being intimately touched. His breathing changed, tense now with sharper inhalations. But he had yet to actually object.

In his most sultry voice, Sylar rumbled, "Anything else I can do for you?"

"Anything?" Peter huffed out with disbelief.

Sylar rubbed his thumb across Peter's chin and let his hand drop away. In case there was any doubt of what he was insinuating, he took his time to look up and down Peter's body. The compression shorts really left little to the imagination. Peter had a nice body, firm and powerful. "Anything at all," Sylar promised.

Peter huffed out a breath in half a laugh, almost said something, then changed his mind and blurted out, "Bend over then!" like it was a joke.

Sylar tilted his head, his expression serious. He cringed a little inside at how quickly Peter was taking him up on it and how laughable the man seemed to think it was. The approach had been spontaneous – Sylar hadn't harbored a single sexual thought about the younger Petrelli until just moments before. If the spandex was any indication, Peter wasn't aroused in the least. Nevertheless, Sylar put his hands to his waistband, unfastening the top button. "Right here?" He glanced around at the various pieces of exercise equipment. It seemed equally likely that Peter would back out as proceed, or perhaps he'd just humiliate Sylar in some way, like demanding he drop trou and then not carrying through as though the goods were not up to par. Sylar had no idea if Peter even had any homosexual experiences, despite racking his brain (and Nathan's broken memories) for information on the topic.

Peter was staring at him with intensity, humor gone. "No," he said shortly. Shaking his head as though he still didn't believe what Sylar had offered, he added, "I have to clean up." Peter tossed the towel at Sylar and left the room through a door next to the men's sign, leaving Sylar not sure what he should do. He caught the damp towel, then sniffed at it when the door had shut behind Peter. He supposed he could jerk off to the scent and imagine what Peter might have done to him. He stood there for a moment longer, until it occurred to him that the mention of getting clean might be an invitation rather than a good-bye. He kicked himself into gear and went to find out.

Peter was nearly naked when Sylar walked in, having obviously wasted no time in taking off his workout clothes. Sylar stood blinking, looking back. Mostly he was startled at how unfazed Peter was. The man stood there like he'd been seen in the buff by hundreds and never suffered the least reproach for it. Sylar admired that degree of comfort in one's own skin. After a few beats, Sylar let his eyes drop, roaming over the parts of Peter's body that had been concealed under clothing before. The man was indeed not aroused. He was normally proportioned as far as Sylar could tell in the flaccid state. Grudgingly taking his eyes off Sylar, Peter bent to finish undressing, stripping off his socks to complete his nudity.

Sylar still wasn't sure if this was an invitation, but he certainly hadn't been told to get lost. That was something Peter had never shied from before and he'd taken plenty of previous opportunities to say it. Sylar stripped off his t-shirt, lifting it up and over his head. He'd expected to see Peter ogling him when done, but instead saw only Peter's pert butt disappearing through the hazy plastic curtain that screened off the shower area. He finished disrobing quickly. Sylar's feet slapped against the cold tile as he followed.

There were four shower heads in a communal setup. Peter had taken the one on the far left, leaving Sylar two out of three choices which weren't an invasion of Peter's space and violation of commonly accepted locker room etiquette. Sylar naturally took the one he wasn't supposed to be at – the second to the left, immediately next to Peter. Peter glanced at him a few times, brief, sly looks out of
narrowed eyes followed by looking away. But again, he didn't tell Sylar to fuck off. He didn't tell him anything at all, which Sylar considered quite revealing. Sylar stepped under the water and soaped up thoroughly using the wall-mounted soft soap dispenser. He wanted to get clean as soon as possible, just in case something was about to happen. Peter did nothing but mind his own business and occasionally look his way. When he was done with the preliminaries, Sylar made a show of stretching and running his hands down his body in a manner he hoped was seductive. He would have found it seductive if Peter had done it, that was for sure. It gained him a few more looks. Gratifyingly, they were more lingering than the ones before.

Sylar slicked his hair out of his face, letting the water beat down on his chest as he did his best wet-hair-flip. He was considering how to show off further when Peter asked, "What are you offering?"

Sylar gave Peter a once-over look. The man was facing him, water hitting his back and side. Peter's right hand was near his hip. His left scratched idly at his belly. Sylar gestured simply at his own body. "This." It was flesh. He'd been immolated, electrocuted, experimented on and drugged to death, and had carved his name into his skin like it was wood. Whatever puerile use Peter wanted to put his body to was fine with him if it bought him time and attention from the world's only other resident. It was the first and only thing he could think to offer that might make up for a few of the lesser wrongs he'd committed to Peter over the years. The greater wrongs couldn't be fixed even if he gave everything he was, inside and out. But maybe Peter would find him more tolerable if he was getting something out of it.

Peter's eyes strayed from his face, gaze trailing down and back up. He took a half step closer to Sylar, reaching out between them with his left hand. Sylar froze at first, but when Peter didn't close the distance, Sylar took a half step of his own. His body was nearly in Peter's reach. He put his hand out where Peter could touch it. Peter did, fingers lightly skimming over the back of his hand. The small, fleeting contact made Sylar's face contort in either a grimace or a smile. He wasn't sure. His eyes burned. He was very glad his face was already so explainably wet from the shower. He struggled not to breathe out a sob of air. He didn't know, in his own head, why that voluntary contact meant so much to him, but it did. Peter wasn't acting especially lewd (aside from the basics of standing naked in the shower touching another man's hand). Given his expression and body language, it wasn't step one in 'throw Sylar to the floor and butt-fuck him until he bleeds'. It was gentle. Careful. Exploring. It was a delicacy Sylar knew he didn't deserve.

Peter moved on to touch along his lower arm, stirring the pattern of dark hairs that the water had turned into parallel lines. Peter mussed them with a half shrug and an equally halfway smile. He looked amused. His expression was warmer than Sylar had yet seen it since Peter's surprising arrival. Sylar's own expression loosened as some of the tension fell away from him. Obviously, he was not barking up the wrong tree here. Peter stepped closer, his interest clear. His hand drifted from Sylar's arm to his hip, then ticklishly crossed the sensitive flesh in a horizontal line from one hip to the other. If Sylar had been erect, the hand would have bumped into it. As it was, Peter's fingers trailed through a generous amount of pubic hair. Sylar shuddered, mouth opening as he breathed out in a rush. He wasn't sure what to say … or do. Peter's other hand went to his shoulder and he was suddenly pushed back against the wall, out of the warm spray of the shower. The shock of the chilly tile against his back and buttocks dispelled the dangerously vulnerable emotion he'd been feeling. More than a little, the roughness of the handling aroused him.

"Why?" Peter still had that half-smile on his lips. Generous lips. Well-formed in a handsome face with wet hair plastered across his forehead just like it had been after running on the treadmill. Moisture was beaded all over the man's face. He smelled so good. Peter was right up in his face, challenging him. The hand that had been on his shoulder caught Sylar's wrist as he raised it with the intention of touching. Peter pinned it to the wall. Along with the pressure of his other hand on Sylar's hip, it was keeping him where Peter wanted him, controlling him. Judging from Peter's face, he still
seemed to think Sylar was joking, even with Sylar's half-full dick prodding against some portion of Peter's anatomy.

"Because," Sylar stated insistently, in the same motion that he leaned in and captured Peter's mouth, going for it entirely. His lips sealed over Peter's, stifling an objecting noise as he quickly grabbed the back of Peter's neck with his free hand. Peter tried to pull back. Sylar didn't allow it, following him away from the wall, sucking greedily at his mouth. His tongue made entrance, slipping between Peter's lips despite the very real danger of getting badly bitten. His hand turned upward, cradling the back of Peter's head for a better grip, making a fist in the man's hair to better hold him. Peter made another noise and this time it was so deliciously far from objecting.

Petrelli stopped trying to get away and instead pushed back, shoving Sylar against the tile once more. Peter's body pressed fully into him when they hit the wall, making it apparent by Peter's hardness that Sylar wasn't the only one seriously turned on by this point. Peter's tongue slid over Sylar's. The shock of sensation was as exquisite as it was unexpected. Sylar's eyes rolled back in his head as he reveled in Peter's newly-kindled enthusiasm for him.

Peter twisted, breaking free from the kiss and yanking away from the grip to his hair at the same time. Sylar grappled with him, trying to keep the man from getting away, but Peter's shoulder slammed into Sylar's chest, knocking some of the breath out of him. He was as surprised by the violence as he was turned on by it. Freed now, Peter didn't flee. Instead, he grabbed both sides of Sylar's head and jerked his face down for another consuming kiss, making a slow thrust that drove the tip of his dick up the lower part of Sylar's wet belly. Thrilled the encounter was far from over, Sylar reached down for both butt cheeks of that glorious ass he'd admired in the spandex earlier. He dug in his fingers and kneaded the firm muscles, pulling their bodies together so he felt Peter's hot hardness pressed into him, so he felt his own dick against the other's body. It was perfect. Peter moaned into his mouth. He tasted as perfect as he smelled.

Sylar boldly ran the fingers of one hand down Peter's crevice, stretched open and to one side by his other hand. He'd never felt this part of another person, nor even wanted to until now. Now he wanted every part of this man to be his. Peter shuddered against him, trailing kisses across Sylar's cheek and down to his neck. "Oh yes," Sylar whispered. "Such a dirty boy." His fingers probed. Would Peter allow this? Was he crossing a line? Sylar had never been one to hesitate – he didn't now.

Peter dropped a hand and wedged it between them, wrapping it around their dicks and pulling them up and down together. Sylar had given himself better hand jobs, but never before with another penis sliding along next to his, nor a stranger's hand doing it instead of his own. It felt so good this way. He prodded with his fingers, knowing he'd found Peter's opening when the man gasped against him and bit the skin over his collarbone. Sylar groaned, stiffening even further if that were possible.

Neither one of them was going to last. Even wet, there was enough resistance in Peter's asshole that Sylar could only make entry with the wriggling tips of two fingers, but even that much caused Peter to redouble his efforts in jerking them off. He bit Sylar's upper chest hard enough to bruise. The idea of being marked by Peter, used by him for Peter's satisfaction, and the knowledge that he was getting Peter off shot all through him. He might not have fucked Peter, but he'd penetrated him sexually and with his partner's enthusiastic consent. This was real. It was real no matter what happened between them, no matter what denials Peter wanted to throw out later – Sylar would know he'd had Peter Petrelli and been wanted by him in a way that could never be taken away.

He felt himself light up inside with a fire that spread until he boiled over, hot spunk jetting and surging out of both of them. He could feel Peter's ass clenching around his fingers with the orgasm. Sylar grinned savagely at the victory of making Peter come with him. He released the man so he
could push him back enough to claim his mouth as the aftershocks coursed through both of them. Peter was so delightfully compliant, bending to his will and tonguing him in return in an easy fashion. Sylar kept at it, his kisses getting gentler as the hot fire of lust gradually blew itself out. In the aftermath, the tile across his shoulder blades seemed colder. He saw Peter's skin prickle with gooseflesh.

Sylar steered them both, still embracing, into the continuing warm spray of the shower. It washed them clean, pouring over their bodies in scores of complicated rivulets. Sylar pushed Peter's hair out of the way only to have it stubbornly wash back across the man's face. He smiled in lazy amusement and kissed a batch of bare skin, flicking the tip of his tongue between his lips to taste his partner one more time.

Peter's half-smile came back, more relaxed than before. "Okay," he said with a sigh, nestling against Sylar for the moment. "That was a good answer. You win that one."

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A week later …

It shouldn't have taken most of a week to find Peter again, but it did. The man had dressed and disappeared after the shower, gone by the time Sylar had his shoes on and tried to follow. Peter wasn't in the streets around the building, so he must have hidden inside. But a search of the building turned it up empty. By that time, Peter was long gone, either from Sylar accidentally missing him (it was possible) or Peter intentionally ducking him (which seemed more likely). The time that followed wasn't the first time since Peter had turned up in the world that Sylar had gone days without seeing him. At least now he had souvenirs – a bite mark on his chest and a towel he'd subsequently been more intimate with than most people were with their lovers. He would have thought the fooling around with Peter would have bought him something more personal – a few words, maybe some time.

Finally, his roving eye caught motion through the big glass front of a bar he was about to blithely walk past. Inside, Peter was playing pool, his back to the street and showing no signs of being aware Sylar had found him. Bells over the door chimed to announce his presence when Sylar walked in. Peter looked up at him with a long, steady, unwelcoming gaze, making Sylar wonder if Peter had known he was out there and just been ignoring him. Sylar looked back to make it clear he wasn't going to be scared away. Eventually Peter returned to his billiards and took his shot, sinking the second-to-last ball in play.

Sylar leaned against the wall next to the windows, watching as Peter disregarded him in favor of the game. The last ball went in shortly. Peter racked up the next set, then walked over to hand his cue to Sylar. "Your game."

"What?"

Peter gestured at the table. "It's your game. You play."

Sylar looked at the cue stick, then the pool table, wondering if Peter was being literal or metaphorical. In either case, he moved to the top of the table, lined up the ball, and took his stroke. Peter wandered over to a nearby chair, taking a seat. There was a six pack of long neck bottles on the table next to him. He took a drag from an open one and sprawled back lazily, watching.

"It's your turn," Sylar said. He'd put the fourteen ball in the back right corner pocket on the break.

Peter shook his head, waving at the game with his beer. "Table's yours. Play it out."
Sylar grit his teeth uneasily, but Peter was at least not leaving. The simple act of staying in the same room was an improvement. Sylar went back to the game, realizing shortly that Peter's eyes were following him wherever he went. It changed the game completely. All Sylar's shots from then on required a lot of bending over, excessive cue stick stroking, and just had to be made from Peter's side of the table. Peter opened a second beer and studied him like a diehard fan intent on watching the home team best their traditional rivals.

When Peter started in on his third bottle, Sylar came to the side of his chair. He bent over him, reaching for the open beer as he announced, "I'm thirsty." He claimed Peter's drink for himself without so much as a twitch of objection. Still leaning over Peter with one hand braced against the table, Sylar tilted the bottle up even though he drank no more than a sip—just enough to get the flavor in his mouth. It was some dark, Irish brew. Sylar didn't care for it, but he was finally getting the kind of attention he'd been craving since that encounter in the shower. Peter touched his hip and looked up at him as though checking for permission. Sylar acted like he hadn't noticed and mimed another drink. Then he felt Peter's hand slide over his ass, caressing the seat of his pants and lightly scratching down his nearer leg.

"Mm," Sylar crooned, setting the bottle aside. He looked back at Peter with something akin to relief. Peter gave him that half-smile. It was knowing this time. Peter let his hand trail up Sylar's inner thigh until it came to his crotch. It traveled up the seam to the small of his back. He wrapped his fingers into the waistband and tugged.

Sylar straightened and Peter sighed, looking up at him with bedroom eyes. He still held the back of Sylar's jeans, fingers curled around the waistband possessively. Peter said, "It's too bad we keep doing this in places that don't have any proper lube."

Sylar stuffed his hand into a pocket, fishing out a black foil packet with silver lettering. He presented it to Peter, who took it and studied the writing. It was premium-grade stuff. Sylar hadn't been looking for Peter this long without being ready in case he found him. Peter was still reading the label when he told Sylar, "Take your pants off." Peter set the tube aside, unfastened his own pants, and pushed pants and underwear to mid-thigh. Sylar stripped down to his socks before he realized this time Peter wasn't actually taking anything off. Sylar stood there uncertain and suspicious, wondering if he should put something back on to keep things fair.

Peter had opened the lube and put half the packet on his fingers. "Come here," he said, patting the end of the seat next to his leg. "Put one of your feet here. The other on the floor, there."

Sylar sidled up and did as he was bade, even if that put his junk embarrassingly close to Peter's face. He worried that he smelled, because even though he'd brought the lube (and condoms, not that Peter had mentioned those), there was nothing he could do about the build-up of crotch funk after roaming the streets for hours looking for Petrelli's latest hideout. He hoped Peter would politely ignore it, or have him turn around so Peter had better access to what he was undoubtedly more interested in.

Peter positioned his hand palm up, thumb and pinkie finger extended slightly to either side, lubricant piled on the three fingers in the middle. His hand went between Sylar's legs, where Sylar supposed the thumb and pinkie finger helped guide it. He really didn't notice, so thoroughly distracted was he by Peter putting his mouth directly on the head of Sylar's dick.

"Uhh," Sylar grunted, looking down at the dark-haired top of Peter's head. Peter's other hand was wrapping itself around his still limp shaft, picking it up and kneading it with a milking motion. Peter pulled the loose skin back and sucked on the glans, provoking another surprised groan. Sylar put his hands on Peter's shoulders, gripping him. Peter's other hand had unerringly found its destination. Fingers and cool lube met his asshole, swirled around, and then teasingly began to penetrate him.
Sylar leaned forward slightly, unintentionally pushing his rapidly stiffening dick deeper into Peter's mouth. He couldn't believe he was actually getting head from the guy, but that was precisely what was happening.

"You filthy, filthy boy" he breathed, rubbing at the man's shoulders. There wasn't much else he could do but stand there and be pleasured. Two fingers breached his ass almost simultaneously. Sylar groaned again, then whimpered. He couldn't figure out how to move, which he dearly wanted to do. Peter had his entire penis in his mouth now. The hand which wasn't pumping slowly at his ass was cupping Sylar's balls, gently rolling and tugging at them. So many buttons were being pressed at once that Sylar was finding it hard to breathe. The blow job was hot, wet, and incredibly stimulating. He could feel Peter's tongue laving over him, licking him and pressing the head of his dick against the roof of Peter's mouth where he could better suck on him. The fingers in his ass moved in and out and were joined by a third, stretching him with a delicious feeling of fullness. Sylar was amazed he'd managed to accommodate them so easily, especially after how difficult it had been to get inside of Peter. Maybe, Sylar thought, he was a slut or his ass was loose or he was defective somehow. Used. Damaged goods.

He worried Peter would notice. He worried Peter would think he wasn't worthwhile and resent Sylar for whatever others had been there first. He worried this even while Peter had three fingers buried in his ass stroking his prostate as he deep-throated Sylar's cock from the front. Sylar moved his hands from Peter's shoulders to his hair, grabbing fistfuls of it as he panted and shuddered, his emotions twisting up inside with guilt, shame, and rapidly building ecstasy. Sylar looked to the ceiling. For the first time in many years, he prayed. There were no words to it. No thoughts brought it into form. It was nothing but a plea for mercy, for grace, for protection, for forgiveness. There was an acknowledgement of his sin, that he was filthy, that he was undeserving … and that he was about to come anyway, which he did with a spasmodic jerking of his hips that Peter rode out like a pro.

"Ah yeah. Fucking yeah," Peter said when he finally lifted away. Sylar wondered belatedly how the man had managed to breathe through all of that. Peter pushed Sylar's foot off the chair. "Turn around." The other half of the lube went into his hand, then Peter stroked it up and down over his very erect dick. Sylar turned, feeling spent and a little dazed. He didn't understand what was happening until Peter took his hips and pulled him backwards, bringing his ass down into Peter's lap. Oh. Oh! Now he understood. He felt the slicked up tip of Peter's penis find his lubed and prepped hole on the first try. Peter nudged at his hip and so he squatted deeper, feeling it slip inside him. Just like with the fingers, it was too easy. Sylar could only conclude he had a whore's ass. Maybe something had happened to him when he was in the clutches of the Company, when he'd been unconscious or too drugged to remember. Maybe they'd amused themselves with him until he was worn out, permanently slack. And now Peter knew. Peter, who was busily thrusting into Sylar's body, the chair squeaking madly under him.

Sylar panted, trying only slightly to help out with his motions. Mostly he let Peter bugger him however Peter wanted. That was the deal, after all. Sylar's now-limp dick flopped between his legs. He rested his hands on his knees to better brace himself. It wasn't that bad … really. It didn't hurt, despite Peter plunging into him in the most unnatural of violations. Sylar stared forward, his gaze a hundred-yard stare out the windows and into the empty street as Peter vigorously pounded away at him.

He felt it when Petrelli orgasmed. Despite how long it felt like it had taken, Sylar knew the process hadn't been much time in actuality. They were both hard up. Coupling was a release sorely needed. Peter pulled him down on him so fully that Sylar was literally sitting on his lap. Peter's dick was buried to the hilt up his ass, still throbbing faintly as Petrelli emptied the contents of his balls inside of Sylar. Sylar was still panting. His skin was clammy. His stomach was a knot of tension. He tried to
control the shivers, but they happened anyway.

Peter wrapped his arms around him and drew him back on top of him. He held him firmly, like a reassuring hug. He'd stopped moving his hips entirely. The man had become quiet, the heavy breathing of before was controlled now, like he was listening intently. "Sylar?" Peter said softly.

"Yes," Sylar got out. His teeth were clenched as he tried to hold himself together. He put one hand over Peter's forearms, holding them to him and keeping him from touching anywhere else.

"Was that your first time?" There was a tone to Peter's voice that made it clear he had only just now figured that out and that it wasn't really a question.

"Obviously not." Sylar felt some of the tension bleed away as he regained some self-control. Very slowly, he moved Peter's hands up and down his front, petting himself with them. Peter let him. Sylar felt the man's lips begin kissing his back as though Sylar's answer had no bearing on Peter's affections. Sylar's breathing slowed. It looked like it might be okay. Peter didn't ask further stupid questions. Peter knew the damage he was dealing with now. Whether he discarded Sylar or not was out of Sylar's hands. If Peter's current caresses and soft kisses were any indication … then that might not be in the cards.

Sylar looked back at Peter as much as he could, but he was too tall to kiss from the position. Peter gave him a nudge that he interpreted as permission to move. He rose, feeling the bizarre, wet disengagement of their bodies. Sylar turned and climbed right back on Peter's lap, settling on him as much as possible given the configuration of the chair. Sylar hugged him close.

Peter returned the hug. "Easy, buddy." He snuggled his arms around Sylar, his face against Sylar's shoulder. Sylar's face was against the side of Peter's head, hair tickling against him. He ignored it, valuing the closeness more. He picked at the fabric of Peter's shirt for a moment, wishing it were gone so they had more skin contact, then accepted it as it was. He felt Peter give him a tiny, sweet kiss on the shoulder.

"I could get used to this," Sylar murmured. It wasn't that bad. The more he sat here and considered what had just happened, the more he decided the act had been not just endurable but actually pleasant. Maybe even pleasurable, if he could relax and let himself enjoy it next time.

"I hope you do," Peter said back in the same quiet tone.

Sylar felt his eyes burn and his nose get stuffy. This time there was no handy shower to hide his stupid, overly emotional reaction to the inexplicable kindness Peter kept offering him. "I don't deserve to." He hid his face in Peter's hair.

Peter reached up and petted Sylar's hair, finger-combing it back and gathering it at the nape of Sylar's neck. "You probably don't," Peter said, sounding tired. "But you're lucky. I don't care about what you do and don't deserve, Sylar. You lost that from me after what you did." He pulled back on the hair he'd been stroking into a ponytail. Sylar's head was obliged to follow the pressure, sitting up and leaning away from his lover. He blinked, knowing there were tears on his face.

Peter reached up and dried the tracks of moisture with the back of his hand. He let go of Sylar's hair. "Did I hurt you?" Sylar shook his head immediately. "Are you okay?" Sylar nodded. Peter didn't look like he believed him, but he gave him a push anyway. "Get up then. Get dressed. I need to clean up."

Sylar stood, grabbing up some of his clothes and watching Peter warily in case Petrelli made a run for it. Peter pulled up his pants and was ready to go, but the only place he went was behind the bar to
make use of the sink. Despite Sylar knowing there was an exit back there, he took his time getting
dressed. He couldn't make Peter stay. That he was sure of. He was deeply relieved when Peter came
back to retrieve his drink. Sylar finished lacing up his shoes while Peter downed half of it, swished a
few times, and then finished it off. He stared across the pool table and out into the street. Sylar stood
to his side, watching him. Peter asked, "Is this going to be a regular thing – the fucking?"

"I am at your service."

Peter bobbed his head in a single nod. He looked at his empty bottle, then said, "Last time, I asked a
question about why. I assumed from your answer that you were horny. Or bored. Or both." Peter
rolled the bottle between his hands, looking at it. "That's not what was going on. Do you understand
that I'm not here to spend time with you?"

Shamed, Sylar shut his eyes and nodded. Peter's boundaries were not where Sylar wanted them to
be, even if they were far more generous than he had a right to expect from someone whose brother
he'd murdered.

"If we're fucking," Peter went on, "fine, then we're fucking, but that doesn't change the past. You got
that?"

Sylar winced and looked away. He didn't answer, or look back when he heard the bottle clink on the
table, or when the bells chimed over the door as Peter walked out. He stayed in the empty bar until
the stupid tears quit flowing, then made himself presentable and went back to fixing watches.

_Four weeks later…_

There was a polite knock at his door. Sylar looked out the peephole, surprised and unsurprised to see
the world's only other resident. He opened the door, puzzled at why Peter would come visiting him.
A second later he realized – after weeks apart, no doubt Peter had grown restless. Sylar shrank a little
and resigned himself – not that he expected the sex would be bad (the man had been faultlessly kind
on that front), but it was a reminder that he couldn't make Peter want to be around him for any reason
other than allowing himself to be used in one way or another. On the threshold, Peter extended a
wrapped package. Sylar took it automatically. It felt like a book. He raised his brows in question at
Peter.

"Birthday present."

"It's not my birthday."

Peter rolled his eyes. "It's a present. Like, _the_ present." At a loss, Sylar looked from the package to
Peter. Peter shook his head and walked past Sylar, finding the couch and settling on it. "Never mind.
I thought it might help you pass the time. I hadn't seen you around much."

Sylar shut the door. He looked at the package, then unwrapped it. It was indeed a book. Peter had
somehow correctly guessed his reading preferences despite limited information. It was either blind
luck, or he'd put a lot of thought into it and perhaps some detective work. "Thank you," Sylar said
sincerely. He set it on an end table and gestured at the side of the room where he slept. "I have a bed,
if you'd prefer."

Peter looked over at it blankly for a moment, then chuckled. "Yeah, okay, maybe later." He didn't
budge from the couch. "I, um, I want to get to know you." He waved a hand at the gift tome. "When
I saw you last, we talked about the past. Or at least I did. This is the present."

Sylar looked to the book, getting the double entendre, realizing there was at least one additional layer
of thought in Peter's actions tonight. Thought that Peter had had because of him. Something warm and hopeful stirred inside him. He rubbed his fingers across the light embossing of the hardcover.

Peter went on, "What have you been doing? What do you do? It's been a while. You've been here for years overall." Peter shrugged. "How do you spend your time usually?"

Sylar swallowed, nervous now as he began to realize Peter hadn't come here to get laid. Or if he had, he wanted more than just fucking. "I fix watches," he said defensively.

Peter nodded. "Okay. Cool. What kind?"

"Analog."

"As opposed to digital?"

Sylar nodded slowly, feeling himself relax a little. Peter wasn't attacking him. He was just asking questions. Silly questions, but they weren't painful or embarrassing. Maybe he could get through this without looking like a complete doofus. Slowly he said, "I was trained to repair chronographs of all kinds."

"Really?" Peter bobbed his head once. "Trained? Was that a job or a hobby?"

"Both."

When Sylar didn't continue, Peter prompted him again. "What's a chronograph?"

"It's a timepiece: watches, pocket watches, clocks, grandfather clocks, and others. I can also repair any of a variety of related clockwork devices similar enough in design and function that the principles are the same." He had no idea how to answer in a conversational manner, so the words came out more like a stilted entry on a resume. If Peter didn't like it, Sylar figured he could stop asking questions.

"Cool. But not digital stuff because of the circuitry?"

Sylar nodded, relaxing a little more as none of the judgment he'd expected materialized. "I'm not an electrician."

Peter picked up on the faint whiff of disdain. He tilted his head. "Is there something wrong with digital stuff?"

Sylar shook his head, moving restlessly over to his workbench as though to protect it. "Is there something wrong with digital stuff?"

Peter leaned against his workbench, frowning. "These days people who want a watch go to Wal-Mart and buy whatever's cheap. Then when it quits working, they throw it away and buy another. Or they just use their phone. It's stupid – what I do.
No one needs that anymore."

"That's not true." Peter snorted. "We've had photography for over a hundred years, Sylar, and yet people still appreciate paintings. Some pay millions of dollars for them, even new stuff. We have recordings all over the place, and yet good concerts are still packed. What you're describing is rare. That makes it valuable."

Sylar looked back and forth between Peter's eyes. Was he really saying that being a watchmaker was something special? "It's boring," he said, his voice faltering, remembering some of the dismissive things his mother had said of his occupation. "It's not sensible. I would be better off working in a bank."

Peter shook his head earnestly. "That's not true either. Listen, I had your ability once. I remember looking at a watch, seeing it come apart, seeing it go back together, and really understanding what made it work, how all the parts went together. That was fantastic, Sylar! It felt incredible. It was like the first time in my life that things made sense. I liked that."

"You … liked my ability?" He felt warm, not just inside, but on his skin as well. He hoped he wasn't blushing.

"That part of it, yeah. That was cool."

Sylar blinked at him. "You're telling the truth, with all this?"

"Yes." Peter tilted his head and gave Sylar a steady, honest gaze.

"Why?"

"Because."

It took Sylar a moment to realize Peter was feeding his own words (or word) back to him. He scoffed, frowned, and looked away, then back at Peter as hope nagged at him. Petrellis were born liars, but there was no reason for Peter to lie to him. He already had access to Sylar's pants. The only reason he might be sitting there running his mouth and prompting Sylar to run his was because he liked what he was hearing.

In a soft tone, Peter said, "You've been a lot of different people. Maybe the guy who saves everybody at the carnival isn't the same one who killed my brother."

"What if I am – that same person?"

Peter sighed. "You are who you are, Sylar."

Sylar drew in a deep, unsteady breath at the cryptic answer. He looked at Peter's brown eyes, fixed on him with a calm confidence that hadn't been there weeks earlier, when Peter had avoided his gaze most of the time and refused to give him the time of day. "Yes. Who I am is my business and no one else's. I'm not going to be that person – the one I used to be – if I have any choice in it. I know what I want now."

"What's that?"

"A genuine human connection. Can you give me that? Or are you just going to walk away when you're done with me?" Sylar sneered, finding himself suddenly hot and breathing harder. Peter met his eyes for a few moments, then dropped his gaze. Sylar went on, his voice getting embarrassingly choked with emotion, "Because if you can't, then go. And I'll stay here fixing my watches!" Just like
that, the offer was off the table. He was available on his own terms only – and if Peter would not give him basic human consideration, then Peter could fuck off.

Peter drew his shoulders in and moved his feet closer together. "I don't want to go." He was still looking down.

Sylar blinked at the top of Peter's head. He realized he hadn't been able to find the bravery to stand up for himself until he'd been convinced Peter was already giving him the respect he was demanding. It was cowardly. And now he was berating Peter for something Peter clearly wasn't doing anymore. Sylar swallowed, looked away, and took a few deep breaths to center himself. He said, essentially to himself, "Like I told Luke, 'Emotions make you sloppy'."

"There's nothing wrong with your emotions." Peter said slowly. He looked up at Sylar. "What we did together made me feel some things, too. And no matter how much I tried to tell myself it would never work because I wouldn't be doing right by Nathan, it wasn't what I was here for, people's lives depended on me staying focused, and I'd shut that door after Caitlyn anyway … I still felt my anger slipping away."

Sylar cocked his head, eyes widening as he considered Peter's admission. There was even more on the line than a simple connection. Peter was hinting at feelings deeper than Sylar had dared hope. "Then I have a chance." Swiftly, he knelt and took Peter's face in both hands, kissing him soundly. "Let go, Peter." Then he went back to kissing. Peter didn't respond for long moments, probably having recognized the obvious allusion to him clinging to what he thought was Nathan on the roof of Mercy Heights. That was exactly what Sylar had in mind, but sex twice had clearly been enough to make Peter's grip on his convictions waver. Third time was the charm.

Sylar worked his mouth determinedly, his tongue skirting the inside edge of Peter's lips, his hands holding Peter firmly where he wanted him while his thumbs moved in short caresses. Not that Peter was fighting it – he just wasn't going along at first. Peter finally began to respond, eyes shut and breath puffing against Sylar's cheek. His mouth moved slowly. Sylar immediately slowed to match. They kissed together, jointly, until Peter twisted his head to the side. "You fucker," he said resentfully, but he was panting with desire.

"Yes," Sylar agreed decisively. "And I am going to throw you on that bed and fuck you so hard that the only thing you'll be hanging onto are my sheets."

Peter looked back to him with a surprised expression, but Sylar was hauling him to his feet before he could reply. Sylar herded him to the bed while unbuttoning his own shirt. "Strip," he ordered as he took his dress shirt off and cast it aside.

"What?" Peter turned, his back to the bed. He shoved Sylar's arm. "Make me."

It took Sylar a moment to process that wasn't a 'no'. When he did, he snorted and gave Peter a shove in return, but harder, and to center of mass. It sent Peter backwards, floundering onto the bed. Sylar yanked his t-shirt off over his head and climbed on top of Peter, shoving him back down flat on the mattress from where he was trying to get up.

"Hey! You fuck!" Peter hit him in the chest with a fist and flexed like he was trying to roll over towards the edge of the bed. Sylar ignored the blow (it wasn't all that hard anyway) and grabbed Peter's shirt and t-shirt, pulling the hem out of his pants and yanking the fabric up to Peter's armpits. Now he had a struggle as Peter rolled onto his back again and flailed up at him, pushing and grabbing at his arms, interfering. He was flopping around with his hips as well, making Sylar 'ride' him … which was actually kind of fun. With difficulty (and possibly a few snapped buttons and damaged seams), Sylar managed to get the joined shirts over Peter's shoulders and head. After that, it
was easy to jerk them down his arms and twist the bunched fabric together to tighten it around Peter's wrists.

"This would be so much easier with telekinesis," Sylar growled, reaching over to snatch up his t-shirt that he'd discarded earlier.

Peter stopped fighting for the moment, craning his head to watch as Sylar knotted the t-shirt around the twisted mass of his shirts and the bedpost. "I didn't come back for your powers, you know."

Sylar blinked at him, not sure if Peter was referring to coming to this world to start with, or coming to his apartment tonight specifically. The tone was unaccountably fond. Before he could ask, Peter bridged, flinging Sylar off and to the side. Sylar caught himself against the wall and grabbed the front of Peter's pants with one hand, gripping firmly enough to stop Peter in his tracks.

He pinned Peter to the bed by shoulder and groin, leaning in to kiss his mouth while he held his junk hostage for Peter's good behavior. Peter was a good boy. He kissed passionately, his arms still held above his head, strung up by their combined clothing. Although, Sylar glanced at that. Peter's fists were balled, which meant the buttoned cuffs kept his hands from sliding out. Was he so dumb he didn't know that he could flatten his hands, fold in his thumbs, and probably slip out? Even if he didn't, Sylar believed Peter was easily strong enough to yank himself free, should he be willing to destroy his shirt further than it had been. No, it seemed most likely that Peter was voluntarily allowing himself to remain bound.

"You kinky little pervert," Sylar grinned at him, thoroughly delighted with his partner.

"Pervert?" Peter scoffed. "You're the one who tied me up!" He rolled his hips a few times, thrusting against the hand holding him. He was mostly erect, but not entirely. Being tied up wasn't such a fetish that it did it for Peter all by itself. Sylar kneaded him steadily and kissed more, feeling the flesh firm up very satisfactorily in his grip. He unfastened Peter's pants and dropped the zipper. Peter whined and pushed at him in such a demanding way that Sylar let go and changed tactics. He chuckled at the frustrated sound his victim made.

Peter snapped at his face as he drew away from the kissing, making Sylar's brows rise in surprise. "Oh really?" Sylar said of the mock attack. Peter bared his teeth in response, flexing his body.

Sylar slid a hand under Peter's chin to direct his face safely away (just in case Peter wanted to make things too real), then bent to bite him over the collarbone, just as Peter had marked him their first time. Peter called out and writhed. Half the noise sounded like genuine pain, but Sylar noted as he lifted away that Peter was at least now fully erect and straining at the fabric of his underwear.

"You liked that," Sylar gloated.

"Fuck me, you bastard."

"With pleasure."

Sylar peeled down Peter's pants and underwear, leaving them bunched around the man's ankles as he moved to get rid of his own lower clothing. Peter grimaced and twisted on the bed, his feet working in vain to try and kick off a firmly-laced shoe and get his pants entirely off. Sylar smirked. But at least it kept Peter busy. Once Sylar was naked, he yanked the lacings free from one shoe, pulling off the pant leg. He left the other shoe on, bunched pants and underwear hanging from it. It wouldn't impede his access and there was no reason to take the time. He liked the hurried, rapey vibe of it all anyway.
He was equipped with the lube he'd kept ready at his bedside for weeks now. He used Peter's pants to control the one leg while he used his other forearm to lever the free leg out of his way. Once between Peter's legs, it was easy. Any attempt of Peter's to raise his knees (of which there were several as Sylar moved forward to situate himself where he wanted to be) saw them summarily pushed back down. He grabbed Peter's balls to calm down the Italian stallion, gaining enough compliance that he was able to tear off the top of the lube packet with his teeth. He rolled Peter's testicles in his hand, tugging lightly as Peter watched him closely, body moving only a little. Sylar smirked at him, enjoying the control that was so easily given.

He emptied half the tube across his fingers and sent them lower, greasing him up along the way. Peter exhaled heavily and put his head back, looking up at the ceiling as Sylar's digits slid inside of him. This time, Peter's ass wasn't so impossibly tight. Sylar made the logical connection to the lubricant immediately. For their first time in the locker room shower, Peter had been squeaky clean and wet with water – the very opposite of slippery. Properly oiled up, just like Peter had made Sylar their second time, and he was now easy to enter. Sylar's smirk changed to a genuine smile – quite possibly, there was nothing at all wrong with his own ass. He put a third finger inside of Peter, feeling the man's hole stretch around his hand and watching Peter arch in pleasure. If anything, Peter was more of a slut for this than he was.

Sylar explored the anatomy, using his other hand to palm over Peter's rock-hard dick. He took his time, working out Peter's reactions – what made him twitch, what made him moan, what the man seemed to ignore or not notice. When Peter's breath began to catch and his knees restlessly crept up Sylar's sides, he removed his hand and idly stroked his own erection with it, emptying the rest of the lube on himself as Peter panted, his body easing down from the aroused, near-orgasmic high Sylar had brought it to with only his fingers.

Sylar wiped his hand off on Peter's leg, then leaned forward to receive eager kisses from his oh-so-receptive partner. Still very stimulated, Peter's body trembled slightly under him. Sylar trailed kisses over his cheek and down his neck, tonguing over the reddened mark he'd left earlier with his teeth. "All of this, on offer, just for me," he murmured, then bit the spot again just hard enough to make Peter gasp and squeak in reaction. "Ah," Sylar breathed. He sat up again, letting his hands slide down Peter's sides, then grasping his hips and shifting him up so his ass was in Sylar's lap. Sylar adjusted himself and thrust inside, a quick, decisive penetration that had Peter inhaling sharply again with a groan. Peter's hands twisted into the fabric, gripping it for stability.

Sylar bared his teeth, holding Peter's hips as he worked out the best geometry of his motion. He knew the spots he needed to hit to get Peter off the hardest. He could feel the hot, wet, slippery flesh encasing his shaft, caressing it snugly. It was a perfectly tight sleeve clamping his member. He started thrusting, hitting Peter's buttons relentlessly, watching as the other man's eyelids fluttered and he called out in passion. Peter's hips bucked against him. He was a muscular brat, and strong. Sylar had to keep a hand on him to keep him where he wanted him. He loved the feeling of those cheeks flexing against his thighs as Peter rode his cock.

Sylar plunged into him, burying himself in the other man's body, very glad he'd already brought Peter nearly off, because the actual fucking was going to last no more than a minute. Everything was perfect; their bodies fit together hand-in-glove. Sylar was on his knees pounding Peter's ass, one hand holding the man's butt cheek, the other holding the wall for balance. Peter's legs were wrapped around him, hands still bound and showing off the lovely lines of his body. Peter's face was in a transport of rapture, his crooked mouth pulled to one side in ecstasy, brows raised, as he gasped out a sort of croaked whimper. Come spurted onto his belly from his bobbing dick. A few seconds later, Sylar slammed himself home in a few stuttering thrusts, filling Peter with his seed.

They panted, holding position where they'd both come, despite it being somewhat awkward when
not in motion. Finally Peter moved with a slow undulation of his hips, rocking Sylar's still partly erect dick around his insides.

"Ohh," Sylar nearly purred at the strange sensation. He let go of the wall – not so much need for balance when not burying his dick over and over into an energetic partner – and petted Peter's softening penis. Due to the angle, Peter's come had ended up pooled on his stomach. Some was running to one side on its way to drip on the sheets. Sylar wiped his finger over the tip of the penis, then tasted the thick bead of moisture he collected. It was very slightly salty and maybe alkaline, at least when compared to his mouth. Peter let go with his legs, unwrapping them from around Sylar's waist. Their bodies separated. Sylar crawled over him to lie on the cleaner side, turning Peter's face to his for a kiss.

Peter slid his hands out of the sleeves almost effortlessly (much to Sylar's internal amusement) and caressed his face as they kissed.

"Well," Sylar said, "now we know each other in the most biblical sense, each with carnal knowledge of the other." He recovered his t-shirt from the cluster of clothing above them and used it to swab Peter clean. He wondered if he could believe Peter's change of heart. He hoped Peter believed in Sylar's.

Peter rolled to face him with a soft snort at Sylar's comment. He pressed his forehead to Sylar's, which Sylar found confusing for a moment and attempted to tilt his head as though Peter was trying to kiss him. Then he figured it out and relaxed. Through Nathan's memories, he'd seen Peter do this before with Angela. But it had never been done to him, or to Nathan. Peter was defining their relationship. They had a relationship to be defined. This was intimate, supportive, and familial – something beyond just the sex. Sylar's hands curled around Peter's shoulders. He shut his eyes and breathed in the moment, daring to believe there might be something more between them.

"A lot of crazy things have happened in my life," Peter said quietly, "especially to the people I've loved. I can promise you that I will do everything I can to stay with you, and give you that connection – this connection." He pressed his forehead against Sylar's just a tiny bit more in emphasis.

Sylar gave the smallest of nods, keeping contact with Peter the whole time. "It's all I ever wanted."
"Gabriel?"

It was a female voice, familiar to him. It evoked feelings of longing, yearning for a home and a comfort he'd never known, and yet resentment and bitter disappointment as well. He opened his eyes at the feeling of the back of a hand touching his cheek. Turning his head, he saw her – Angela Petrelli. 'Mother' leapt to mind, echoed from his own past and that of Nathan. With a snarl, he batted her hand away and sat up, yanking off the various medical leads and lines attached to his body. He was back on Level 5, in a grey concrete cell featuring only this gurney of a bed and the stool Angela perched on. He rushed to his feet, ignoring Angela as she repeated his name in a more remonstrative tone. He grabbed up the IV stand and swung it at her without hesitation for what she'd done to him. She shrieked and recoiled, blocking the blow somewhat with raised hands as she fell from the stool. The IV pole broke, it being a lousy excuse for a weapon. He snatched up the stool instead, making sure he was between her and the door so she couldn't escape. The stool was a better bludgeon. He brought it down on her without mercy or pity, ignoring her brief screams.

Then it was dark. It was as though his consciousness had ended when hers did. He lay as he had before, asleep and unable to wake himself. His eyes moved restlessly behind closed lids, the smell of dust and wet mortar in his nostrils. He was helpless, confined in his own mind. On some level, he knew this was for the best. He'd put himself here. He wanted to stay – almost unaware of the monstrosity that he was. Almost.

"Gabriel?"

A cool cloth blotted at his forehead. It felt nice, but he'd recognized the voice. His eyes opened reluctantly. It was her, again, on the same stool in the same cell, showing no sign of injury from their previous encounter. He pushed her hand away and sat up, pulling off the medical leads with less haste this time. "Claire's ability should have come as a surprise to no one," he said, "given how hard it is to keep any Petrelli dead."

She grimaced and said nothing. Her lips tightened.

Sylar considered that with Nathan's death, one of the family may have finally perished for good. He stood up from the bed and said no more. He walked out into the hallway, surprised to find the door unlocked. The hall seemed foggy though, or maybe that was just his perception. His awareness of reality disintegrated within a few steps … and then he was gone.
"Gabriel?"

This time her voice was more tender and she wasn't touching him. He rolled his head to one side on the bed and regarded her where she awaited him on the stool. He brought himself upright slowly, scanning the room more carefully. This time he noticed the commode and the sink, but it felt like his mind was filling in details as he looked for them. "This is a dream," he stated.

"Yes."

He tugged loose the monitoring cables, resisting the impulse to see what they connected to, for he had previously noted the absence of equipment. He fingered the intravenous line for a moment before pulling it out. It felt numb as it left his body. He knew it should have stung. He looked up at her. "This is your ability." He waved briefly at the cell.

Angela made an acquiescing nod. "I woke you once before in a place like this."

"When you had need of me," he said bitterly, getting off the bed and stalking around the small room. "It wasn't for my benefit, then or now, I'm sure. What do you need this time? Another stand-in for a son?"

She paled slightly, a faint shift in coloration that his observant eyes caught. "My only remaining son is coming to find you, right now. He believes you have the capacity to save people. He thinks you are something other than a monster."

She had his complete attention. "And am I?"

"It's no longer for me to say. Or for him."

"You want mercy, is that it? Peter had his chance at Mercy and he dropped the ball. Why would he think finding me again would turn out any better for him?"

"He has seen a future where it is possible."

Sylar paused, considering that. Then he chuckled darkly. "That might have been possible once, but I'm not sure it is anymore. He may be coming to his death, just like you fear."

"Has all the killing you have done solved your problems? Is that why you're here, trying to sleep everything away?"

"Has it solved yours?" he bit back.

"I went back to Coyote Sands, where it all began, so I could unearth the past and learn from it. What have you learned from your past, Gabriel?"

He squared his body towards her from the other side of the gurney. "I have learned that you have no right to call me by that name."

She regarded him silently for a long moment, her eyes seeming to go through him and past him. Finally, she said simply, "Sylar."

"Amazing," he said with dry sarcasm. "So you can teach an old Petrelli new tricks after all." He came around and climbed on the bed again. It put him considerably above her.

"You have learned how to define yourself," she said. "Good. Will you let that extend to areas aside from your name?"
It was an annoying question, reminding him of his biological father's judgmental tone about his targets. "I've done more than enough for the Petrellis in regard to my identity," he snarled.

"This isn't about us. It's about you."

"I thought it was about the safety of your baby boy," he crooned, "who is about to walk into the dragon's lair with nothing but a hope and a prayer."

"You model yourself after a dragon – a symbol of powerful evil, consumed by greed, slumbering away beneath the mountain. Perhaps you should consider better role models."

"And what do you model yourself after, Cassandra?"

She frowned and sighed. "We can spar like this for eternity, Sylar, or we can address the issue that has plagued you from the beginning. You want to be something better than a base murderer, unoriginal since the first descendants of the biblical Adam, stealing from others because you imagine some father figure finds your gift to be unworthy. You look for approval from others, Sylar, and never approve of yourself. Peter is coming for you. I have told him where to find you. His approval is based entirely on who you are – and that is your decision to make. You must find a way to make the changes you …" Her voice faded away, losing itself in the depths of his mind. The entire scene changed.

He was sitting in his apartment in front of his work table, bent over a partly disassembled pocket watch he was endeavoring to repair. Some vital piece was missing from it. He felt like he'd diligently repaired this particular chronograph hundreds of times trying to find a way to make the changes the voice (had it really been Angela?) had told him he had to effect. But no matter what he did, it didn't quite come together right. His labors were interrupted by the unexpected sound of metallic clanging – a broken pipe against pavement. In an instant, he was on the street outside, wearing his jacket. A moment later, it was a different street. He looked around in wonder and some trepidation as his sense of reality flickered. The last time that had happened, he'd been talking with Angela Petrelli in what must have been a dream; she'd told him Peter was coming for him. Was any of that real? He'd thought it was just another hallucination – his mind playing tricks on him.

Another flashing blink, and there the man was, a hundred yards away, slamming the pipe into the asphalt one last time before noticing him and heading his way.

"Peter?" Sylar breathed.
Safe Sex

Title: Safe Sex
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: None
Word count: 800
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter provides Sylar the exact kind of aftercare he needs.

Sylar was panting by the time Peter finished inside of him. His forehead was on the bunched pillow he was gripping with both hands. His rapid breaths puffed out underneath him. He could feel the base of Peter's cock spasming in his asshole. That and the sudden ceasing of thrusts told him it was done for now. He got his breath back and blew across his chest, cooling himself. Peter's butt-fucking of him was almost good enough to make him come twice. The first time had been the blow job Peter had given him during what Sylar saw as foreplay; Peter's appetizer before he moved on to the main course of reaming out Sylar's ass.

Peter petted his back and sides with slow, delicate touches. Sylar stretched a little from the doggy-style, butt-in-the-air position he'd been in. The position was his choice – one of the few things he'd insisted on in the realm of their sexual interactions. Everything else was up to Peter, but Sylar didn't want to be seen while he was being taken. If he enjoyed it, if he hated it, if it hurt, if it was fantastic, or even if he was numb to it and bored (not that that happened) – he wanted that to be private, his own, and he didn't care if Peter complained that it was harder to come when he didn't get to see his partner's face. If it took Peter ten times as long to get off, then fine. Not that it did. Peter did a thorough job on him, but the duration was manageable. Sylar wasn't sure if Peter's single statement of his preferences rightly counted as a 'complaint', but Sylar's unequivocal response had been enough to warn the Petrelli against bringing it up again.

A minute or so later, Peter disengaged their bodies, then snagged the hand towel they kept on the nightstand for the purpose. He wiped Sylar carefully. Sylar tried not to flinch at the rough fabric against the over-used, sensitive flesh. He was apparently unsuccessful, as he heard Peter murmuring, "Easy," to him as he finished up. Peter flopped down on the bed, pulling Sylar back against him. 'Pulling' was probably inaccurate. It made it sound like Peter put Sylar where he wanted by main force. In actuality, Peter used only light pressure from his fingertips to ask or urge Sylar to go where he wanted him. But they'd done this before. There was no way Sylar would decline. This was his favorite part.

He lay with his back against Peter's chest, still damp with sweat. His lower back was against Peter's groin, now covered with the hand towel so Peter wasn't smearing lube and whatever else on his partner. Peter's arms settled around Sylar's head and shoulders, letting Sylar rest his head on a convenient bicep. After getting into the basic position, Sylar wiggled backward, getting as close as humanly possible. He made a deep, sighing croon of contentment. This was true ecstasy, far more appealing than any brief orgasm, better even than taking an ability. Peter answered with a purring noise of approval as he nuzzled at the side of Sylar's head. Peter kissed his ear and Sylar's lids fluttered.

Peter petted Sylar's chest hair. He toyed with his head hair. He kissed the side of his head, his ear, and nibbled lightly on Sylar's throat and shoulder. His hot breath puffed against Sylar's skin, and yet through all of it, Sylar still wasn't facing Peter. Certainly Peter could see his profile now and so had a
good idea of his expression, but Sylar could shut his eyes and close it all out. He could live in the moment of pleasant, endearing physical sensations of being loved and secure in someone's arms, without worrying himself about the relationship or reactions of the other. He could drop his guard. He could let himself be.

This was something he hadn't had to ask of Peter. The empath had done it of his own accord, cuddling him after their first intercourse, when Sylar had been humiliatingly unable to stop himself from shivering. Sylar was so grateful Peter had not asked stupid questions. He had made no demands for explanations. He'd just held and comforted and been exactly what Sylar needed, for once in his life. He was generous with his time, too, as there was no hurry. They spent longer at this than they did in getting off to start with. Sylar knew that one of these times he'd start talking, and probably about more than just his dysfunctional response to affection. He could feel the words welling up inside himself, trying to take form. The urge was stronger each time they fucked and Peter gave him this aftercare. Soon. But not yet. He caught up Peter's arm and hugged it to his chest, pressing down with his head against Peter's bicep at the same time. For now, this was as expressive as he could manage.
Temptation Refused

Title: Temptation Refused
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: R
Warnings: None
Word count: 800
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar's offer is something Peter won't be able to stay away from forever.

"You said I could touch you anytime," Peter said.

Sylar looked over at him in the bed. He'd been relaxed before, mentally readying himself for sleep with the pleasant prospect of Peter being nearer to him than the couch, without Sylar even having to argue or whine (not that those tactics had worked in the past). "Yes." He wasn't relaxed now.

Peter plucked at the covers, finding the top sheet and sliding under it. "Roll on your side, facing away."

Sylar gave Peter's body a quick glance. He was as clothed as he usually was for bed – boxers and a t-shirt – so sex didn't seem in the immediate offing. Nevertheless, Sylar was tense with uncertainty about what was going to happen. He followed the direction. Peter scooted up behind him, spooning like he'd done a few days ago when Sylar had been hypothermic from too long out in the cold. "Is this okay?" Peter asked.

Sylar waited a beat, not sure exactly what Peter was asking. "Yes," he said slowly, deciding Peter must mean the intimacy and not, say, the general position. Frustrated by not understanding what was going on, he said, "Of course this is okay. How many times do I have to say it?"

"Every time I ask." Peter adjusted his position slightly, his face to Sylar's upper back, one leg over Sylar's legs. "And I'm going to ask a lot, Sylar, because I try not to take things for granted with you." He slid an arm around Sylar's waist. It was like they were lovers, but Sylar didn't feel an erection on Peter's part and they were close enough that he would have.

"I wish you would take for granted that I'm available to you," Sylar grumbled, even as he enjoyed the contact and noticed the possessive body language. He liked that especially.

"You've said that, yeah," Peter said, voice muffled. Sylar could feel the man's breath, warm against his back through the t-shirt Sylar was wearing. Peter went on, "I'll ask anyway. It's the right thing to do." Peter snuggled against him, which was an unexpected, thrilling pleasure all its own – not only being held like Peter wanted to own him, but being held firmly and cuddled against like he was … cherished. Sylar's shivered slightly. Peter held him tightly, keeping them close. "Not that this is, necessarily, the right thing for me to be doing. At all. Really."

Sylar snorted softly at Peter's apparent moral dilemma, so at odds to Peter's current conduct. He didn't have anything to say to it – obviously, Peter touching him in any way other than to inflict misery and retribution was wrong. Just as obviously, Sylar wanted Peter to continue to ignore that and caress him instead. He put his hand over Peter's and stroked it, trailing his fingertips over the back of Peter's hand. Peter relaxed after a few moments, shifting his weight like he might want to pull his hand free. But he didn't do it, just as Sylar didn't think he would. After all, Peter had tolerated this much touching after the hypothermia incident. He was confident Peter would tolerate it again as
long as Sylar didn't escalate it too much. He took Peter's hand in his and turned it so he could see the palm of it. Rather dimly, admittedly, as the room's lighting was limited to the indirect light from the bathroom down the hall. But it was enough. He turned the hand back to palm down against his belly and rubbed it up and down against him, a few inches per motion.

He'd done this before also, and Peter clued in on the third motion. With a little push, Peter took over, willingly and slowly petting Sylar's front from bottom of breastbone to just below his navel. With a pleased sigh, Sylar relaxed. Peter snuggled against him again in response, then expanded his range to include Sylar's chest, then his far arm, with Peter's hand stroking over shoulder and bicep and a bit of forearm before switching to the other arm. Sylar bent at the elbow so Peter could reach the rest of that arm. Their hands and then fingers, touched briefly. Peter shifted his hips suggestively against Sylar's backside, then dropped his hand back to Sylar's belly. Peter sighed hot against his back, wiggled deliciously against him again, and hugged him firmly. Somehow, Peter still didn't have an erection, but he was definitely going to get one if he kept rubbing his groin against Sylar's ass.

"Good God," Sylar said in exasperation, "would you please just fuck me? The anticipation is going to kill me otherwise!"

Peter hugged him harder and chuckled against his back. "You're right. You're right. I can't do this." He pushed away, scooting back to the other side of the bed. The pleasant heat that had been building between them dissipated far too fast for Sylar's liking.

Sylar rolled onto his back and stared at the ceiling, releasing a theatrical but heartfelt groan of frustration. "You're obviously going to do it one of these days, Peter. Why not tonight?" He looked over.

Peter was glowering at him because of the question. "Because I'm not going to do it tonight." Peter's voice was tight, snappish.

Sylar rolled his eyes. "Fine." He rolled to his side again, facing away. Peter, on the other side of the bed, flounced to lie facing away. It wouldn't be much longer, Sylar knew. Peter wasn't even bothering with the pretense of 'never!', but instead it was 'not tonight'. Peter might be strong, but Sylar knew no one could stand against temptation forever. Peter had his own hunger gnawing at him. And all Sylar had to do was be there when Peter's resolve finally crumbled.
Morning After Sex

Title: Morning After Sex
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Drunk but otherwise consensual sex with the mild dub-con that implies, and rough sex with full consent.
Word count: 3,500
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar navigates a rocky start to getting what he wants from Peter Petrelli.

*He's drunk. He doesn't mean this. What do I do?* Sylar stared up at the ceiling as Peter passionately mauled his neck with lips and teeth. Under other circumstances, it would be incredibly arousing. The empath had Sylar pinned to the bed by a hand on his shoulder and the weight of his body. His other hand cupped Sylar's thigh, holding it up at Peter's hip while Peter rubbed his half-mast erection into Sylar's groin. They were clothed for bed – t-shirts and boxers on both of them, but for all Peter seemed to care, they could have been naked. This was not how Sylar had expected things to go.

Earlier, when the evening had wound down and Peter took his blanket and pillow to the couch, Sylar had jumped in to recommend a board game before bed – something simple and fun to pass the time, hoping Peter would forget about his intention not to share a bed with Sylar again. The last time they'd done that, Peter had ended up riding his ass for one slow, delicious grind, that had been inevitably followed by Peter backing off, then resolving to fix the 'problem' by sleeping on the couch from now on.

Sylar had other plans. But it wasn't the game of Sorry! that had prompted the sex. After one game, there had been best two out of three, then the addition of a bottle of vodka Sylar had found in the back of a cabinet. Sylar had made simple screwdrivers – vodka and orange juice – going exceptionally heavy on Peter's drinks after the first one. If Peter noticed, he didn't say. All Sylar had intended was to get him next to him in bed so they could rest peacefully. To give the alcohol time to take effect, Sylar had asked Peter about parties he'd gone to in college. It had been a good question. Peter had had a lot to say about fraternity wild life and a lot to laugh about. Alcohol definitely loosened his tongue. And he had quite the scandalous past, even for a Petrelli.

After that, it had been simple to toss Peter's pillow on the bed and follow it with his blanket. Peter laughed more and teasingly objected. He swayed on his feet near the couch as he made snarky comments until Sylar (a little tipsy himself) pushed Peter on the bed, too. But Peter had snagged an arm and dragged Sylar into bed with him. That was fine, but Peter had lost no time in moving on him.

*I started this. Am I responsible? Should I stop him? Ah!* In the midst of Sylar's indecision, Peter pulled down Sylar's boxers and took hold of his mostly-erect penis. Peter looked at him in the dim lighting. "Yeah?" Peter asked. That was Sylar's cue. He knew it was. This was the time to say, 'You know, Peter, maybe we should wait until I haven't made you too whiskey-dick drunk to perform' or 'Let's wait until morning, when you're sober.' But he said nothing. This act was going to happen, sooner or later, and Sylar would rather it was over with than wait until Peter's resolve cracked at some future point. Sylar wanted someone in his bed and if he had to deal with the occasional drunk fucking to get it, then so be it. Sylar pulled Peter to him, kissing him on the lips. It was a pleasure he'd yet been denied.

Peter groaned and tried to melt into him, pushing into Sylar's kiss as his hand began to pump at
Sylar's member. Their tongues swept against one another. Sylar relaxed, letting his lids flutter. It would go better if he just let it happen and Peter was certainly doing a passable job. The taste of alcohol and citrus still lingered in his mouth. Sylar cupped the back of Peter's head and held him to him. He liked the kisses. They continued until he was achingly hard down below, the pressure and friction from Peter's fist just beginning to chafe him. Sylar touched at Peter's hand, hoping to communicate that further rubbing was going to be counterproductive. Peter understood. He left off stroking, gave one last kiss, and then scooted down the bed to replace his hand with his mouth.

Sylar's eyes got big. He hadn't expected this either. He wished he'd left the light on so he could watch better, but there was no doubt Peter was giving him head. He could feel the hot, wet mouth, the occasional edge of teeth, and the muscular laving of tongue. Peter had one hand wrapped around the base of Sylar's dick and the other jerking energetically at his own. It was like he was actually getting off on having Sylar's penis in his mouth. The sounds Peter was making certainly confirmed that. Sylar felt his arousal peaking much sooner than he'd expected. The whole idea – Peter sucking him off, Peter getting off to it – the slapping noises of Peter's fist rapidly working himself, the lewd sound of Peter's moans as he shoved more and more of Sylar's shaft into his mouth. He was deliberately gagging himself on it. Sylar couldn't contain himself any longer. He came with a trembling groan. Peter coughed and slurped and gasped, coming himself not long after.

Sylar stared down the bed, dumbfounded. His dick still stood, wet but clean. He even swallowed. He watched as Peter grimaced at his own spunk left on the sheets, then pulled up his boxers and clumsily climbed up beside Sylar. He collapsed there, slinging one arm lazily over Sylar's chest and nuzzling his face against Sylar's shoulder. A few moments later, he was asleep. Sylar stared at the ceiling again, vacillating between reliving the startling turn of events and worrying about what would happen the next morning. Peter might have passed out, but for Sylar, sleep was harder to come by.

Sylar woke when Peter sat up. He rolled over to see Petrelli sitting on the edge of the bed and holding his head in both hands. Sylar blinked away the gritty residue of what uneasy rest he'd been able to achieve. Seeing Peter's obviously distressed pose, he reached out a cautious hand to stroke his fingertips down Peter's back, over the cotton of his rumpled t-shirt. He hoped he was seeing evidence of a hangover and not … remorse, or something worse. Peter dropped his hands halfway. In a quiet voice, he said, "We fucked, didn't we?"

Remorse then, not the hangover, along with the option of 'worse' than regret. The disappointment of Peter's response was heavy in Sylar's gut. The possibility that Peter didn't remember clearly, and that Sylar could conceivably convince him the whole thing had been a dream, passed through his head. Sylar hesitated, then answered truthfully. "Actually, you sucked me off and masturbated. We didn't fuck per se."

Peter turned on the bed to face him, his posture still bent but his eyes piercing. "How much vodka were you putting in my drinks?"

Sylar swallowed. As a veteran partier, Peter knew when he'd been effectively roofied, even if the drug of convenience was ethanol rather than rohypnol. Sylar took a long moment to weigh the consequences of telling the truth. He didn't care about any of the possible benefits he might enjoy from lying, but rather how he'd feel about himself and the kind of person he wanted to be. Those things had become surprisingly important to him. He said, "Enough to get you in the bed. But I didn't expect-" He shrugged, glancing over at the side of the bed where they'd made out.

Peter crossed his arms and stared at Sylar for a long time. Sylar met his gaze, but not so long as for it to be a challenge. He looked over Peter's shoulders and chest and forearms, remembering how the man had tasted and what he'd smelled like up close. Sylar looked at Peter's lips, which Peter was biting. He'd enjoyed the kisses the most. No matter what Peter decided to do, Sylar didn't think he'd
be able to bring himself to regret the night. Even clumsy, quick, and lost in alcohol-fueled self-absorption, Peter had still been a good lover.

"I'm going to believe you," Peter finally said, rising from the bed. "Because I know me. And that's why I didn't want to sleep in the same bed with you. I knew what would happen." Peter looked pissed and frustrated. He bared his teeth as he looked away, then turned back to Sylar. "You didn't expect it. Fine. But was that what you wanted to happen?"

Sylar met Peter's gaze again. He had an intuition that this wasn't a time to be coy – Peter was asking a very important question, his body language saying he was on the verge of leaving but wanted to check one last thing. Sylar sat up, leaning forward, never taking his eyes off Peter's. For a few seconds, he let every shred of naked ambition and desire show in his face: the Hunger, unveiled. "I want all of you." Peter's body, his mind, his attention, his affection, his ability, his family, his connections, his money, his status, his importance in the world, and him, all wrapped up in one neat package of Peter Petrelli.

Peter stared into his eyes. Sylar saw the man's nostrils flare slightly, his chest rising and falling in a more pronounced way. His face flushed subtly and his eyes darkened. This wasn't the first time he'd seen lust written on Peter's features, but it was the first time that Peter didn't pull himself away and kill the impulse before it took him over. Peter climbed back in the bed in a fluid motion, reaching where Sylar was sitting up and shoving him flat on the mattress. Peter followed, kissing him suddenly and roughly, both needy and demanding. Sylar thrilled to it, exultant inside that he'd moved Peter to this. This time, Peter wasn't drunk. This time, Peter wasn't stopping. This time, to hell with regret.

Sylar wrapped his arms around Peter and kissed him back just as ferociously, his larger mouth giving him an advantage. He would have fucked Peter's mouth with his tongue if he could have, but Peter was already adjusting himself to grind a growing erection into Sylar's groin. He pulled down Sylar's boxers over his butt cheeks, breaking away to ask, "Lube?"

Of course, Sylar had some. He'd picked it up weeks ago partly to be ready, but mostly to show him he was ready despite Peter's protestations that it would never happen. Sylar twisted and rolled, reaching his long limbs to the nightstand to retrieve it. Peter stripped off Sylar's boxers as he reached, the latest sexy thing in a rapidly building sequence of very sexy things. Sylar got back into position with Peter between his legs. Peter followed, kissing him and roughly, both needy and demanding. Sylar thrilled to it, exultant inside that he'd moved Peter to this. This time, Peter wasn't drunk. This time, Peter wasn't stopping. This time, to hell with regret.

Sylar felt the cool lube applied to the crack of his ass. It was a strange sensation when coupled with Peter's hot tongue exploring his mouth. When he was done with Sylar's ass, Peter's slicked hand went to Sylar's shaft, pumping it with a firm grip – no chafing this time. Peter's hand slid up and down him like tight silk. Sylar moaned softly as a shudder ran through him. He was so glad he wasn't having to do this – he wasn't having to pursue, to pressure, to maneuver or encourage Peter. Peter was finally, finally taking what Sylar had offered so many times. And he was doing it without questions, like he owned Sylar, like Sylar belonged to him.

But there was one question. Peter bit Sylar's lip hard enough to make him whine. When the flesh popped free, Peter asked, "How do you want it?"

Dazed with the reality of getting what he wanted, Sylar huffed, "I will take everything you've got, as hard as you can give it!"
Peter bit him again, this time both lips, and in the same moment, his anus was breached by Peter's fingers – multiple, as far as Sylar could tell, and not gentle. They filled him, sweeping back, forth, and ringing him. Peter was lubing him up inside and out. Getting him ready. It was going to happen.

The next step was Peter shifting his weight back to his knees as he sat up. The hand he'd previously been using to brace himself, he now used to tug upward on Sylar's rear, trying to get it right where he wanted it. Peter made another squirt of lube, messy this time, and slathered his penis with it. Sylar bridged up to meet him. Peter leaned forward and stared vacantly at the wall over the head board, his attention entirely focused on where his slippery hand was guiding an equally slick dick into the cleft of Sylar's body. His other hand clutched Sylar's lower back. Sylar felt the knob of Peter's dick pressing against him. With all the lubricant, he opened before the pressure with obscene, embarrassing ease.

Even if his body was giving it up like a whore, Sylar was still processing the sensations for the first time. Peter's shaft was much bigger than a pair of fingers. It was hotter, wetter, and more insistent. He was being violated with a foreign body, penetrating his own in a way he was hitherto unfamiliar with. His sphincter muscles threatened to cramp around the intrusion. The keen edge of pleasure-pain made Sylar gasp and arch.

"Yeah, fuck you," Peter whispered, his face inches from Sylar's. "You want it all? You're getting it all!" He swooped in for another kiss, difficult given the position and their relative heights. The hand that had been positioning Sylar's butt wasn't needed there anymore, though, and Peter hooked the back of Sylar's neck with it instead. It pulled Sylar up for the kiss Peter demanded at the same moment that Peter drove the rest of himself up Sylar's ass. Sylar's struggled to breathe, but Peter had no mercy to allow it. He didn't deliver a single thrust, but a series of them, one after another as he claimed Sylar's mouth and ass at the same time. Peter had only gone slow during the initial insertion for his own safety. A third of his length had been involved then, but now at the end of each plunge, he was entirely sheathed inside of Sylar.

Sylar's head was spinning when Peter finally stopped stealing his oxygen and shifted position so he had more leverage. Though Sylar could breathe now, the fucking only intensified now that Peter could brace himself. Peter slammed into him, jamming his loins against Sylar's body as though his force might allow him to get another precious half-inch inside. His balls slapped rudely against Sylar's crack. Peter's grip had shifted from Sylar's neck to his shoulder, fixing Sylar in place to receive the punishing thrusts. It was overwhelming. Peter was relentless, dishing out such a pounding that Sylar felt like he was breaking apart inside. He worried for a moment that he might be bruised, or even injured to be used like this, and in the next instant he hoped he was. He opened himself in every way possible, letting himself go, letting the experience blot him out for the moment. He was nothing but a fleshy ball of tangled sensations, overlapping and surging, riding high on the pain, the ecstasy, and the release from uncertainty. He came profusely, his pent-up jism spattering up his belly and clotting in his stomach hairs.

With a final series of urgent, aggressive slams into Sylar's ass, Peter put both hands to Sylar's hips and shoved them together as firmly as possible, like he was straining to press inside of him dick first. A connection, whispered through Sylar's brain, bringing him back to lucidity just in time to feel the base of Peter's penis throbbing as he delivered his load as deep inside of Sylar as he could. No condom. No barrier. No protection. It was exactly as Sylar had wanted it.

He panted. His whole body had a low-level shaking going on from both the physical adrenaline dump and the overpowering emotional response that was surging through him. He felt achingly vulnerable. And simply aching. As Peter withdrew, the shaking became a brief shudder of pain. Sylar felt like he'd been violently and thoroughly ass-fucked into oblivion, which he had. He was so sore, his asshole was overstimulated and every muscle involved overexerted. Sylar was strangely
proud of what he'd asked for, received, and endured. He'd taken everything Peter could dish out and come out the other side. Peter, dull-eyed and spent for the moment, pushed down one of Sylar's legs to climb over it and lay at his side, much as he had when drunk, but this time further up the bed. He pulled Sylar to him and cuddled him to his chest, with a satisfied sigh.

Sylar tenderly caressed Peter's collarbone, tracing out the structure before moving up to the delicate throat and neck. He tilted his head up to nip Peter's Adam's apple, and taste the sweat on his skin. His thoughts were awhirl with memories of Elle and Lydia. Had they felt like this after he'd fucked them? He didn't think so. This seemed so much more intense than what Sylar had done to them. He felt torn open and laid bare, mostly in a psychological sense, but there was definitely a physical component as well. He didn't have regeneration here. He worried that Peter had fucked him gaping, but if he had, then that was Peter's responsibility. There was so much he felt comfortable surrendering now. (This, too, worried him.) Anything Peter asked of him, Sylar would have tried to give.

Peter petted his back and rubbed his face against the top of Sylar's head. It was the part he could get to, having settled against the bed after putting himself several inches above Sylar. It was nice, though, Sylar thought, not to be the tall one for once. He felt safe, secure, and cozy. Peter pushed back his hair from Sylar's forehead, a motion that would have normally provoked a flashback of fear and anxiety from having his mind wiped. He still felt something deep and dark stab through him, but his response was to yield entirely in primal submission. For all Sylar's sublimated terror, Peter's action was to harmlessly rub the tip of his nose against the bared skin and then give him adoring pecks along the hairline.

It was so innocent and pure that Sylar chuckled and relaxed again. There was one other deep-seated fear he needed to put to rest – that Peter was going to come to his senses, freak out, and leave him. Sylar leaned back to look Peter in the face. "Do you still have regrets?"

"About this? No. Last night … if I'm going to hell for what we did last night, the penalty isn't any different if I do it once or a million times. And anyway," he said, tipping his head forward so his forehead rested against Sylar's, "It's not hell if I can find love in it."

"Love?" Sylar choked out. "I thought you were just getting off, like with those people at the parties."

"You're not like those people at the parties. This is about us." Peter sighed and looked away with a chastened expression. "Sometimes I … feel more about things than people want me to."

"That's what makes you so special, Peter." Sylar slid his arms around Peter, holding him in turn. The idea that Peter might feel love for him was making his heart flutter (whether Peter felt love already or merely thought it possible he might 'find' it later – both were more than Sylar ever thought he'd have). It seemed like such a strange accident of fate, that he might have stumbled into the sort of person who bonded with people so fast, easily, and securely that even someone like Sylar was a candidate as a partner, as a connection. It fit with what he knew about Peter, even about the man's ability. "You don't have to be ashamed of that."
Peter set aside the guitar and looked to Sylar. Picking up the motion, Sylar looked up without thinking, meeting Peter's eyes. "So," Peter started, "I-"

"No!" Sylar said, making a defensive wave of his hand. "No more questions, Peter."

"Earlier, you asked why I even cared what you thought. I think what you were really asking is, 'Do I care what you think?' The answer to that is pretty obvious. If I didn't care, then I wouldn't ask. I wouldn't ask you questions. I wouldn't ask your opinion or what you'd experienced."

Sylar frowned. Peter had yet to ask a question of him, which was remarkable, really.

"Okay," Peter said. "I'm not sure what the difference is." Sylar said nothing, lifting his brows a little and leaving it to Peter to carry the conversation. "But we agree on the rest. I can't understand you without knowing more about you."

Sylar glanced down at his book, then set it aside and gave Peter his full attention. His face was serious, but no longer unhappy, as he was surprised to find he was getting the explanation he needed.

"When I had your ability, I wasn't killing people to be special. Or even to get their ability. I was killing them to understand them. That's what I wanted – to pull their motivations out, to 'get' them, to finally get inside their skin, know why they did what they did and felt what they felt. I know people's feelings and it is so frustrating to not know where those are coming from. It's gotten to where I try to ignore it and just focus on one thing at a time." Peter gestured in front of himself. "Just whatever's in front of me. That person. That thing. Stay focused. Don't get distracted. Listen to myself. No one else. Tune them all out." He looked back to Sylar. "I used to have so many people in my life, so many people I cared about. And I was always ... swimming in how they felt. Claude told me to forget all of that. But that was how I learned to use my ability – by thinking about the people whose powers I was using, or tapping into some mental representation of them." He pointed at his head, then chuckled bitterly. "Now I don't have anyone, but that just means I know what I've lost." He shrugged, melancholy now. He picked up the guitar again. "That's why. And that's why it's not going to go away just because you tell me no." Peter looked off into the distance for a moment, then settled the guitar and began strumming again.
Instead of picking up his book, Sylar watched, listened, and considered what he'd been told.
Title: Constant Consent
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: PG-13
Warnings: Mention of rape in the abstract
Word count: 600
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar and Peter try to navigate issues of consent and personal damage.

"Hey," Peter said softly, holding out his hand. "Can I touch you?"

Sylar had already stiffened, having seen the gesture. Hearing the words, he relaxed slightly.

Peter put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed, looking seriously at him for a moment. Then he took a seat on the couch with his sketch book and asked, also quietly, "Would you put your feet up here?"

Sylar complied, watching as Peter arranged Sylar's feet next to him, toes tucked under his thigh. "Why do you ask?" Sylar said accusingly. "I said you could do what you wanted with me – whenever, wherever."

Peter raised a querulous brow at him. "That doesn't mean I'm not going to ask. You're not an object. You're not even a dog I could expect to be able to pet when I want. You're a person: you can change your mind, you can put conditions on it, you need a heads-up before I do anything."

"As though I could say no," Sylar scoffed, raising his book between them. "You can," Peter said with emphasis, although he found himself talking to the spine of Sylar's latest hardcover. "That's why I ask – so you have an opportunity to tell me this isn't the time or that's not what you want."

Sylar kept the book between them, grumbling, "Is this what sex with you will be like, always tediously asking for permission?"

"It's not going to happen," Peter said crossly as he opened his sketch book. "And anyway, with the way you are now, I'd never know if it was rape or sex."

Several minutes passed, with the only sound being their breathing and Peter's pencil making a few faint scratches on the paper. Sylar finally closed his book and set it aside. "Peter." He leaned forward, locking eyes with the other man. "Take off the rose-colored glasses and listen to me."

"I am so damaged as a human being that you can do whatever you want to my body and it will never be 'rape.'" He paused again, Peter's expression was uncertain, but again, he said nothing and let Sylar speak. "I killed your brother. In another man, I would find your tolerance of me indicative of a dangerous level of naiveté. But despite your blind spots, like the one we're discussing now, I've found you to be more practical than I or Nathan had believed. So I'm asking you to consider how … unsettling it is for you to treat me like something I'm not, as though when it comes to this subject, you somehow forget what I'm guilty of. You wouldn't ask permission to hit me if you were angry. Extend the same rules with this subject – whether it happens or not."
Peter was quiet for a while, his face contemplative. Then he said, "I don't forget, Sylar. That's why I ask. You're the guy who killed my brother, and a lot of other people. I'm being careful with you … because you're 'damaged' – if that's the word you want me to use. I'm not blind; I see it every time I try to reach you. And I'm never going to have the same rules for intimacy as I do for violence, no matter how often you ask me to," Peter put a hand on Sylar's ankle and added very softly, "They're not the same thing for me."
Oral Sex

Whatever it was Peter said, it didn't stick in Sylar's mind. He couldn't remember it later. Words were trivial next to action, and that action was that Peter leaned in, tilted his head to the side, parted his lips, and canted his face up towards Sylar's. It was an obvious and classic kissing posture. But that was as far as Peter went. Sylar's eyes widened and he pulled back – an inch, no more, really. He was startled into immobility otherwise. That Peter would try to kiss him was more than he could wrap his head around at that instant; that Peter would only unmistakably begin the action and then pause without completing it was even more incomprehensible.

He didn't know how much time passed – a second, maybe more – before Peter looked away, dipped his head to one side in a shrug, pulled back, and put a little distance between them with a short step. At that point, Sylar was still confused about motivations, but what was happening made sense now. Peter had stopped because he was inviting reciprocation. Maybe he didn't want to force himself on Sylar (Peter was that eye-rollingly ridiculous sometimes). He'd been waiting for Sylar to take the next step in the dance. Declining to do so was a refusal. A refusal was the last thing Sylar wanted to issue in this situation.

Peter even seemed to be taking it gracefully, in what little time Sylar allowed to pass between Peter pulling away and Sylar acting. Peter's expression was turning into a wry, disappointed smile. Sylar seized the man's shoulder, turned him, and assaulted Peter's mouth with his own without waiting to see what Peter's expression would mature into. He kissed him solidly, passionately, mouth open and tongue questing. His body followed less than a heartbeat behind, molding himself to Peter's front. His hands rose to hold Peter's face to his, mouth yawning to consume him, to swallow down the startled noise Peter made as Sylar plunged his tongue into him, claiming everything he could reach. He felt the shudder run through the other man and the pressure in turn as Peter leaned into him so receptively.

Sylar growled. He'd waited so long for this, for this yielding, for this oral consummation of desire and lust. It was a proof that Peter had a use for him after all. He was relevant. He was worthy for Peter to extend affection to, or at least to be an object Peter was willing to use for gratification. It was hopeful that Peter had offered a kiss rather than demanding something one-sided; even more hopeful that it hadn't been a demand at all. Even if Sylar's traumatized, repressed past didn't equip him with the tools to know how to recognize or respond to a consensual advance, he knew this was better than most of the alternative scenarios he had imagined as likely. Peter was the only option he had as a partner, a companion, an anything. Without Peter, Sylar was worse than a nobody. He didn't even meaningfully exist.

And Peter was still kissing him! Sylar was so taken by the osculation that his head was spinning. He felt faint. He might have even wobbled because a moment later, Peter was moving him, turning him, and steering them to the couch. Sylar went, sitting on it where Peter pushed him down. Peter then climbed into his lap and resumed the kiss as fervently as before. This time, Sylar whimpered. Peter
had kissed him this time and not the other way around. Sylar was being taken. He was being used. He was valuable this way. He mattered. He adored it.

He was not, however, sexually aroused. Maybe that stemmed from his expectation that Peter would fuck him imminently. Maybe it was because sex was only a vehicle to what he really wanted and he was virtually mainlining the attention, affection, and kind caresses he was already getting. He'd be turned on later, he assumed, either when it was required as a show of interest in the lover he was obviously in the process of gaining, or if he ever had the unlikely opportunity to take what he wanted, sexually, of Peter. Either way, that wasn't now. Peter wasn't even escalating things. It wasn't that he was withdrawing, but he was slowly ramping down the intensity. His touches were softer, fingers caressing Sylar's cheeks, neck, and upper chest. Peter's lips were less insistent, mouthing against Sylar one time after another, yet working in concert with Sylar's motions to allow the deeper tongue kisses Sylar was still probing the man with every chance he got. They were all the more delicious for the breaks. If Peter were this sensitive with a first kiss, then Sylar could only imagine how perfectly the man would fuck him. Peter's eyes had slid shut. That last gave Sylar a pang of insecurity that Peter might be imagining someone else, but the rational part of his brain insisted Peter had offered the kiss with eyes wide open. He knew who he was with, which was enough to hold off the demons of Sylar's paranoia.

Peter broke from the kiss to nuzzle him, rubbing his nose across what smooth, unstubbled skin of Sylar's cheek he could find. Sylar cradled Peter's head and trailed smaller kisses across Peter's cheek and down his jaw. They explored one another's skin with their mouths. It was so human-tasting. Sylar couldn't remember anything that had ever tasted so good. It put him so close, so absorbed with another human being that he could feel the thrumming rhythm of Peter's body. Peter's breathing was shifting to sound relieved, relaxed, maybe torpid as he wound down from their frenzied and prolonged sharing. Sylar pulled him into him, against him, and they remained that way, breathing and embracing. He still wasn't aroused, but he felt safer than he had at any other time here in this world – possibly safer than he ever had at all. He didn't know what to say of it – of how he felt or what they'd just done. He'd fucked Peter's mouth with his tongue – Peter had asked for it, allowed it, and was now hugging him for it. Sylar simply wanted to stay here, cuddled and held. He got his wish for long minutes, until he began to wonder if Peter might fall asleep on him.

Peter did, finally, straighten. He dismounted with a half-smile and an unnecessary but interesting brushing at Sylar's forearm as he moved to sit on the couch. For a moment, he sat parallel to Sylar's position, face forward. Sylar felt another pang of insecurity at that, having a few seconds to wonder if Peter was staring into the distance dissociating, trying to bury the memory or separate himself from it. That seemed like a reasonable reaction to Sylar's way of thinking. Then Peter bent and incongruously unlaced his shoes. Sylar's brows rose. He put his hands to his pants button, thinking this was Peter preparing to undress and fuck him now that foreplay was over. It would be a payment Sylar had no strong opinion of – it seemed fair, really. Assuming Peter wasn't too rough or careless with him, then he was fine with it. But once Peter's shoes were off, he turned sideways on the couch and stuck his toes under Sylar's nearer thigh. Peter sat now facing him, but he didn't lie back to be supported on the far arm of the couch. He leaned to his side against the back of the couch, still sitting upright. He curled and slouched a little, head settling on the couch cushion as he brazenly regarded Sylar's face.

Sylar had remained immobile as Peter had settled in. He was waiting for that indication of what he was expected to do next in the social script. Now it seemed the ball was in his court, up to him to write in his own part. He knew what he wanted all the way to his bones. He wanted more of this. Sylar left his pants still buttoned and reached over to slide his hand up Peter's ankle and past the top of his sock, pants leg riding up along the way. Sylar touched the skin beyond. It was warm and hairy. Not as hirsute as his own leg, but it felt like a normal amount of body hair. He cupped his hand over Peter's shin possessively and looked up at the man from under his brows. Peter smiled gently at
him and sighed wistfully. It wasn't the engagement he wanted to cause.

Sylar drew in a deep breath and leaned back. He moved his tongue languidly in his mouth, savoring the flavor. "I can still taste you."

Peter said nothing, his eyes lingering on Sylar's mouth like he very much wanted it. Yet still, he didn't initiate.

Maybe he wasn't interested. Maybe Sylar had misunderstood. Time to get to the heart of the matter then: "Why did you do that?"

Peter stiffened slightly. His toes moved uneasily under Sylar's thigh. Sylar pressed lightly on Peter's shin, quietly urging the man not to leave, not to withdraw. He wanted an answer. Peter said, "I … I wanted to kiss you. I … thought you'd like it." It was an encouraging answer, but very shallow.

Sylar said nothing and kept his face perfectly immobile. Peter raised his brows slightly at Sylar's lack of response. "I thought it would be a nice thing to do. And simple." Now Peter's eyes went to the side guiltily. "It wasn't simple."

Sylar understood. It wasn't that Peter hadn't liked it, it was that he'd liked it just as much as Sylar had thought, which to Peter's way of thinking was probably far too much. Sylar turned his head a fraction of an inch. "It can be." When Peter looked back, Sylar added, "Simple. If that's what you want."

"I don't know what I want," Peter mumbled, pulling back the leg that Sylar didn't have hold of. But he didn't even try to pull the other one away, as though content to leave it in Sylar's clutches. Peter, and Sylar, both looked at where Sylar was touching him. Sylar didn't let go. Peter huffed, shrugged his shoulders uncomfortably, and crossed his arms. He looked huddled. Sylar could empathize – to want something so badly, yet know it was utterly wrong to reach for it.

"You want to let me keep touching you," Sylar said gently, beginning to stroke the bare skin from Peter's knee to the top of his sock. Peter didn't disagree. Sylar turned to face him three-quarters way. He slid his other hand up Peter's pant leg and with both hands, bunched the pants over Peter's knee, then folded down his sock. He smoothed down the hairs and bent so his nose was over Peter's skin. He felt Peter tense – but again, he didn't pull away or disallow an intimacy that was entirely beyond the bounds of their relationship as it had stood only minutes earlier. Sylar openly inhaled his scent. He wasn't particularly attracted to legs. They weren't generally that erotic and although Peter had shown some interest in feet, all that was exposed now was shin and calf. So he didn't think this would stir either of them so far as their libidos went. He was instead showing Peter what it was the man wanted, giving it to him because he knew Peter couldn't bring himself to ask for it. Sylar breathed against Peter's skin, stirring hairs, then sat back up. He stroked. Then he kneaded the calf muscle.

"You want to do more than you've already done," Sylar's voice was quiet to start with, but then he dropped it to a whisper when he said, "or else you wouldn't be so upset about it." Peter's lips tightened and he fidgeted, toes clenching and releasing a few times. Sylar waited until he still, then leaned down to press his cheek against the side of Peter's leg. That was all he did for a few moments. He heard Peter swallow and sensed, with that sixth sense someone develops when they've been hurt too many times in their life, that Peter was about to leave. Sylar sat up, still holding Peter's leg for one last line: "But if it can't be simple, then know: I'm very good with complications." He let go and even scooted back a few inches so that when Peter pulled his leg back, Sylar had already ended the contact first. Peter nodded brokenly, put on his shoes, and left, leaving Sylar relieved that at least Peter hadn't felt so pressured that he'd taken his shoes and ran. Too much pressure and Sylar knew Peter would fight him; not enough and he'd blow him off. It was a delicate balance where all the gears had to mesh perfectly. It was something Sylar had experience in.
"Tell me about the times you cheated on people." Sylar took a small sip of his beer as he watched Peter across the table of the bar. "You've said it happened."

Peter frowned. "Yeah, sort of. As I said then, it was more a case of people thinking we were going steady, exclusive, whatever, when I didn't think that was the deal."

"How many times?"

Peter rolled his eyes and sighed, then looked off in the distance. "Twice. The first time, we'd hooked up and exchanged numbers afterwards, but the next weekend I went out with someone else. I mean, I'd talked to her in the week between, but she was doing something else that weekend and I thought it was a brush-off, you know? I mean, we were talking on the phone. It's hard to tell. So I went out like I always did and had a great weekend, saw, like, a couple people. Then she called me Sunday night and was," Peter raised his brows in emphasis and shrugged, "really upset. She'd heard. She thought I was super-rude and that we were done. I went over to her place. We made up."

"Did you have make-up sex?"

Peter blinked at him. He was silent for several beats. "Yes. We did," he said in a clipped voice. "Then we broke up two weeks later because she got back together with her ex." Peter made a perplexed face, like after all these years, he still didn't get that one.

"You said there were two incidents?"

"Why are you interrogating me about this?"

"I have my reasons. Why are you evading?"

"Sylar …" Peter ate a pretzel out of the bowl between them and said nothing for a while. Sylar took a longer, slow sip of beer and waited Petrelli out. Peter finally said, "The other, we went out. Saw a movie. Talked. She wasn't in the mood for anything else, or else she was at least firm the night was over."

"You mean, you didn't get to fuck her."

Peter frowned at him heavily enough to be a confirmation, then went on as though no interruption had occurred. "So a few days later I went out with someone else to a theatre production … I don't recall which one, but there was a guy in it I'd met who was named Tony. We'd hooked up before –
me and Tony, not the woman I was with, but we did afterwards in the prop room – me and the her, not me and Tony. Anyway, when the woman I went to the movie with the weekend before called me the next day asking if I was free for another movie, I told her I already had plans and she got really jealous when she found out I was going out with someone else. She broke up with me, not that I'd even thought we were going out to start with."

"Did you have make-up sex?" Sylar asked a second time.

Peter frowned at him again. "No."

"Did you try to go over to her place?"

Peter looked at the ceiling and sighed. "Yes."

"So you could have make-up sex?"

"Because she was upset, she thought I'd … done something wrong. I wanted to explain things. She wouldn't let me. She told me to leave. So I left."

"Without the sex."

"Kind of hard to do that through a closed door, so yes, Sylar. I didn't get any."

"The 'plans' you had, were they with Tony or someone else?"

"Probably Tony. We're talking about things that happened ten years ago. I remember people fine, but I'm not always good on remembering what happened when."

"When did you stop being promiscuous?"

"This really is an interrogation, isn't it?" Sylar didn't answer. Peter went on in a complaining tone, "Why are you worried about what I'd do with other people? There's no one else here. I can't cheat on you with anyone! Assuming we even got together."

Sylar gave a small, bitter smile. "You've considered it?"

"No! We're not in a relationship." Peter picked up a pretzel and broke it in half. "Not that kind of relationship."

"Of course not," Sylar said softly. In a more normal tone, he said, "I have to know if I can trust you. How you've conducted yourself in the past matters."

"My past?" Peter asked disbelievingly.

"My trust," Sylar rejoined. "Now when did you stop fucking everything that would hold still long enough and start seeing people as potential long-term partners?"

"They were always potential long-term partners," Peter said defensively.

"Prove it."

"I brought one home to Ma and Dad. Thought she was the one. I thought the world of her. I was so in love. I told them that. Then she dumped me the next week."

Sylar frowned. "When was that again?"
"Freshman year of college. First semester. I don't remember exact dates, but I pretty much fell in love right off the bat. I know we'd had plans about the holidays – doing them together, how much time we'd spend with each other's families and stuff. I took her home to dinner, my parent's house, so they could meet and Dad didn't like her family. Next thing I knew from her, we were done. In retrospect, I think he used an ability on her. At the time, I was devastated. It was senseless and ran counter to everything I thought I knew about how people felt, about how she felt. She loved me, but she dumped me anyway. So yeah, I started hitting the scene hard, just to prove people wanted me. And it didn't matter anyway, because anyone I was with for any length of time dropped me regardless, which just started the cycle all over again. I didn't take any of them home after her. I know it sounds like the height of paranoia to think my dad was involved with all of them, but I've looked at the kind of crap I know he pulled and then there was what he did to Mom …" Peter shook his head. "But yeah, fine, I fucked everything that would consent and I kept that up throughout college."

"Then you stopped. Nursing school, was it?"

Peter shrugged. "Before nursing school. It was that summer between graduating college and going to nursing school. I graduated (something I think my Dad had to pull strings to get arranged because my grades sucked; I'm still not sure I had the right credits) and was expecting to go into law school that fall or whenever I passed the exams, which Dad …" Peter shook his head again. "Anyway, that was the summer they were renovating the beach house. Him and Tim were doing it and I was volunteered to help. Everyone I'd known at college was going somewhere else in their life. I felt left behind. The lowerclassmen were staying in college and I was leaving for law school. All the people in my class had moved on to master's degrees or jobs. There were a couple people going on to the same law school that Dad had picked out, but they hated me. I think they knew I didn't qualify and was only getting in on my family and connections."

Peter huffed and went on, "I was cut off from everyone but family. I quit doing drugs. I mean, it would have been tough to do them with Dad and Tim there all the time, but I didn't want to anyway. And the break was good. I'd started getting into a habit with some stuff and I didn't want to get addicted. Any more than I was. So that stopped. First month was rough, but Tim was a big help and honestly Dad wasn't that bad. For Dad. The orders were simple and it was stuff I was okay with doing – building things, fixing stuff, physical labor. I didn't know how to do anything to start with, but I enjoyed learning. It was … good. I started talking to Tim about how much I didn't want to be a lawyer. He was the first person in the family, the first person I respected that way, who told me it was okay not to follow in my father's, and Nathan's, footsteps. That I could do my own thing. I thought about that a lot, but it wasn't until Linderman said he'd fund nursing school that I figured out how I could actually make it happen. I know, or at least I assume, Linderman was doing it as a big 'fuck you' to Dad, but I didn't care. At the time, that's all I wanted to say to him, too."

"Your sexual relationships after that were … faithful?"

Peter shrugged. "I didn't have many. I'm not saying I was celibate or anything. I blew a few guys I had arrangements with and I dated a few women, but it wasn't the several-times-a-week, every-weekend-a-couple-parties thing it had been in college. I had friends, but it was mostly sort of professional. We were all busy studying. Around the time I was graduating, I was started a job with Charles Deveaux as one of my patients, and I saw Simone." Peter pursed his lips and picked up his beer. "It was like the start of freshman year all over again. I loved her at first sight."

"How did that end?" Sylar waved a hand dismissively, "I'm fairly sure you've told me, but you mention so many people it's difficult to keep track of all of them."

"It ended badly. I faced off with Isaac. I was invisible. He started shooting wildly. She walked in. She was hit. She didn't make it."
"He was shooting? Not you? I thought you said it was your fault when you told me about it before."

"I didn't have a weapon, but I was egging him on. It was my fault."

"Did you stand in front of her or otherwise lure him into shooting her?"

"I lured him into shooting wildly."

"Without knowing she was there or going to be there?" Sylar pressed.

Peter huffed. "No, I didn't know she was going to be there. It just happened!"

"Then it wasn't your fault."

Peter frowned. "She died. I shouldn't have …" He shook his head.

Sylar shrugged it off. "I was wondering what you held yourself responsible for. That's a subject for another conversation, though. For now, let's say she hadn't died, was never shot, whatever. Were the two of you an item?"

"We were dating," Peter said with more reservation than he'd used for most of his other answers.

"Did you see a future with her?"

"Maybe. We were still working that out." And still with the guarded tone.

"Why? You said you said you loved her. Did that change?"

Peter pursed his lips and looked away. "She dumped me, too, okay? For the most part. She was … getting back with Isaac. I don't think she really knew what she wanted yet."

Sylar's brows rose. "Isaac, the one who shot her?" Peter nodded. "Ah. That explains why she was there." Sylar smiled. "What a soap opera that must have been. That's the artist I killed, right? Isaac Mendez?" Peter exhaled heavily, then nodded. Sylar said, "You're welcome." Peter grimaced at him. Sylar probed, "Why didn't you kill him yourself if he was stealing the woman you loved?"

Peter rolled his eyes. "He wasn't- That's not how I do things, Sylar. She chose him. Or was kind of choosing him, or maybe she'd chosen him, I don't know. I never had a chance to ask her for sure."

"But you fucked her, right?"

Peter made an inarticulate noise of frustration. "Yes, Sylar. I had sex with her. We made love. It was hot. Then she dumped me. Are you happy now?"

Sylar smiled thinly. "Somewhat. So Simone didn't return your feelings. Who was next?"

"You want my whole history here?"

"Obviously."

Peter snorted. "Caitlin. I've mentioned her before."

"Yes. Tell me again."

Peter fell silent for more than a minute, looking around the room distantly. Sylar ate a few pretzels and waited. Finally, Peter said, "I met her in Ireland when I didn't have my memories. She helped
me. She was kind, but practical. I showed her my abilities and she didn't freak out. She accepted them." He swallowed and sighed.

"Why aren't you still with her?"

"I took her to the future with me. We were …" Peter blinked and shrugged, falling silent.

"You were in the future?"

"Yeah." Peter stood up. "We're done."

"What? Why?" Sylar got to his feet, looking genuinely disappointed.

"Because I said so." Peter pulled his coat off the back of the chair and swung it on. "I love- loved Caitlin, I- Listen, I'm not talking about it. Not right now. She wasn't … a bookmark or a milestone on my way here. She was a human being that I miss and I lost." His voice broke on the last word.

Sylar shut his mouth on whatever he'd been about to say. Instead, after a moment of thinking, he said quietly, "I know what it's like to do something that causes you to lose someone you … felt like … might have been the one you were going to be with forever." He swallowed. "I know that feeling."

Peter regarded him steadily, then nodded. It was a long, quiet walk back to the apartments. When they reached there and were safe in the lobby, protected from the elements, Peter took a seat instead of saying his goodbyes and going straight up to his place. He rubbed his hands together and blew on them to warm them. "Who was she – the one you loved?"

Sylar blinked, but his face didn't change expression. After a long pause, he said, "Elle." Peter nodded. "You already knew that," Sylar added.

Peter nodded again. "I don't know how you felt about her, or how you feel about her now." He blew on his hands again as Sylar stood, watching him stiffly. Peter said, "Were there others?"

"Other women I fucked? Yes."

"Who were they?"

Sylar released a controlled sigh, his face grim. "In order: Maya, Elle, Lydia, and Janice." Peter looked at the floor and said nothing. Sylar amended, "Janice probably doesn't count."

"You only dated?"

Sylar snorted. "No. I was disguised as her husband at the time of the fucking. She never knew it was me."

Peter's brows rose and he mouthed a silent 'oh'. "Yeah, that's not a relationship. But were the other two just … casual?"

"Yes."

"But Elle wasn't. How did you … lose her?"

"She died."
Peter looked up at him for a long beat with no more or less than his usual perceptive gaze, then said plainly, "You killed her."

Sylar swallowed and shifted his weight in a tiny fidget before he caught himself. He breathed in through clenched teeth, then smirked viciously. "Yes, Peter. I killed her. And it wasn't an accident like yours with Simone. It was premeditated. I didn't even end her for her ability. I did it because we were over. I kissed her and I killed her. Is that what you wanted to hear?"

Peter looked shocked. "You killed her for breaking up with you?"

"I killed her because she betrayed me! She knew I wasn't a Petrelli and she'd been lying to me all along! It wasn't going to stop. I died for her and I still had to hear the truth from Noah Bennet of all people, instead of HER!"

Peter's shocked expression faded. He raised his brows briefly and tilted his head in a sort of shrug.

Sylar took a step closer, eyes narrowing as he studied Peter's reaction. "Don't tell me that's acceptable to you as a reason for murder!"

"Well, I can't say it doesn't make sense. It fits with what you've said was important to you – honesty, freedom from manipulation, loyalty." Peter rubbed his hands together slowly. "I couldn't be with someone like that either. Even with people like Ma and … Nathan - the secrets they kept, keep, destroyed my relationship with them."

"You didn't kill them over it."

"No, I didn't. If what you're asking is – do I think you did the right thing, the answer is no. But you already know that. You don't think you did right either. You feel remorse."

"How do you know how I feel?" Sylar sneered.

"You're angry about it – shouting, confessing, refusing to agree when I showed some empathy for your motivations, calling it murder instead of a killing when you thought I was excusing it. You're acting guilty. I can feel it coming off you. You still hurt-"

"Shut up!"

Peter stood up and walked to stand in front of Sylar. He lifted his chin and said, "You interviewed me to see if I'd be the kind of partner you wanted. Guess what? I did the same." Peter reached out slowly and put his hand on Sylar's shoulder, rubbing once. "You're human, Sylar. It's okay. I can deal with that." Peter turned and went to the door to the stairs, letting it bang shut behind him as he went up.
Title: First Time
Characters: Peter Petrelli, Sylar
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: None
Word count: 4,000
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter fucks everything up.

The couch was not where he wanted to be. Peter knew that even as he laid down on it and tugged his blanket over his shoulders. He’d exiled himself intentionally from the king-sized bed of the open-plan apartment, leaving Sylar to occupy the expansive mattress alone. The longer Peter had been in this world, the more fixated Sylar had become on not letting Peter out of his sight. The man didn't sleep at all if Peter tried to sleep elsewhere. Staying apart didn't help either of them, and so Peter had agreed to share the apartment. But not the bed.

Sharing the bed was dangerous and not because of Sylar. Peter had history of cuddling his bedmates, whether he had feelings for them or not. He was also prone to what had once been minor parasomnias – talking, touching or clutching others (or a stuffed animal), and occasional affectionate behaviors. In the last few years, though, what had once been minor had become the occasional 'wake up screaming' situation instead. He blamed the abilities for changing his sleep patterns even though the more medically logical source of his increased disturbances was the repeated death, torture, abandonment, isolation, and crushing responsibility he'd had to deal with alone, and often poorly. The only person he'd ever shared his burdens with, Sylar had taken from him. And so … the couch.

He laid there silently for most of an hour. Sleep would not claim him. His mind kept running over insoluble problems, like Sylar’s anxiety and Peter’s feeling of inadequacy for the tasks the world kept setting before him. The future-dream, for example. Sylar wouldn't save anyone, so what was the point? How was Peter supposed to solve this? He couldn't even get out of this mental trap and even if he could, what next? Sylar wouldn't stick close if released. Peter knew that. Sylar only wanted his company here, because there was no one else for him and Sylar was desperately lonely after years of solitude. Thinking about that brought back snatches of traumatized memory from the trip to Ireland – Peter so hollowed out that he didn't know his own name, chained up in the dark and cold without food, water, or light. He sat up in a cold sweat, trying to fight off the experience before it consumed him.

He tossed away the blanket and stood, stretching his limbs to shake off the phantom sensations of being handcuffed to the unforgiving metal wall of the cargo container for over a week. Peter moved away from the couch and stared outside. The expanse of the city was laid out before him, soothing to look at. It struck him as 'generic cityscape stock image #4', something cobbled together from his and Sylar's subconscious impressions of the urban landscape. But the falseness of it didn't make it any less engrossing. Peter stared at it in fascination like he might at a mesmerizing screensaver. It was not the unrelieved, pitching interior of that freezing metal box. That made it better.

He leaned his forehead against the thick glass as he stared out. There were few lights on out there and no signs of human life. Despite it, the empty city still kept his attention. His eyes roamed over the roads, up the buildings, and across the horizon. The sky above was hazy. Few stars were visible and no moon. It left the interior of the apartment darker than usual.
When his breath fogged the glass, he moved down a few feet and stared outward there, until it, too, clouded up. Tired of the view by then anyway, he stared in Sylar's direction. All he could make out was the lumpy form of blankets, so he leaned against the windowsill and occupied his mind imagining the geometry of Sylar's body under the covers that would result in that particular pattern of lumps. He took his time at it. Sylar had a nice body – long, lean, and attractively fit. Peter couldn't see the rise and fall of blankets. The man didn't snore so he heard nothing either. Peter wondered if Sylar could hear enough from him, while over on the couch, to be soothed by it. He hoped Sylar found peaceful sleep. Sleep deprivation was miserable.

Peter looked to the couch, knowing he needed to get rest himself. But he didn't want to lay down again on the stiff couch. He knew where he wanted to be instead. He sighed, shooting the bed a resentful glance before carefully navigating the dark into the kitchen. He hoped a glass of milk would make him drowsy enough to drop off. The light of the fridge was a glare that dazzled him and seemed to drive him into alertness instead of away from it. He poured up his glass and stood with his back to the counter as he sipped it. He faced the bed, just as he had earlier from the windowsill. He could make out Sylar's form a little better from this angle. The man was facing this direction. Peter wondered if the light from the refrigerator had woke him. Or the sound, even though Peter had tried to be quiet. He sighed again, drinking slowly, wishing the milk was warm so it might have more of a soporific effect. As it was, he didn't want to make more noise by trying to heat it.

He took his time in downing his drink, eventually setting the glass on the counter next to him with a soft clink. He headed to the bathroom next, his steps slowing as he passed near the bed, his eyes straining to see if Sylar was awake. He could make out the pale contours of his face and the dark lines of brows, but the other features were too indistinct for Peter to be certain. The face didn't move as he passed and Peter didn't quite stop. If he had, he was sure some sixth sense of danger would have woke Sylar – the man had been through too much trauma himself not to be just as hypervigilant, if not more, than Peter was.

Bathroom duties complete, Peter returned to the couch. He tried to sit, but was almost instantly back on his feet as a wave of physical revulsion ran through him at the thought of lying down. He did not want to. He flat did not want to. Peter stared out at the quiet city for several more minutes as he probed at the feelings. He couldn’t make sense of the instinct, but what he knew for certain was where he wanted to sleep. With a final annoyed huff, he decided Sylar would just have to take his chances with him. Peter picked up the blanket and pillow. He moved to the bed.

Peter slipped in as quietly as he could. He lifted the blankets and sheets, sliding in on the same level as Sylar, no barrier between them. For a long minute, he waited motionless on the bed, listening. This close, he could hear Sylar's breathing. It was even, but lacked the relaxed, free cadence of actual sleep. Sylar was awake. Peter suspected he had been all evening. Peter relaxed, knowing he wasn't waking the man, and knowing that sleep would take them both soon now that he was where he'd wanted to be all along. He felt better here, close. He scooted closer. That was even better. He touched Sylar's arm and elbow with a light touch. Then he touched Sylar's waist. Sylar said nothing; he didn't react. Peter swallowed and moved right up next to him. This – this was what he wanted even more. He pushed his face against Sylar's back. He drew up his knees to the back of Sylar's thighs. Peter breathed him in and exhaled heavily. There was no way Sylar wasn't awake at all of this contact.

Peter moved his hand slowly around Sylar's waist, ending on his belly, on top of his t-shirt. Peter spooned against him, snuggled up to a warm, human form of comfort. He would have dropped off to sleep immediately had Sylar not finally moved. It was a small motion. Sylar rested his hand over Peter's, clasped it lightly, and raised his shirt with his other hand. He slid Peter's hand under and inside, against the warmth of his bare skin, hairs tickling against Peter's palm. Sylar let go and pulled the shirt down again, leaving Peter's hand unattended inside to do with as Peter pleased.
"Mmm," Peter hummed softly, hardly a sound at all. He stroked a small circle around Sylar's belly button – an innie as he had noticed before. He skimmed the indentation briefly. He let himself drowse as his fingertips explored the pattern of hair and the extraordinarily soft skin beyond it. He turned his head to the side, cheek against Sylar's back. His other hand was folded under himself, touching Sylar's lowermost shoulder.

Again, Peter might have dropped off had Sylar not acted. Sylar rolled towards him, brushing Peter's body firmly the whole way and making Peter scoot back to give him room. Peter left his hand on Sylar's shoulder, though, ending with it trapped behind Sylar's neck like half an embrace. They looked at each other in the darkness, light enough to make out faces, but no details of expression. Peter swallowed and adjusted himself upward, intending to put himself on a level with the taller man, since he'd previously been situated in a way that put Peter's face between Sylar's shoulder blades. Moving up would help him free his arm, too.

But the motion was misinterpreted. Or maybe not. Peter didn't know. He only knew that when he moved, Sylar lifted, met him mid-way, and kissed him. It left Peter inhaling sharply, very aware of his position – a hand on Sylar's bare belly and the other wrapped around his shoulders – and how it must appear to Sylar. Peter had climbed in bed with him, plastered himself to Sylar's body, accepted the invitation to caress him, and then moved up in a way that Sylar had obviously interpreted to mean Peter was about to kiss him. So Sylar was kissing back. It all made perfect sense, except for the part where it really wasn't what Peter had intended.

It was a nice kiss. They hadn't had that before. Sure, Sylar had shoved his lips onto Peter's a couple times before and Peter had knocked him away violently for it. He supposed he could do that now, but it seemed so unnecessary and inappropriate. Sylar's mistake was an honest one here. Were their positions switched, then it would have been Peter trying to kiss him instead. After a beat of surprise, Peter moved his lips gently in response. It was their first reciprocated kiss. Against his arm, wrapped under Sylar's neck, he felt a faint shudder. Sylar strained forward into him. Peter felt a lurch in his gut and a heaviness in his groin at Sylar's subtle but emphatic reaction. Against all propriety and good moral sense, Peter turned his head and parted his lips, tongue sweeping out to taste his partner in crime, because this was really as wrong for Sylar to be engaging in as it was for Peter. Sylar should be contrite, apologetic, and guilty for what he'd done to Peter's brother, or perhaps indifferent, if he truly was a sociopath. He should not have been sucking in sharp little inhalations between ever-deeper osculations, or rubbing his leg up and down against Peter's.

Peter raised his knee and slid it over Sylar's thighs, holding him down. He also came up on his elbow, laying Sylar flat on the bed. He was just … getting more control of the situation, right? Sylar took Peter's knee and pulled it up to hip level, where Peter could feel the prominent erection under Sylar's briefs. Sylar panted against his cheek, pulling and pushing Peter's thigh up and down over his bulge, rubbing himself on it. Peter could feel the moisture from pre-come faint against his leg. He dropped his leg out of Sylar's reach and used his hand instead, palming over Sylar's length, feeling him up through the cotton.

Sylar made another shudder, more pronounced this time, and nipped Peter's jawline.

"Oh!" Peter huffed out. He was so turned on. This was wrong. All of it was wrong. But it felt so perfect. It was going so fast. And one thing was leading to another so understandably. Peter burrowed his hand under the elastic waistband and curled his fingers around the real deal – Sylar's velvety shaft in his grip. Sylar put his head back against the pillow, breath catching roughly as Peter began to pump him. "Yeah," Peter whispered before leaning in to kiss Sylar's neck, putting his mouth wide over the man's bobbing Adam's apple, feeling the surging life within him and coiling tension. It was delicious. He'd seen this throat so many times in passing, never with a thought to doing something like this to it. But here he was doing it and he felt like he'd never wanted anything
Sylar had one hand behind Peter's back and the other on his shoulder. Both held him tight, keeping him there like Sylar shared the feeling of urgent need. Peter threatened him briefly with teeth against his neck, feeling a wild jolt within himself as Sylar's breath hitched and his hips jutted upward. Peter sped up his hand, but hardly got more than a few strokes in before hot wetness surged over him. Trapped in the briefs Sylar was still wearing, it smeared over Peter's thumb and index finger as he pulled his hand out.

Sylar panted heavily, his breaths coming deep and loud now. Peter chuckled in a throaty, satisfied fashion, deeply pleased to have shaken Sylar so thoroughly with a simple hand job. He was also terribly, terribly aroused. It had been years since he'd been with a man. Hell, years since he'd been with anyone, but twice that for the male gender. He raised his hand to the level of his face, breathing in the scent of Sylar's emission. It was lovely – pure sex that touched something visceral and animalistic inside of him. He wanted that. He wanted to consume it and make it his. He licked the come off his thumb, sucking his fingers clean while Sylar watched gape-mouthed. Seeing enough of the man's expression to pick up that he was startled, Peter grinned and made quite the show of it, throwing in a few grinds against Sylar's hip with Peter's needy hard-on.

It got Sylar moving and fast. He peeled off his briefs and turned, stretching away, scrambling at something. Peter tried to see what Sylar was doing in the dark. It looked like he'd grabbed the bottle of lubricant off the nightstand, the one he'd picked up months ago as a prank (or wishful thinking). "Huh?" was all Peter got out before Sylar was presenting his bare ass inches away from Peter's body, Sylar crouching on the bed in obvious position for rear-entry anal sex. Peter sat up, simultaneously excited by the eagerness and cautious about the lack of communication. Sylar said nothing, adjusting his position slightly by pulling over a pillow under his head. He was comfortable and ready. Peter touched his naked posterior.

Like Sylar's belly, the skin was sublimely soft. What hairs were present were fine. Peter bent and trailed his lips along the bare skin, crooning lightly as he did. He knew he was going to Hell for this, but he couldn't bring himself to care with that taste in his mouth and this body so willingly put before him. His hands were on either of Sylar's hips. Peter moved so he was on his knees behind the man. Where he needed to be; where he wanted to be. Peter slid his hands up Sylar's sides, up his ribs, and smoothed them over his shoulder blades to his spine. He brought them back, spreading them at the small of Sylar's back, letting his thumbs rub the tense muscles as his fingers dug in just enough to get a grip. "Oh yeah, Sylar," he whispered, bending to lightly bite a butt cheek. Sylar's breathing was raspy and rough.

There was no condom. They hadn't really talked about it – sure, they'd joked a few times and Sylar had smugly offered to let Peter top him, but it had never been serious. Certainly not 'Sylar's ass in my face' serious. Peter mouthed closer to the man's crack and found the edge of the lube. He brought a hand down and his thumb and then fingers up and down the seam of Sylar's ass. He probed gently at the point of entry. Sylar pushed back against him and Peter let the motion push two fingers inside. Sylar gasped. He was so tight, so hot. With his other hand still on Sylar's lower back, he felt the man quiver, then do it again as Peter moved his fingers in and out. Sylar made half-swallowed, hungry noises.

Peter breathed out a laugh at how wonderful this was, how reactive Sylar was. Peter moved himself into position, rubbing the head of his dick up and down against Sylar's ass, grinding into him a few times to get at least a minimum covering of lube.

"Do it, Peter!" Sylar shuffled his knees wider and pushed his ass backward again.

"I will," Peter answered, putting the head of his dick to Sylar's opening. He pushed forward slowly, feeling Sylar's body flex tensely around him.
"Ah!" Sylar gave a high-pitched grunt as Peter breached him with something much larger than two fingers. The sound was muffled, though. It wasn't until Peter was halfway in and Sylar made another, similar noise, trembling slightly, that it suddenly hit Peter out of the blue that Sylar may have never done this before. A stunned second later of neurons firing rapidly, Peter leapt from 'may have never' to 'has definitely never', or maybe 'had definitely never before now', because Peter was certainly inside of him. A pillow-biting virgin. There were so many other things Peter would have done, said, required – if he'd known Sylar had no experience at all. And now, the worst possible thing Peter could think of to do was pull out and take Sylar to task about it, humiliating him by only consenting to have sex if his intentions were honorable enough for Peter's liking. At all points in his life, Sylar demanded respect; Peter saw no reason not to grant it, especially now.

"Give me the lube," Peter said, instead of any of the dozen other things that ran through his head. Sylar handed it back after a second of reaching around on the mattress to find it. Peter pulled out mostly and reapplied liberally, rather than the thin coating he'd had before. When he pressed in a second time, it was smoother. Sylar's gasp was more throaty and at the end of Peter's motion, Sylar shoved back the final inch or two until his backside was flush with Peter's groin. Peter wrapped his hands around Sylar's hips and kept them together as he rocked up and down, then side to side.

"Fuck," Sylar said. His voice was small, subdued. But he wasn't asking for Peter to stop.

"This is so good, Sylar. So good. Fuck, you're good. I want to come right now, but I want to take my time, okay? I'm gonna go slow." If Sylar replied in any way, Peter couldn't tell, but he was telling Sylar the plan and giving him a chance to say something. Peter pulled out an inch and then pushed back, repeating it and pulling out a little further each time. He watched Sylar as close as possible in the dark for signs of distress. He knew it was good when he saw Sylar lay his dark-haired head sideways on the pillow and breathe freely. "Oh yeah, you are so hot, Sylar. Faster now, huh?" This time, he saw Sylar nod. "A little harder?" Another nod, bigger. "Yeah, fuck!"

He picked up the pace with short, humping thrusts, balls slapping lightly against Sylar's body. He loved the feeling of being encased, sheathed inside Sylar's body over and over, his dick entirely inside of him at the end of each push. Sylar had loosened, so Peter sped up more, pounding into him and gripping his sides for leverage. Sylar whimpered, but it was not at all a pained sound this time. Peter saw the man reach down between his legs, his shoulder moving like he was jerking himself off down there. "Oh, oh, oh," Peter breathed, his excitement ratcheting up an impossible notch at seeing he'd done such a job that Sylar might come twice. He rammed into him with even more energy, gripping the narrow hipbones as his body made rapid, lewd slapping sounds against Sylar's.

Peter felt like he was about to explode, but he tried to ride the edge of it as long as possible. Sylar said, "Ah!" and gasped loudly, his arm making a few last, fitful jerks. Peter felt Sylar's asshole clench around him. Peter came immediately, releasing inside of Sylar with a few last ragged plunges, growling as he did.

Peter laid one hand, splayed, across the small of Sylar's back. Still deep inside the other man, he bent forward and kissed his back. Sylar shuddered slightly. There was a glint from his eye as he looked back at Peter. Peter wrapped his arms around Sylar and lifted, bring him upright with both of them on their knees. Peter kissed his back, hugging him from behind. Sylar stroked his hands and after a little bit, moved as though to disengage. Peter shifted, feeling his length withdraw from Sylar's body at last. He nuzzled Sylar's shoulder and guided him down on the bed, where they ended lying next to each other, facing.

For a long moment, they just looked at one another in the darkness. The enormity of what he'd just done was collapsing in on Peter like the walls of a pit. It drove him forward, closing the distance between them. His lips found Sylar's and he kissed the man tenderly. If Peter would never forgive
himself for this, then at least he wouldn't add to his guilt by treating Sylar like crap. It hadn't been Sylar's fault. Peter knew he should have never gotten in bed with him to start with. Even knowing the cascade of events that stepping on that butterfly would cause, he still didn't see how he could have done differently. None of it made any sense.

Sylar was kissing him back with fervent but small pecks across his face, hands holding Peter's cheeks so Sylar could better dot his skin with little kisses. It made Peter chuckle, a sound that turned hollow and hopeless at how much he'd just fucked things up between them. They'd been complicated before. Now, though? They'd fucked, which was occasionally enough all by itself to blow up relationships; he'd taken Sylar's virginity (at least in respect to anal sex) and first partners always made quite an impression on people; Peter had just had sex with the man who killed Peter's brother, something he should never do on moral grounds; Sylar had just had sex with the brother of one of his victims, something that was depraved beyond just killing people; and to top it all off, Sylar still slipped from time to time and thought of himself as that brother, whom Sylar had said had more than a few pervy thoughts about his little brother anyway. Peter felt like he'd mishandled things as thoroughly as when he'd mistakenly trusted Adam Monroe.

"What is it?" Sylar asked quietly at the odd timbre of Peter's laugh.

Peter sighed. He wanted to explain, but he couldn't think of how, and certainly not politely while still basking in the post-coital glow. Instead he said, "I think we'll finally be able to get some sleep."
Peter couldn't ignore the way Sylar jutted his ass out as he leaned over the pool table, lining up for a shot that could have been taken more easily from the other side. But no, he'd come to this side of the table just so he could bend over in front of Peter. Sylar's elbow pinned his shirt against his side and pulled it up, intentionally letting the fabric ride up and expose a line of bare skin above the waistband of his jeans. It was all so deliberate. Peter breathed out heavily as something clicked inside of him. He'd been resisting this for so long, but Sylar was being so overt. The man was obviously going to continue for as long as it took, making Peter torture himself through denial. There wasn't much Peter could do about it. He had no interest in beating Sylar senseless, or in ignoring him altogether. While Peter had been telling himself he could hold out forever, he abruptly didn't want to.

It was time to stop being the one making himself miserable.

He walked forward and put his hand on Sylar's rump, above the seam of his rear. He smoothed it up between the pockets until his thumb was over the skin of Sylar's lower back, while the rest of his hand stayed on the denim. Sylar had frozen in place. Peter's thumb rubbed back and forth briefly. Sylar exhaled. Before he drew in his next breath, Peter bent. His other hand brushed the ends of Sylar's hair off his neck. Peter leaned in and kissed the exposed skin, both bold and dominant. He kissed and then bit, not putting too much pressure to it but Sylar groaned nonetheless. Peter's hand cupped his neck, keeping him close so Peter could continue to gently maul him.

With a shudder, Sylar let go of the pool stick, turned, and straightened. As he did, Peter's right hand rode up to fully lay on the skin of his lower back. His left rotated around Sylar's neck and directed the tilt of the man's head. Peter's lips landed squarely on Sylar's, competing with the slight gasp Sylar made. Peter growled. The hand on the small of Sylar's back dropped a few inches, with pinkie and ring finger slipping under the waistband of jeans and underwear. Peter pressed against Sylar, sandwiching the man between Peter's hips and the unyielding structure of the pool table.

Sylar almost immediately settled himself, spreading his legs to reduce his height, putting their groins into alignment. His hands were creeping up Peter's back, but the moment Peter ground into him, they dropped to Peter's ass, clenching and kneading. Peter growled again, kissing more passionately. His tongue delved deeper. Sylar curled his fingers into the muscle of Peter's rear. Peter ground into him again. Neither of them were fully erect.

His hand went down the back of Sylar's jeans the few inches he could before the pressure of the pool table ended his explorations. His other hand curled and scratched lightly down the back of Sylar's neck, getting a surprised and appreciative noise. Peter paused in the kissing, panting softly as he looked at Sylar, who watched him back from inches away, warily almost. As hot as it might have been to climb into each other's pants in an instant after all this time, it wasn't going to happen that way and they both knew it. Or at least Peter did. He suspected Sylar would go along with whatever he started.
With that in mind, Peter leaned in and gently kissed the man's cheek, then the thinner skin on the side of his nose. Sylar's hands rose to Peter's waist and rested there. Peter nuzzled him and Sylar turned his head to kiss Peter's cheek similarly, like a dancer who needed to see a few steps to know how to follow. They made out quietly for long minutes. Peter touched Sylar's neck and the small of his back. Sylar rubbed up and down Peter's back. The man seemed quite taken by exploring Peter's hips and how their bodies pressed together. It was a flicker of genuine, but guarded, curiosity.

"So," Peter finally asked, still pressed against the other man, "now that we're on kissing terms, are you going to be any easier to be around?"

"No."

Peter snorted and chuckled. "Points for honesty."

"I'm always honest. Nearly. Speaking of which, I want more than kissing."

Peter sighed and pushed away slowly. "Not today. But soon. I'm done torturing myself. And you. But we'll get there."
Peter gave Sylar a friendly shove as he came over to the pool table. It was like many others Peter had given the man and as usual, Sylar's response was defensive. Or maybe offended. He drew himself up and looked at Peter archly, as though daring him to assault him a second time. Peter rolled his eyes and started to walk away, then something occurred to him.

Peter wheeled fast enough that Sylar stiffened again, but Peter ignored it. "When I shove you like that, I'm trying to say something. It's not an attack; it's a question. Do you get that?"

Sylar said nothing, but his posture loosened somewhat. His expression was disbelieving in addition to wary.

Peter tilted his head to one side, taking in Sylar's own wordless communication. "Okay," he said more gently. "When I shove you, I'm asking how things are between us. I'm asking in a way where you don't have to put it into words, because it's not really a thing words express very well. If you push back hard, and you're not clearly just being overenthusiastic, then you're probably angry at me or afraid. You want to be in charge. You're letting me know by shoving me around harder than I pushed you. If you push back a little, then either I'm not worth your time, or you're annoyed at me but not enough to do anything about it. If you push back the same, more or less, then I know we're cool. It's call-and-response. It's reciprocal behavior. Animals do it – courtship, bonding, pack identity – all that stuff. And if you won't play my game at all, then we aren't friends on any level. Things are deadly serious between us – and you're putting me on notice."

Sylar had listened with surprising attentiveness throughout Peter's explanation. Now he looked down at himself, then at his shoulder, then at Peter. He looked suspicious and uncertain.

Peter went on, "But I know you. I've done this enough times – touched your elbow, jogged your arm, play-punched you in the shoulder, that I know you're not acting this way because you're going to kill me. It just now occurred to me that you don't know what I'm looking for as a response, or maybe even why I keep doing this."

"Why do you keep doing this?"

Peter pursed his lips and rolled his eyes. Then he walked over and pushed on Sylar with both hands, palms out. Sylar stumbled back a step, drawing in air and looking alarmed. Peter pushed him again. This time Sylar lashed out and shoved him back, hard. Peter stopped, rocked back by the impact. "See?"

Sylar waited a beat, then pushed Peter again, gentler. Peter waited a moment as well, then copied Sylar's action and intensity. Sylar looked at him like he had a second head, then laughed out loud. He reached out and tousled Peter's hair. "You're something else, Petrelli."
Peter chuckled, raking a hand through his hair to sort it out. Sylar walked off to circle the pool table and took up his cue stick. Peter asked him, "You get it now though, right?"

"What I 'get' is that I've been telling you loud and clear I would kill you if you touched me. You've understood that perfectly – crystal clear." Sylar tilted his head with an amused expression. "And yet you keep doing it anyway."
He didn't know what to do with such kindness. At least, not so much of it. It was the repeated aspect of it that was fucking him up. Four times, in fact. The first time, Peter had done his thing; Sylar had done his. They'd both been wary and careful, which wasn't very sexy, but the job was done anyway. The second time had been rougher, but afterward Peter was just as intimate as the first – cuddling, kissing, touching, and holding. If he was bothered by the false start or misunderstanding, he didn't say. The third time was smooth enough that Sylar laughed at how easy the whole thing was. They fit together so well. It was such a comfort to tumble into Peter's arms when they were done, that it almost made him cry with relief. And frustration, maybe, because he was so afraid it wasn't supposed to be like this. Then the fourth time was the same way – easy, delicious. It left him tired and fulfilled while still twitchy with paranoia.

He huddled in Peter's embrace, sheets pulled over their sweaty bodies. Peter was slowly petting his back, drowsing with his cheek on the top of Sylar's head. It was the pose of a parent with a distraught child, or maybe of a lover being protective of their mate. Sylar found he no longer cared about the inadequacy implied by the first interpretation, because he was getting what he desperately wanted no matter how much someone else might scorn him for the desire. Peter didn't scorn him and his opinion was rapidly becoming the only one that mattered to Sylar.

"Does this … end … sometime?" he asked in a very small voice. He wouldn't have been surprised if Peter was too asleep to hear him, or if he'd said it too quietly to be heard even if the man was awake. But Peter heard.

"This?" Peter said thickly, shifting slightly as he roused, limbs flexing comfortably around Sylar's form. "What 'this'? Me holding you?"

"No." Sylar burrowed his head under Peter's chin because he could, because such freedoms were allowed between them now. He kissed the man's collarbone with a light, grateful peck. The air between them was rich with scents of both of them – both from the exertion and the sex. They were fascinating to his nose. "Us. You … treating me like this. After. Being … this way with me."

Peter turned his face to kiss the top of Sylar's head. After a quiet pause, Peter said, "I want to be this way with you forever."

Butterflies churned in Sylar's gut. No one had ever given him any kind of commitment like that. Nothing in his life had prepared him for it – out of the blue, unconditional, almost a blurt but he knew that pause had been Peter thinking about his words and whether they were true. Sylar didn't need lie detection to know that statement wouldn't have triggered as deception. Sylar pulled his head up and looked Peter in the face from too close to see him clearly. "You can't want that. It's- How? I don't- Something will happen!"
"Easy, easy," Peter crooned. "Hey," he said softly. "We'll deal with it, okay?"

"How?"

Peter's brows rose slightly. "By talking with each other, being understanding, and patient."

Sylar's heart was hammering in his chest, blood racing. He hugged Peter again, putting his face against the other man's chest. Peter's heartbeat was slower. This was not a terrifying subject for him. Sylar took a deep breath and let it out, trying to follow Peter's example. Peter was petting his back again. Relaxation slowly spread through Sylar's frame. He weighed Peter's track record with lovers (poor) versus his loyalty to those he loved (high) and his tolerance for the drama, trauma, and difficulty that seemed to plague Sylar's life (also high). Somehow, Peter's problems maintaining a relationship before seemed exactly what Sylar deserved, and bizarrely turned into a plus. "You're very strange," Sylar said against Peter's skin.

"As long as we're strange together," Peter told him. "Strange is just another word for special."
"What do you think, Sylar?" Peter leaned against the pool table, regarding his unnecessarily flirty companion with a sour look.

Sylar strolled over to him, putting hands on the pool table on either side of Peter. He held himself stiffly at that distance, a good six inches between the two of them. Peter leaned back to get just a little more distance between their faces, but otherwise remained still. Sylar didn't rattle him and he wanted Sylar to see that. Sylar tilted his head to the side with a small smile. "It doesn't matter what I think, Peter. It's all you. It has been since you came here." Peter tilted his head in the opposite direction, eyes narrowing slightly but obviously listening. Sylar added, "My whole universe has come to revolve around you."

Sylar still wore the same smile. It was equal parts annoyingly condescending and charmingly genuine. Only Sylar could achieve both in such a delicate mix. Peter pressed his lips together to stall his own smile at the flattery. But he liked it. He let go of his pool stick, heedless as it slid a few inches to the side where it caught on Sylar's wrist. Peter put his hand on Sylar's forearm, giving the touch a lingering glance before looking back to Sylar's face. Sylar's brows rose a tiny fraction, then his gaze tracked the same path in an obvious manner. "Mmm," Sylar rumbled so softly Peter could barely hear it, but hear it he did.

Peter's heart sped up. He felt warm and alive with everything looking just a bit more vivid. He wondered how far Sylar would let him push it. He wondered how far he should push it. It was wrong, of course, to flirt with Sylar – his brother's killer, a serial killer, a murderer, and the sole other occupant of this world. Sylar was right – their mutual existences here each revolved around the other. Anything that might upset the equilibrium was dangerous, best to be avoided. But Peter was not very good at following the rules, especially not when one of the most physically attractive people he'd ever met was inches away, teasing him and daring him to do more.

Peter's other hand went to Sylar's hip. With a look that left no question that Peter thought he was in charge here, Peter tugged Sylar's shirt from where it was tucked into his jeans and slid his hand under it. The warm skin was soft and delicious. Peter inhaled deeply, reveling in the touch. He leaned back a few inches more so his hips were the closest part of his body to Sylar.

Sylar was staring straight into his eyes, slowly, gradually moving closer with the steady flex of his elbows. Peter could feel the angle changing under the hand that rested on Sylar's forearm. He could sense the increasing proximity tingling along his entire body. He could see it in how Sylar's eyes grew larger, his face coming closer, feeling the man's breath faint against Peter's skin. The hand on the skin of Sylar's hip slipped gently around the man's lower back, so close were they that it was easy to do.

Peter stiffened (in more than one way) and twitched when Sylar's groin touched his. Sylar stopped
precisely where he was, continuing not a single millimeter. Peter exhaled shakily, his eyes darting over Sylar's face. They settled on the man's lips. They were slightly parted, a tiny opening showing at the center. Peter stared for a moment, overcome with desire. Then his eyes went back and forth between lips and eyes. Sylar tilted his head a fraction in invitation, lips opening more, and a second later, Peter snatched at what he hungered for. He stole a kiss, lips pressing to Sylar's in a brief, ill-considered peck that was so far from the entirety of what Peter wanted to do to the man (what he wasn't allowed to do with the man; what was wrong to do with him).

No more had Peter's lips pressed home than his sense overcame his impulsiveness. "No!" He jerked his head away and to the side, awash in guilt. Sylar flinched back and then froze, face wary. The pool stick clattered to the floor. Peter glanced at him and shook his head, keeping his hands low (both having left contact with Sylar) and face turned mostly away. "No," he said in a calmer tone.

Sylar backed off a full, graceful step, leaving Peter exhaling in heavy breaths, his head spinning a little from the break in the tension. Sylar's smile broadened to a knowing smirk as he reached up and touched his lips. "You kissed me," he said softly, both wonder and dark promise in his tone.

Peter scowled, or tried to. "What am I supposed to do here, be pissed off at you, at me, or laugh at myself for being an idiot?"

"Mmm, Petrelli," Sylar crooned as he moved away to lean on the arm of the nearby couch. "You're not an idiot. But whatever helps you accept reality faster, the better off you'll be. I know a few things about temptation … and hunger." He looked Peter up and down with a ravishing gaze that gave Peter goosebumps all by itself. "And you're in deep, Petey. Very deep."

Peter shook his head, bending to collect his pool stick. "We can't. We shouldn't. It's wrong."

"We can, we just did, and the world didn't end," Sylar replied. "But whatever you say, Peter. Like I said before – it's all you."
Favorite Part

Title: Favorite Part
Characters: Sylar, Peter Petrelli
Rating: R
Warnings: None
Words: 250
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Sylar asks which part of his body Peter prefers.

"Which part do I like the most?"

"For sex," Sylar clarified. He thought it was obvious he was asking if Peter preferred to top or bottom, now that they'd done both. Whether his ass or dick pleased Peter more would settle it.

Peter tilted his head, thinking about that a moment. "Your mouth."

"Oh." Sylar kept his expression carefully neutral. He didn't know why it hadn't occurred to him that perhaps Peter was an intense fan of getting blow jobs. It was, after all, the thing Peter had mentioned when Sylar had asked him what he fantasized about.

Peter leaned forward, looking at the specified part intently. "I like kissing it," he said softly. "I like the way it looks, tastes, feels against mine." Sylar blinked. Kissing was not sex. But Peter wasn't done speaking. He went on, "I like watching it. It says so much about how you're feeling and what you're trying to express. How much you want me – or don't." Sylar opened his mouth to object, but Peter raised a hand to postpone his objection. Peter's voice was husky as he continued, "I love what you do to me with it – everywhere you use it on my body." Sylar shut his mouth. Peter had his full attention, especially with that lusting tone of voice. "And I love what you let me do to it." He smiled and scooted forward, moving in for a kiss. "That's why it's my favorite part."

Sylar made a delighted, surprised chuckle before granting the kiss, letting Peter deepen it at his own pace, then pulling the smaller man against him so Sylar could turn the tables and kiss him deeply in return.

XXX

"Which part of me do you like the most?"

Sylar had managed to wrap himself around Peter quite satisfactorily. After their previous couplings, it had been Peter doing the holding. Now that Sylar was getting to do it, he could definitely see the attraction of the role. He kissed Peter lightly on the forehead. "Your brain."

Peter snorted and shifted in his arms without any meaningful change in position. "Internal organs don't count."

"What? Why?"

"They're not … it's not the same thing," Peter said. "It's like, I could have said your heart before, because you can't live without it, but that's dumb. I never see it. Pick something … external."

Sylar sighed and grumped, "I don't know why you get to set the rules."
"Because you're going to let me," Peter said confidently. "Now tell me which part you like the most."

Sylar breathed lightly, mentally reviewing the person that was Peter Petrelli. Divorcing the physical form from personality, memory, behavior, past associations, supernatural abilities, intellect, and emotions left just a shell of flesh behind. The characteristics of it seemed … irrelevant. "I … I can't think of anything."

"Really?"

Sylar shifted uncomfortably, rearranging his arms around Peter's shoulders. "There's nothing I can pick. Your eyes … but if they were another color that wouldn't change the attraction. Your face, your body, your genitals even – if they were different, it wouldn't matter if it was still you."

Peter pulled back and met his eyes steadily for a moment. "I don't think you get the question." Sylar pursed his lips and said nothing. "You like my hair," Peter stated as a fact.

Sylar's eyes lifted to it, widening. "Yes! I do!" He reached up and sank his hand into it, threading the locks between his fingers. "I'd like this hair on anyone."

"And you like my ass."

Sylar looked at him blankly for a moment, then slid his hand down Peter's back, under the sheet that partly covered them. He cupped the swell of Peter's rear end, not gripping too hard because he thought it likely he'd handled Peter roughly enough to bruise earlier. The hand in Peter's hair dropped to his throat. "And this. I like your neck. All the air, blood, electrical impulses through your spine – all travel through this single column." His thumb stroked up and then down Peter's windpipe. "This is the conduit that allows your brain to control your body, and your body to maintain your brain." He bent and kissed Peter's Adam's apple. Peter moaned softly under his lips.

Sylar moved up to Peter's face. "I like your tongue, maybe most of all, if you'll allow it. I love the noises you make and the things you use it to say to me. I love the clever things you do with it. I love the taste of it in my mouth and the feel of it licking across my skin. So there – something other than the brain."

"Mm," Peter hummed. "Let's put our favorites together. Do it long enough and I might be ready for round two."
Title: Care Full
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 1,000
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: None.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter and Sylar, third or fourth time of sex. Peter being careful of Sylar's issues.

Peter sat on the edge of the bed, watching as Sylar came out of the bathroom, ready for the evening. "What do you like in bed?"

Sylar stopped. "What we've been doing is fine."

"Mm." Peter was unconvinced. "Come here," he said quietly.

Sylar approached.

Peter lifted Sylar's t-shirt and kissed his belly, rubbing his face against the soft skin. "Do you like this?"

Sylar swallowed and looked down with a neutral expression. "Yes." Peter rubbed his chin back and forth against Sylar's belly, looking up at him and remaining unconvinced. After a beat, Sylar added, "You don't have to be careful with me, Peter. I'm not made of glass."

Peter quirked a brow and a corner of his mouth in amusement. "Really?" Let me test that. He turned his face and bit Sylar, hard, a big mouthful of sensitive, vulnerable flesh that now featured a faint imprint of Peter's teeth. Peter looked up at him with bared teeth now.

Sylar looked shocked and pleased, eyes wide and half a delighted smile on his face.

Oh, he really does like that. Peter hooked a foot beside Sylar's ankle, knocking it to the side as he pushed and pulled the man's hips, spinning him and sending him tumbling into the bed on his back.

Sylar landed with a bounce, but he didn't fight or get back up.

Peter came up next to him, kneeling on the bed. He took a moment to check Sylar's expression. Sylar looked pleased, but disdainful. "You're still being careful."

Peter slapped him - instantly and without warning, more speed than strength. "Do you have any idea who you are to me? Of course, I'm being careful!"

Sylar's mouth fell open, either in outraged surprise, arousal, or both.

Peter snarled at him, then slapped him again just as lightning quick as the first time. Then he was on Sylar with a hard, brief kiss. A second later, his hand groped Sylar's groin, his grip firm and insistent. Sylar was already hard. He likes it rough? I can give it rough. Peter switched from Sylar's mouth to his jawline and then his neck, biting at him as he pressed his pelvis to Sylar's hip, and manhandled his junk with a hard, twisting motion. Sylar groaned and his hips bucked.
"Yeah? You want it? Roll over. Get naked." Peter got off the bed to shuck his boxers and t-shirt, leaving Sylar to do the same. He didn't miss the worried, slightly paler look on Sylar's face before the man was face-down and on his knees, positioned for rear entry. Peter snagged the lotion as he climbed back on. "Middle of the bed." He gave Sylar a hard nudge. The man went silently.

Peter lotioned himself up thoroughly, then Sylar – his entire, hairy crack. He positioned himself, penis between cheeks, and rubbed up and down, feeling Sylar's hot body against his shaft. He leaned forward, pressing them together enough to put Sylar off-balance. Sylar moved his elbows out to brace them, but Peter reached under the man's armpits and lifted him while shoving forward with his hips. Sylar ended up mostly flat. Peter made it entirely flat with a few seconds more of maneuvering.

Sylar was breathing fast and shallow – doing and saying nothing. Peter laid on top of him, fairly still, and kissed his shoulder lightly. Sylar turned his face away. He was beginning to sweat. Peter said, "I'm not going to fuck you tonight."

Sylar turned his face back. "You … can." It seemed difficult for him to get the words out.

"I know." Peter kissed him again. "It's not what I want right now." He nibbled on Sylar's skin. "It's not what I've prepared you for." Already, Sylar's breathing was deeper. His color was returning.

"What-" Peter bit him harder, cutting off the question. He snaked his arm around Sylar's throat, not tight enough to make a difference in Sylar's breathing, but it was there. Peter's hips moved, sliding his shaft up and down Sylar's well-lubed crack.

"Thisss," Peter hissed. He put his free hand to Sylar's hip to stabilize himself and started thrusting harder. It was just like they were having sex except no one was being penetrated and the sensation was considerably different. It wasn't fantastic, but it was enough. "I'm going to take you whatever way I like, and this is what I want tonight!" He snarled, pressed his face to Sylar's upper back, and snugged his arm around his throat. Sylar's breathing was deeper. His color was returning.

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It felt good – wet, slick, hot. Sliding against each other, listening to Sylar's hoarse breaths, occasionally ratcheting up the pressure, biting his back and leaving teeth marks behind when Sylar would gasp and shudder. He felt it when Sylar went, the spasms passing through the man's entire body, the taut arch of his back going limp after. Peter released his neck, slid down so his knees were firmly seated on the mattress and his dick lodged in the cleft of Sylar's ass. He put one hand to encircle the head of his dick and used the other to keep his balance as he continued thrusting against the man. He spilled onto the small of Sylar's back soon enough. Peter smeared it liberally in that spot that he loved to touch, just at the level of Sylar's waistband.

He leaned forward in a push-up position over Sylar's body. This time, Sylar didn't turn away to hide his face. He looked blissed out and only a little concerned. Peter gave his shoulder a peck. "I'm always going to be careful with you, Sylar." He rubbed the tip of his nose where he'd kissed. "Always."
I'm so angry inside and it's not going away. I thought it would – time would pass, I'd get to know you, things would get better. But they haven't. I'm still angry. I'm starting to wonder if I'll ever not be angry.

"You need to vent it. Channel it. As long as you keep it bottled up inside, it's not going away."

Peter sighed and rolled his eyes. "Sylar, I have tried beating the crap out of you. Aside from being dangerous to both of us, it didn't help. I'm still mad."

Sylar shrugged. "There are other ways to release your energy on me. You've been unnecessarily careful to date."

Peter narrowed his eyes at Sylar, then blew air out his nose and looked away. Sylar scowled at the dismissal. Peter looked back to say, "If I thought you were really into that, that's one thing. I could do that. But-"

Sylar launched himself from his seat, his hands coming down on the armrests of Peter's chair. He nearly snarled. "I am – into that. Be rough with me. Put that passion to use. Show me how much I mean to you."

Peter looked at him wide-eyed for a long beat, then jerked upwards and bit Sylar on the lower lip hard enough to make Sylar gasp, then kissed him – solidly but close-mouthed – before dropping back in the chair and pushing Sylar away casually with a foot to the thigh. "Then we have a deal. And it's not one-sided this time."
"I remember," Sylar shot Peter a cautious look as the two of them waded into the deeper water of the pool at the deserted YMCA, "him pulling you under time after time once. You must have been ten or twelve or something like that."

Peter glanced at him, then shrugged. Time and exposure had defused the anger at the mention of Sylar's knowledge of Nathan's memories. "Could have been any time."

"True." Sylar nodded. "He did things like that a lot."

Peter gave him another glance, this one with more of a warning in it. "He was probably trying to teach me to swim underwater – hold my breath, that kind of thing."

The warning irritated Sylar. "No. It was a game to him, to see how much he could do it before you were drowning or gave up."

Peter's look hardened and he stopped where he was, water up to his neck. "The point was to learn not to give up."

"I have the memory, Peter. I know what he was doing. He was dunking you because it was funny to him. You rationalized it then; you're rationalizing it now."

Peter glowered at him, then shook his head and pushed off, sending himself into the deeper water at the other end of the pool. After a beat, Sylar followed. When they drew up to the far edge, Sylar shook the water out of his face and persisted with, "Why is it okay for him to treat you like that? Why do you still idolize him, even after his death?"

"You're on thin ice, Sylar."

Sylar hung in the water, supported by the tenuous grasp of one hand on the edge. He sighed. "I'd like to know the answer."

"Why?"

"Because it doesn't make sense, Peter."

"Because I loved him, alright? He loved me." Peter pushed away from the wall, treading water.

"How do you know that?"

"What?" Peter gave him an offended look. "He's my brother!"

"What makes him different from your father – who also didn't treat you well?"
That seemed to break through Peter's self-righteousness and send him back to think things through. But he didn't take long to answer. "Nathan was there for me when I needed him. He helped me when I asked for it. He hugged me, was supportive. I was an annoying kid. He put up with me. My father … didn't." Peter shot him an incisive look. "You have the memories. You know how it was different."

Grudgingly, Sylar ceded the point. "There are still things Nathan did to you that he shouldn't have."

"You don't get to sit in judgment over my brother, Sylar." He swam closer to where Sylar still hung out at the edge. The swirling currents around Peter rolled over Sylar's skin. "Judge, jury, executioner? Fuck that. It sounds like you're looking for justification for what you did." Peter's teeth were bared for the last part of that.

Sylar shook his head, but held his tongue until Peter backed off and took up a spot against the rim of the pool, out of arm's reach from Sylar. Then Sylar spoke. "You forgave him for trying to lock you up specifically and criminalize our entire sub-species! Something you know, from personal experience at your father's hands, as an inmate of the Company, and from the bodies at Coyote Sands, is a recipe for death, torture, and worse. You make excuses for the times when he abused your trust. You think he was trying to impart life lessons when all he was doing is-"

Peter lunged at him, intent on violence. Fighting in the water turned out to be ridiculous, but very frightening. Neither of them tried to hold the other under water, but both were paranoid about it happening and clung to the lip of the pool as though their life depended on it. Peter couldn't swing his one free arm effectively in the water, but he still hit Sylar, who couldn't dodge properly and spent his effort splashing water in Peter's face and pushing Peter away from him like Peter was an angry child.

Peter backed off, coughing. "What, are you fucking jealous?!

"Yes, Peter! I am fucking jealous! Why does he get all these breaks and I don't?"

"He's my brother!"

"I was your brother once!"

"And I gave you a fucking break then, didn't I?" Peter coughed again. Sylar frowned at him. Peter went on, "That's what brothers do', right?" He wasn't mocking – just reminding.

Sylar's frown was intensified by a glare, but then he shook his head and looked away. He muttered, "Okay, fine."

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'Fine'. You win. You're Peter Petrelli, the rock of the house of rocks, and you're stupidly loyal. Immovable object. Fine."

Peter was silent for a long time, watching Sylar sulk. Finally, he said, "It's not family I'm loyal to, Sylar." Sylar looked over. "It's love."

"But-" But Peter had already pushed away from the wall, head under water as he shot away through the water, leaving Sylar confused and alone.
Sylar stepped out in front as Peter left the bathroom, clad in only a towel, and started to head down the short hall. "So clean. Let me get you dirty again."

Peter looked surprised, maybe even put off, as Sylar went to his knees. It wasn't the expression Sylar wanted on Peter's face, given the offer, but perhaps the attention would bring Peter around. He'd said, after all, that this was his fantasy – Sylar on his knees, serving him. It was demeaning in a way that simultaneously disgusted and thrilled Sylar. He tugged downward on the towel when Peter didn't immediately drop it. But Peter hung onto it. Sylar stopped then, a beat of mixed, tumultuous emotions – mainly anger at himself for having misread Peter's cues. He'd thought this (or himself) was desired.

Before he could recoil or even consider a safe exit strategy, Peter came down, nearly sitting in his lap. Sylar stiffened, not sure what to do. Pulling away or leaving would only make things worse now, but what was Peter up to? Peter leaned in and kissed him on the cheek. Sylar swallowed uneasily, pulling away an inch or two. He was confused as to whether Peter liked to kiss or not – evidence was that he didn't, but then what the hell was he doing?

Peter studied Sylar's face. The set of his shoulders dipped somewhat, then he leaned in again, this time lower, and gave Sylar's neck a light peck. This was a more acceptable kiss from Sylar's point of view. Peter had done similar – kissing his collarbone - while Sylar had masturbated him. Non-face kisses had not been rejected (or maybe it was just kisses started by Sylar that Peter responded badly to?) Peter was waiting, he realized, listening and watching and probably feeling for Sylar's response, his body poised with his mouth a few inches away from Sylar's neck. He was, just as Sylar, trying to figure out what was okay.

Sylar let out the breath he'd been holding and grumbled, "Don't be so tentative. You can do whatever you want."

Peter shifted back just enough to see him. "What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to take everything you want of me!" Sylar spat out, angry at Peter trying to turn the tables and make this about anyone's desire but Peter's.

Peter gave him a penetrating look and a single, slow nod. Sylar's eyes narrowed slightly. A well-developed sense gave him a few seconds of warning – enough for his heart rate to spike and adrenaline to flood his system. Peter was on him before the process was done.

One of Peter's hands snaked around Sylar's head to grab his hair – not yanking, just grabbing – and the other seized his bicep. Peter lunged forward, his teeth sharp against Sylar's throat and then raking up over stubble to his jawline. It was sudden, like an attack, and despite his instincts screaming at
him to defend himself, Sylar threw back his head and exposed his throat entirely. Peter pressed in, climbing on him.

Sylar's hands scrabbled over bare skin. The towel had fallen away. Peter's body was still hot from the shower, fresh and damp. He smelled clean and yet still like himself. Sylar embraced him, holding them together encouragingly as Peter ravished his throat, the side of his face, and what of his shoulder Peter could get to. The sense of the man was overwhelming.

Peter pressed into him, pushing him back and over in his passion. The hand in his hair shifted on the way down and what might have been a nasty knock to the head was conveniently cushioned. Peter's other hand was shoving up Sylar's shirt as he climbed between Sylar's legs. Sylar's legs, which were awkwardly bent as he struggled under the weight of Peter's body to unfold them and straighten them out. It helped that he was flexible, but it was not a good position. Peter's weight went back to his knees and the roaming hand down to Sylar's butt. He gripped and lifted as Sylar bridged upward and righted his legs. The motion brought Sylar's groin directly against Peter's. He was erect.

It was a relief and an excitement for Sylar, who had worried Peter's sexual assault on him was an act or some kind of joke. His legs free now, he wrapped them around Peter, who was using both hands to push Sylar's shirt up and then off. Sylar pulled it over his head and tossed it to the side. Peter was on him again, humping against him like they were having sex, biting his chest, shoving an arm under Sylar's back to hold him closer and pin them together. The vigor and energy was everything he would have expected of a man who worked out daily and could usually best him in a fight.

Sylar reached down between them, cupping and then holding Peter's dick as the other man thrust into his fist. Peter was really going at it. Sylar knew he was going to have bite marks on his chest, a thought that turned him on and made him tighten his legs around Peter's hips. Peter curled his hand over Sylar's shoulder, getting leverage to ram into him even harder. It jogged Sylar's whole body, scraping him over the floor until Peter changed angle to make sure he wasn't going anywhere. The thought of what this would be like if they actually fucked was making Sylar high. He was so hard he ached.

Peter grunted noisily, put his face cheek to cheek with Sylar and pressed into him, the last, rapid flexes of his hips into Sylar's fist taking on an urgent quality. He came seconds later, gasping in Sylar's ear. Sylar kept pumping at Peter's dick, intrigued and pleased to have Peter thrust in time with his motions. It seemed involuntary, along with the spasms that ran through the Petrelli, who was hunched over him, panting. Sylar stroked him slower, finding himself in control of the pace of Peter's ramp down.

"Mmm," Sylar hummed, "That is exactly what I wanted you to do."

"Yeah?" Peter asked, slowly pushing himself to his knees as he seemed to regain his senses. "One other thing, though." Sylar hadn't let go of him. Peter hadn't indicated he wanted him to. Now Peter used one hand to scoop up his messy ejaculate from Sylar's belly and the other to open Sylar's pants. Sylar's hand stopped moving as he stared down himself. Peter took up Sylar's erection in the hand that was slick with his own emission. It was one of the filthiest things Sylar had ever seen (might be 'the' filthiest), being done directly to him.

It was so shocking that he laughed a few times. Peter didn't stop (for which Sylar was grateful) and Sylar's laughter turned to quiet groans of pleasure. He let his head fall back on the carpet while a naked man crouched over him and stroked him off to completion. He came in moments. He would have laughed again with the release, but mirth was dangerous and Sylar didn't want to push his luck with Peter. Not at this early stage.

Instead, he pulled Peter down and … kissed his cheek after a beat of hesitation. Peter allowed it.
There was no revulsion. But he didn't move in for a normal kiss, either. He just lowered himself on top of Sylar, putting their bodies together. "You succeeded," Peter said.

"Hm?"

"I'm dirty again."
"Since I have been here," Peter said, "I have not made any serious attempt to kill you. We've fought. I've lashed out in anger or fear or because you started it. But the fact that you're here with all your fingers and toes, both eyes, and nothing wrong with you is because even at my angriest, I know I shouldn't murder someone!"

"Get off your high horse, Petrelli. You're lying and we both know it."

"If I wanted you dead, Sylar, then you'd be dead! How many times do I have to say that?"

"Actions speak louder than words."

"What?" Peter looked confused. "The concussion?"

Viciously, Sylar snapped, "You used your ability and tried to wipe me out! Is that somehow not death to you?"

"That- but-" Peter hesitated, then raised his mobile brows. "That wasn't what I was going for. Remember the drugs? And you seemed pretty fucking gung-ho about it at the time. And it didn't take. And it was before I came here. Three strikes, you're out!"

Sylar barked a single, loud, angry laugh. "So you think I asked you to kill me, is that it?"

Peter bobbed his head to the side and shot his eyes that way for a moment. "That's exactly what you told me to do. Yes, Sylar."

"You proposed a one-sided deal." Sylar got in his face, teeth bared. "I'd rather die." He glared until Peter faltered, then said, "That's what I meant in context and you know it!"

"It was still before I came here," Peter said, not backing down an inch.

"So it doesn't count? Is that it?" Sylar jeered, putting some distance between them again. "How about everyone I killed doesn't count either, because they were before all of this, too!"

"What are we even arguing about here?" Peter threw his arms up in frustration. "I was trying to say we're both basically safe with each other!"

"I'm saying you're lying! I'm not buying the Petrelli bullshit this time!"

Peter hesitated again, looking lost as his eyes darted back and forth across the floor. He looked up. "What? Seriously – what, Sylar?"

"I told you!"
"You told me something that happened before I came here. But I don't think you'd be acting this way about that. It's something different. What is it?"

Sylar narrowed his eyes at Peter for a long moment. Slowly he said, "You grabbed me with your hand. You used your ability on me. And you tried to wipe me out."

Peter was still hopelessly lost. "When?"

"In the rec room. I beat you unconscious for it!"

Peter flinched and compulsively touched the back of his head. "I don't remember that." Sylar gave him a very doubting look. Peter went on, "I'm not denying it happened. You're telling the truth. I'm telling the truth. You wouldn't lie to me about something like this! I know you. That's not how you act."

"Of course not. I'm not a real Petrelli, I just play one on TV."

Peter gave him a sour look for the interjection, but went on, "I remember … reading that book," he shook his head, "and then the next stuff was just disjointed – you taking care of me after I'd been fucked up."

Sylar gave him a long look, then asked, "All this time, you didn't know? You thought I just snapped and beat you within an inch of your life because …?" He lifted his brows in question.

Peter shrugged. "I didn't know! I was fucked up. You were helping me. Nothing made sense. I sure as hell wasn't going to go pissing you off when I could barely keep from pissing myself. I just tried not to be a problem."

Sylar was still staring at Peter intently. Dryly he observed, "You didn't do a very good job."

"Well, you didn't kill me, so it must have been good enough." Peter shrugged one shoulder this time. "Why … did I do that, though? Try to," he waved his hand to indicate it, "use an ability on you?"

"How would I know, Petrelli? You woke up and attacked me." But Sylar's tone had calmed remarkably. He was still watching Peter suspiciously, but he sounded almost conversational now, rather than agitated and lashing out as he had been before.

"I woke up? I was asleep?"

"You woke," Sylar paused, seeming to consider his words, or word, in this case, "up."

"Tell me what happened."

Sylar put his thoughts aside and described it. "You were reading on the couch, as you remember. You put the book down and fell asleep. You were having … a nightmare. You grabbed me in your sleep. You used your ability."

"In my sleep?"

"Listen!" Sylar snapped, getting louder for that one word. Peter shut up and obeyed. "I shook you off. You woke up. You paced. You yelled about how you didn't need me conscious for whatever it was you were going to do, then you came at me again, trying to do the same thing. You were awake. You knew what you were doing! I should have killed you for it!"

Peter was pale and quiet. His swallow was noisy. "Why didn't you?"
"I beat you so badly, you threw up on yourself," Sylar snarled. "It was disgusting. I didn't want to get your *filth* on my hands."

Still subdued, Peter asked, "What happened then?"

"I left you until the next day, when I found you huddled in a corner, unable to take even the most basic care of yourself. You know the rest."

"It was the next day?" Peter's voice was faltering.

"Yes, Peter. I left you there overnight to wallow in your own puke and blood. I thought you'd do your 'physician, heal thyself' thing, but I'd forgotten Petrellis never clean up their own messes."

"That's not fair."

"Neither was you attacking me out of the blue!"

Peter bit his lips and hunched his shoulders, shifting his weight a little. "How can you sleep with me, Sylar?" He looked up to quickly add, "I'm not threatening that or saying we shouldn't, but if I did that to you, then how can you … what if I do something like that again?"

"You were *awake* the second time you did it. Clearly awake. If you do it again, you won't be sleeping with anyone."

"And … yeah. Okay." He was quiet for a moment, looking down at his hand. "I wish I remembered. I didn't even know I could do anything here – with my ability."

"Don't bullshit me, Peter."

"I'm not, Sylar."

"You told me you have … tingles or something like that. When you showed up, you tried to get us out of here and something happened then, too. You can do *something* and you know it. Now, you might be too incompetent to know what it is or how to trigger it, but you have the ability." Sylar said it so matter-of-factly that it didn't even sound insulting.

"Okay, yeah, I have something. But trying to use it is stupid. Not unless you agree. And even then it would be stupid."

"You didn't care about my consent then, or the time before it."

Peter sat down, shoulders drooping. "I'm sorry."

"That … shouldn't make it better." Sylar sounded angry, pent-up.

Peter shook his head. "It doesn't. What makes it 'better' is you telling me about this, us believing each other, and," Peter sighed, "trying to work together to figure out how to never have it happen again."

Sylar lunged at Peter, going from casual to full assault in a second. He slammed his hands into Peter's shoulders hard enough he almost knocked over the chair with Peter in it. "DON'T DO IT AGAIN!"

Peter jumped, like any normal human being would at the sudden attack, but then his lip curled. "Don't tell me what to do."

Sylar shoved, rocking the chair again, and stalked away. "Then how does this work, Petrelli? You tell me!"
"I could sleep with restraints."

Sylar stopped and spun to face Peter, studying him. "You're serious."

"It's," Peter looked uncomfortable, "an idea."

"Could you handle that?"

Peter exhaled heavily. "Probably not. But maybe. If I had to. If you were … alright … about it."

"It's not sexy for you, is it?"

Peter shook his head with a tiny, tense shake.

Sylar sighed. "Too bad. Other ideas?"

"I don't know! I'm assuming sleeping apart is off the table." Sylar said nothing, but tensed enough that Peter went on, "Is there some way I could be depowered?"

Sylar laughed hollowly. "How fitting that you supposedly have Matt Parkman's power."

"Supposedly?" Peter scowled. "But fine, can his ability take away powers?"

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"I had that information from him directly, while he was highly incentivized not to lie. If he could have done it, he would have. And killed me immediately after, which he obviously didn't do, so there's your answer."

Now it was Peter's turn to study Sylar. Though eventually, he nodded. "Okay. I don't know what else. Gloves, maybe."

"Does your power require skin-to-skin contact?"

"Not really. Touching through clothing has worked before, so you're right – gloves probably wouldn't work. Maybe boxing gloves, though. There has to be some degree of padding it won't get through. But … I don't know what to suggest here, Sylar."

Sylar let out a deep breath. "Neither do I, Peter. That's why I hadn't brought it up until your little self-righteous, holier-than-thou spiel."

"Yeah, that was wrong."

"You say that, even though you can't remember what it was you did?"

"Yes, I say that. I trust you, Sylar."

"That's all we have to rely on anyway."
Take My Hand

Title: Take My Hand
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 900
Rating: PG
Warnings: None.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: It's a proposal.

Peter sat down next to Sylar where he was reading on the couch. "Let me have your hand."

Sylar said nothing, but he set his book down and put both hands on his thighs. Peter picked up his nearer hand, the right, and stroked it. He turned it palm up, petting that side as well, and began to gently massage it. Baffled, Sylar asked, "What are you doing?"

"Rubbing your hand."

"Why?"

Peter didn't pause. He kept doing what he'd been doing. "Because we're lovers, Sylar. I get to do this." He worked down the length of Sylar's pinkie finger, then moved on to the next. "I like touching people, especially the ones I'm intimate with. It's important to me. I want to touch you in ways that make you feel good. And I like helping people, so it's a double whammy of 'things Peter wants to do'."

He looked up to see Sylar looking at him wonderingly. Peter smiled and blushed a little, embarrassed to be the focus of such an expression. "What's that look about? None of what I just said was new."

"You said, 'We're lovers'," Sylar said as though he didn't quite believe the words.

Peter's smile broadened. The corners of his eyes wrinkled. "Yeah," he said slowly, drawing it out and teasing a little, "that's what we are now."

"You call it that, even to yourself?"

"We make love to each other. That means we're lovers. And yes – that's how I think of it. That's how I've thought about it from the start." Peter chuckled softly and reached for Sylar's other hand. "Give me that one now." Sylar complied and ran his other hand, now free, through Peter's hair. He cupped the back of Peter's head and tilted his face up for a sweet kiss. Peter opened his eyes halfway through, looking deep into Sylar's darker eyes. He loved getting lost in them. Peter broke the kiss, then kissed again, then a third time. Sylar's hand slipped down. Peter pulled back and reluctantly turned his attention to Sylar's left hand.

"I've had really shallow relationships for a long time – most of my life. I knew they wouldn't last. With men, I thought I couldn't let them. With Simone, I thought I could have something. She was beautiful and I loved her from the moment I saw her, but I thought maybe I'd finally found someone I could be with, if things could have worked out. I thought her family, her connections, her wealth were all things that might get her past my father's … bigotry."

"See, I thought it was racism when I was growing up. But he was so inconsistent about it! There
were so many exceptions – people he knew, people who were powerful, and sometimes just total strangers at random and I couldn't understand why they had a bye and no one else did. I could hear the dog whistles and the code words he was using, about how some people were better than others, the innate superiority of some bloodlines, that sort of stuff. I knew they meant something. I didn't realize until after he took my powers away that it was abilities he was talking about."

Peter exhaled heavily. "No wonder he had Nathan injected! He couldn't have his firstborn son not be a member of the master fucking race."

"For the same reason," Sylar said dryly, "he had to take your abilities away as soon as he could. He couldn't have his second born son, in open rebellion against him, being more powerful than anyone and everyone in the master race. He substituted me for you, but only as long as he thought he had me under control."

Peter nodded. "You killed him. We killed him. I don't think either one of us are much for knuckling under. Too bad Nathan had bought into Dad's philosophy from the beginning. All that talk on the news about 'terrorists'. My partner, Hesam, thought Nathan was talking about people like him – brown-skinned, foreign-born, possibly Muslim. He was hearing it, too, but like me when I was a teenager listening to Dad, he thought Nathan was talking about something else. He didn't know about abilities. Neither did I way back then. So when I met Simone, I thought this time it might work. The Deveaux's were old friends of the family. Maybe she'd pass the test."

Sylar spoke in an even, uninflected voice, "Maybe love would stay. But she was shot by her ex-boyfriend and died in your arms."

"Yes." Peter raised Sylar's hand to his lips and solemnly kissed his knuckles, one by one. "You're not going to run off by my family. You're not going to die in my arms because you've been shot. You're not going to be lost in time because of some fuck-up. I'm not going to break your cello because I can't explain things because you wouldn't believe me."

"Sylar, you are the best chance at a long-term relationship I'm going to get. You're strong. You're careful. You know my history and all the baggage I come with. You know what you're getting into and you're still willing to do it." Peter gave him an admiring look. Sylar blinked a couple times like he didn't know what to do with such an expression directed his way.

Peter took up both of Sylar's hands in his own. He looked earnestly into Sylar's face. "I want this to last."

Whispering, Sylar answered, "It will."
Sylar got into bed with the same awkward, stiff manner as he had the night before – no eye contact that Peter could meet, only a profile of his face in the dimness. At least this time when Peter touched his arm, there was no flinch. Instead, Sylar drew in a breath, turned to face Peter, and began to slide downward.

"No," Peter said firmly, grabbing Sylar's upper arm. Sylar stopped. Peter released his grip. "Not tonight."

Sylar's lips pressed together carefully and he made a dip of his head that might have been a nod, or merely hiding his face. It had to be hiding his face, because he kept doing it as he returned to his previous position, as though preparing to sleep.

Peter wasn't done, though. "You wanted to sleep together, for company, so you're not alone." Sylar didn't respond beyond sliding his eyes in Peter's direction without turning his head. "Last night we slept close, holding each other. Or I can be over here, where I am now. Or on the other side of the bed. Which do you prefer?"

"I … whichever you want, Peter."

"I want to know which you prefer."

Sylar's brows lowered for a moment as he finally turned his head a little to face Peter, more or less. "I prefer whichever you want."

Peter chuckled at the idea of them fighting over something like this. He decided to ignore Sylar's challenging tone. It was hard to take it seriously when they were lying next to each other in bed, discussing how much snuggling they might do that night. "Okay. I can sleep any of those ways, but if I start on the other side of the bed, I'm most likely going to be on top of you by the end of the night." Sylar raised a brow. "Okay," Peter amended, "maybe not on top of you. Probably. But next to you. My point being that if you're okay with me close, then I'd rather start there … if I'm welcome." Sylar said nothing, but his actions spoke loudly enough – he scooted over a few inches nearer.

Peter arranged himself as he had the night before, arms prepared to loosely encircle Sylar's upper body, his leg hooking over Sylar's. Sylar settled himself in, but it was a few inches further away than the previous evening. Peter made a mental note of that, adding it to the short list of things he was sure Sylar was okay with, or perhaps even enjoyed.

He leaned over the short distance to touch the tip of his nose to Sylar's forehead before pulling back. "I'm trying to find what we can both enjoy. So the things we do make us both happy."
Sylar looked at him, utterly baffled. "Why? I'll give you whatever you want."

"I want you happy!" From his expression, Peter's answer wasn't convincing. He tried another tack. "You're not going to stay with me long-term if this is miserable for you."

"I have nowhere else to go, Peter." Sylar still looked confused, but there seemed to be some understanding there as well. "No one else to be with. You're safe. You can do whatever you want."

"I am," Peter insisted. "Making you happy is what I want."

Sylar searched Peter's face, then dropped his gaze to Peter's arm. He touched over it gently, his expression concerned and thoughtful. Peter enjoyed the simple touch and wondered how much had gotten through to Sylar. Did he think Peter was telling the truth, or just another in a long line of people trying to manipulate him? It left Peter feeling vulnerable and helpless, wondering if he was trying to tackle something too big. What if it was impossible to ever convince Sylar of his sincerity? With a depressed sigh, Peter asked, "When we're out of here, are you going to kill me to make sure no one knows about us?"

Sylar stiffened, looking at him with alarm. "No!"

Peter nodded to himself. As gratifying as Sylar's outrage was, it was no more convincing to him than his good intentions were to Sylar. He was still so afraid of what might happen when they got out. If Sylar couldn't believe Peter wanted to please him, when they were lovers, then what hope was there for them?

Sylar asked, "You're with me and you think I would do that?"

Peter made a small, ashamed shrug. "I'm just trying to be realistic. No … rose-colored glasses."

"Killing someone who has shared themselves with you like you have is a terrible thing. Horrific. You think I would sink that low?"

Peter's eyes lifted slowly to Sylar's. A lot of thoughts ran through his head. The obvious and reassuring 'no' just didn't fit. There was something odd in Sylar's pronounced disgust. It wasn't that unreasonable a thing to worry about when dealing with a serial killer whose profile you not only fit, but who had tried to kill you before. Peter's eyes narrowed. This was the man who had murdered Peter's brother and was now being dismissive of Peter's concern. Peter wasn't going to lie – not about this or anything else. "Yes."

Sylar met his eyes in a level gaze for several seconds, but he blinked first. "I did," he said, looking to the side with something like a snarl on his face. "You shouldn't be here with me, Peter. It's not safe."

"I think we've already covered that I'm aware of that," Peter said dryly. It was chilling to have that confirmed. He wanted to know the details, but more than that, he was tired of being horrified by Sylar. "It's not that I don't care – I do. I'm not naïve and I'm not suicidal. I need you to stop pretending to both of us that your needs don't matter. Because they do, and I'm going to die if you never trust me enough to be honest."

Sylar stared at him, his eyes a little too wide. He said nothing. Peter just wanted to go to sleep. The whole thing was emotionally exhausting. He exhaled, cuddled Sylar closer, and shut his eyes. He didn't see the wondering stare Sylar sent his way, followed by blinking, opening his mouth to speak, then shutting it before finally settling into the new position.
Trust Exercise

Title: Trust Exercise
Characters: Peter, Sylar
Words: 1,600
Rating: PG
Warnings: None.
Setting: The Wall
Summary: Peter puts his cards on the table. Sylar isn't so willing.

Peter took a seat at the kitchen table and showed what he had in his hand – a deck of playing cards with a red, interlocking Arabesque-type pattern on the back. Sylar took the seat across from him, waiting to be told what was going on. Peter turned the deck so the faces of the cards were visible and spread them in a sloppy arc. He was no professional. Despite many casual games of cards, Peter had never gained any special proficiency with them, but he didn't need it for what he had in mind.

Sylar leaned forward to examine them, reaching out to tease the two jokers and the rules card from the end. He glanced up at Peter in question, because for some games one might leave in the jokers. For most, they would be set aside. Peter gave no indication of what Sylar was to do.

"This is a trust exercise," Peter explained. "See the cards?"

Sylar moved the jokers and rule card to the side anyway, then reviewed the rest of them. He raised his brows at Peter and said nothing, as though the question was too obvious to answer.

Peter scooped the cards back up and set to shuffling them repeatedly. Sylar watched Peter's hands intently as if trying to detect any sleight of hand. Despite having Nathan's memories, Peter supposed Sylar couldn't be certain Peter hadn't learned a new skill at some point. He tried to shuffle normally, but the scrutiny made him self-conscious.

Peter dealt five cards face down in front of Sylar, arranging them in a row with each card about an inch apart. He dealt five cards in front of himself the same way. Then he set the deck down in the middle. Sylar puzzled over the layout without touching his cards. "What are the rules?"

"It's simple. We each lift the first card and look at it. I'll say the name of my card. You'll say the name of yours. Then we both show our card and see who lied and who told the truth."

Sylar blinked at him twice, then stared. He lifted his first card and looked at it. Peter made note of the lack of argument, discussion, or question. He took Sylar's action as a signal to begin and looked at his own. It was the two of diamonds. Sylar's face was carefully impassive as he regarded his card. He kept it perpendicular to Peter so there was no way Peter could see it. "How is the score kept?"

"There is no score. It's not a game to win or lose. It's an exercise I want to go through with you."

Sylar tilted his head slightly, letting his eyes slide to his card, then back to Peter. Peter waited as quiet and still as he could, letting Sylar work through this. Because that was the point. It was the exercise by itself. He had worried this was too cruel, or would set off Sylar's paranoia about manipulation. He had been concerned Sylar might even become violent if he suspected he was being tricked or mocked. Peter didn't know what Sylar would do. But he wanted to find out. He needed to find out, if they were to build any sort of decent relationship between them.
"Then it's a mind game," Sylar said, which was close enough to the truth that Peter didn't dispute it. With a falsely conversational tone, Sylar asked, "Is it like that other game where if both tell the truth, they each get a point, and if both lie, they each lose a point, but if one tells the truth and the other lies, then the liar gets two points and the truth teller loses two?"

"That … sounds like the Prisoner's Dilemma," Peter said. "That's important, but it's not what this is or is about. This is about trust."

Sylar gave him an unimpressed look. "Then tell me what your card is."

Peter looked him straight in the eyes and answered without looking down at his card, off to the side, or anywhere else. "Two of diamonds."

Sylar's brows twitched. "Show me."

Peter looked at the card Sylar continued to hold and had said nothing about. His eyes went up to Sylar's, who remained patient and guiltless at having immediately broken the rules. It was surprisingly painful to realize how little trust Sylar had for him. Peter exhaled steadily. He turned his card over. It was exactly as he had announced it. Sylar studied it, then looked at Peter. He kept looking at Peter as he put his card down, face-down – unseen and unannounced.

It was a challenge – a dare. Not only was Sylar refusing to state what his card was, he was refusing to turn it over. No doubt he was waiting to see what Peter would do. He could reach over, flip the card, and lecture Sylar on the rules again. He could insist Sylar do as he was supposed to do. Which one would be meaningful in developing trust?

Peter tried to ignore the itch on the back of his neck that hadn't been there a moment before. It was purely psychosomatic, discomfort brought on by the conflict. He also resisted the desire to grimace in displeasure. Instead, he reached for his second card as though nothing untoward had happened. Sylar's lips pursed slightly as he mirrored Peter's actions. Peter looked at his new card. Sylar looked at his. Peter said, "Jack of clubs."

Sylar's eyes narrowed. He looked from Peter to the back of the card as though he might develop x-ray vision. But he wasn't going to ask questions. He just wasn't, and seeing that was fascinating to Peter. It was terribly important to know and realize. It was also gratifying to know that Sylar was as off-base with this as Peter. They were two swimmers treading water, each concerned about being pulled under by treacherous waves. Sylar put his card down, face-down just like the other. Peter copied him. Sylar said, "Let me see yours." Peter obliged by flipping it. It was as he'd said.

Sylar swallowed and pulled his head back in muted consternation. He lifted his third card, glanced at it, and set it back down. Peter lifted his, examined it for a moment longer, and set it down. Sylar asked, "What is it?"

"Four of diamonds."

"I have an ace," Sylar asserted as though it were some manner of trump card.

"Okay." When Sylar didn't move following his statement, Peter set his card down face up – the four of diamonds. Sylar gave it a suspicious look, then lifted his fourth card, leaving his possible 'ace' unconfirmed. He didn't put his fourth card down, preferring to hold it as he had the first ones. Peter looked at his own fourth card and said, "King of spades."

"Three," Sylar said cautiously, "of diamonds."

Peter really had to work to keep his expression neutral. He wanted to smile. He wanted to thank
Sylar and congratulate him and heap praise on him for having made it far enough to admit the identity of his card (or the potential identity – he might be lying). But the exercise wasn’t over yet. Peter nodded once and set his king down, face up. Sylar looked at the card in his hand. He started, twice, to set it face up. But then at the last instant, he disappointingly flipped it to face down, his gaze shooting to Peter's face to catch any trace of emotion that Peter hadn't been able to keep from his features.

Peter didn't know how good or bad a job he was doing on the expression front. He was certainly disappointed at how guarded Sylar was, even though this was much better than a worst-case scenario of Sylar refusing to do it at all, or being so threatened by the uncertainty of the proceedings that he became violent or demanding. It could be worse. At least he was willing to struggle through this, learning and adjusting along the way. Peter sighed and reached for the fifth card. Sylar lifted his. Peter said, "Two of hearts."

Sylar glanced at his a second time, then at Peter. He laid down his last card unannounced, but face up. Peter's heart skipped a beat and the corner of his mouth lifted. It was the six of spades. Peter showed his briefly to confirm it, then pushed all the used cards off to one side without flipping any to see the ones Sylar had left facedown. They ended up in an untidy pile. Sylar stared at them in unvoiced dismay, but did nothing. Peter picked up the deck and dealt five more cards in front of each of them, just as before.

Sylar picked up his first card immediately, pulling his eyes away from the mess of the discard pile. "This goes on until I realize you're going to tell the truth every time, is that it? Some proof of your honesty and good intentions?" There was an edge to his voice, but under that seemed to be actual curiosity.

Peter shrugged. He looked at his first card. "Queen of hearts."

"Jack of spades." Sylar set his down, face up. Peter put his own down the same. A small, serious frown creased Sylar's features as he looked back and forth between the cards. He appeared perplexed.

Peter picked up the second card. Sylar matched him. "Two of clubs." "Ten of diamonds." The cards were revealed and matched what they had been announced as. The other three sets followed quickly, with Sylar setting a rapid pace. When done, he regarded Peter with that same serious frown.

Peter pushed the last set of cards off to the side to join the others. Sylar was distracted from peering at Peter. He grimaced and gathered the pile to him, sorting and flipping cards as Peter shuffled the deck to give him time. It seemed time to offer an explanation, before Sylar's patience and good humor with the process was exhausted.

Peter said, "Last night, we talked about honesty. You said it could be dangerous – being honest. I've been thinking about that. You play your cards close to your chest. I thought maybe we could practice trusting each other and being honest. Doing something low stakes – no score, no winner, no loser. Just … practice, like you've said I need to do with abilities. Maybe trusting each other is something like a muscle that we can strengthen through exercise."

Sylar finished arranging the discard pile to his standards. "Is this an escalating operation where we steadily reveal more and more incriminating things about ourselves? That sounds like a game I will not fare well in."

Peter put five new cards in front of Sylar and himself. "I'm not doing this to trick you, trap you, or make you reveal anything you don't want to reveal." He drew his first card. Sylar looked at his facedown cards, seemed to consider his options, then lifted the first one. They went through the five
cards in sequence, per the rules, with both of them announcing the correct identities of the cards before proving it. It was slower than the second round. Sylar let Peter set the pace this time. He followed along in a more relaxed manner. Peter had to resist the impulse to lie on the last card just to get a reaction. That, perhaps, was a stunt for another day, when they already had a foundation of trust between them.

At the conclusion, Sylar collected up the used cards and put a hand over the deck before Peter could take it. He set the deck on top of the discard pile, consolidating them into one. "I think," Sylar said thoughtfully, "I understand this … exercise. Let me think about it."
"You completely redefine my idea of what love is and should be. That it needn't be possessive, volatile or detrimental to your well-being, but can be selfless, gentle and consistent, and should empower you to pursue your passions. That it should balance and enrich a life, not tear it to pieces."

- Beau Taplin, The Redefining

"Whatcha reading?"

Sylar set aside the book he'd been staring at. "You said you … loved me." He rubbed his fingers restlessly on the cover of the poetry book.

"Yeah?" Peter looked at the cover, then at Sylar's eyes.

Peter's eyes were wide, dark, and fathomless. Sylar stared into them, feeling the ground fall away like when he levitated – a feeling of being transported, deeply moved. He sighed, helpless against that power. "I was just doing research," he said weakly.

Peter sat down next to him, resting a hand on top of Sylar's. He said nothing. His expression was kind and attentive as it often was these days.

Sylar looked down at where they touched. "I wanted this connection so badly. It didn't occur to me I didn't know what it was." He licked the inside of his lips nervously. "I thought … love was jealous, demanding, and required sacrifice." Reluctantly, he pulled his hand away so he could open the book to where he'd been before. "It says here, 'it needn't be possessive, volatile, or detrimental to your well-being, but can be selfless, gentle, and consistent, and should empower you to pursue your-'" His voice, already wavering, cut off. Sylar pulled in a deep breath and let it out slowly.

Peter's hand, bereft of Sylar's, stroked slowly along the outer side of Sylar's thigh.

Sylar shook his head slowly. "That's … strange. I don't know what it is. Why would someone be like that?"

"Like a friend?" Peter tilted his head slowly. "You were the one who once told me, 'That's what brothers do.' This is the same – people who love each other treat each other well. That's how it is. The rest – that other, demanding, hurting you – that's not love."


Peter blinked slowly at him, head still turned. "That's why you saved me? You took that risk because
Sylar shrugged and flinched. "It was … there may have been some part of it you might call noble. I hoped you'd see it that way. But I thought I was your brother. I thought that's what I was supposed to do – sacrifice. I was trying to prove myself. I wanted to show you I … I could be … really …" He shrugged again, wincing.

Peter swallowed and moved his hand up to Sylar's shoulder. "It was noble. I'm grateful. Family might hurt you and maybe you forgive them, but that doesn't make hurting you okay. That's not love when they do it. It's selfish. It's abuse."

"'Even if your generosity, you're selfish,'" Sylar quoted Peter's words to him from another life. "But he loved you."

"We can be selfish and still love. But you show your love when you put aside your selfishness for someone else."

"That sounds like sacrifice."

"If it's a sacrifice, then it's not an act of love. I don't work as a paramedic because it's a sacrifice. I do it because I want to help people. If it was a burden I wasn't willing to bear, then I'd find another job. It doesn't mean it's always easy or there aren't mornings when I wish I didn't have to go to work, but it's something I want to do. If you love someone, then you want to do things for them. Your selfish desire is to selflessly help them."

Sylar gave a small smile. "That's so contradictory."

Peter shrugged one shoulder. "It's how it is. Nathan spent a lot of time with me. He was there for me when I needed him. He never acted like it was a sacrifice. He joked around about it, but it wasn't serious."

"He … enjoyed being your big brother."

Peter smiled, sad and warm at the same time. "I forgave him, you know."

Sylar nodded a few times. "I killed him."

"You took him away from me." It was a whisper. Peter drew in a deep breath and looked away.

Sylar bit his lips and looked down. "Love should … not tear a life to pieces. But I've done that to you."

"You didn't love me then."

Sylar looked up, apprehension on his face. "I haven't … said those words to you yet."

"I know," Peter said simply. "It's not the words that are important. It's never the words." Peter leaned in, kissing Sylar chastely on the cheek. "Love forgives, Sylar."
He didn't want to be fighting. But he had to. This was important. Peter shoved Sylar down on the bed. His fist was in Sylar's hair. His knee was in the man's back. "Hey." Sylar tried to twist away. Peter ramped up the pressure. "Hey!" He demanded attention. Sylar hesitated, as though aware Peter wanted to say something.

Peter leaned closer, but avoided grinding his knee into Sylar's kidney. He didn't want to hurt him. That was, after all, what the entire fight was about. "If you don't let me love you," Peter snarled, "then I won't!"

Sylar went limp. Peter released him and backed off a couple steps, breathing hard and getting himself under control. Sylar turned and picked himself up to a sitting position. His eyes were bigger than Peter had ever seen them. He looked afraid and confused. "You don't love me!" There was a hint of a question and that made Peter's heart sing, because it meant Sylar wasn't certain – it was possible and the man knew it. "You can't," Sylar insisted.

Peter snorted, still upset something this basic had to involve violence. "Don't tell me what I'm not capable of." Sylar himself, as Nathan, had told him he could do anything. He didn't get to change his mind when things got uncomfortable for him. "This is about actions! What I do! And if you keep sabotaging that, then I walk!" Peter waved angrily at the door.

Eyes still wide, Sylar followed the gesture. He was speechless and pale. It was sweet, how lost he looked. If Sylar could only see himself, Peter thought, he'd see why Peter couldn't help but want to help him.

After moments of silence, Peter shook his head as he realized how threatening his declaration must have sounded. "I didn't mean that to be an ultimatum. I meant that I need there to be something loving between us or else there's nothing here for me."

Sylar was still floundering. He plucked at the bedspread without taking his eyes off Peter. "But I don't … deserve love."

"'Deserve'," Peter scoffed. He hated that word. But he put it to his own use this time. "Why don't you think about what someone else deserves for once?"

"You …" Sylar trailed off, unable to articulate further.

"Yes, me," Peter said. He didn't want to risk Sylar thinking he'd meant his victims. For once, Peter wanted this selfishly centered on himself. It seemed like the only way to make things better. Peter's needs were going unmet because Sylar wouldn't let Peter meet Sylar's needs. "You think I want to be
Sylar looked down and shrugged helplessly. "People throw themselves at you, Peter. You've always found people."

"Yeah. I had a whole world of people to pick from. And I came here, to find you." He looked pointedly at Sylar. Sylar looked up at him, then at the door. He frowned as though Peter's journey to find him made no sense. And really, it didn't, aside from how Peter had trusted the dream. He'd trusted fate. It had led him to this man and Peter wasn't going to ignore that. He added, "There's nobody out there for me, Sylar!" Peter sat down on the bed next to him. "There never has been. Not that would stay." With vulnerability in his voice, "Is there anyone here?"

Sylar looked physically pained by Peter's words. "What if I don't know how to love? What if it's not possible?" He wouldn't look Peter in the eye, opting instead to stare at his knees.

Peter wrapped his hand around Sylar's. He tilted his head sympathetically. He'd figured out how broken Sylar was, how shattered inside by the events of his life. Peter knew what he was asking was hard. "Love is something you do," he said gently. "You know what it looks like when I do it. That's what we were fighting about. Follow my lead."

Sylar raised his eyes slowly as though an idea was dawning on him. In a moment, he hooked his hand lightly behind Peter's head and guided him into a kiss. But it wasn't Sylar's usual face-swallowing, desperate osculation. It was a smooch, followed by another, then another, in varying levels of passion and engagement. Peter recognized his own pattern almost immediately. He started to lift his hand, but Sylar was already in motion doing the same. He caressed Peter's face, kissing him gently and thoroughly, just as Peter tended to kiss him. It wasn't what Peter had meant – for Sylar to copy him so closely – but it worked.
Peter murmured in Sylar's ear as they made out, "I'll forgive you your fantasies of revenge against my family if you'll forgive me for what I think about while you blow me."

Sylar was quiet for a moment, then asked with unexpected curiosity, "What do you think about?"

"Eh." Peter pulled back, the mood definitely broken. "That's … I mean, I-"

"Guilt? Now I must know."

"No, I was just saying I'd, I'd forget about … Sylar?" The last word was plaintive. He stroked Sylar's forearm.

Sylar put a hand on top of Peter's, stopping him. "How can I possibly know if we're discussing a fair trade if I don't know what you're offering? I've long since spilled about the darker reasons I want to take you to bed. You've been holding out on me."

Peter snorted and pulled his hand away. "That's a little heavy-handed, don't you think?"

Sylar shrugged. He kept his attention riveted on Peter.

"It's … degrading," Peter said.

"Having to admit it?" Sylar asked. "Or is what you think about so filthy that it debases you just to consider it?"

"No," Peter shook his head. "I think about you, degraded." Sylar looked dubious. Peter ran a nervous hand through his hair and tried to explain. "That you're doing it even though you don't like it, because you want me that much. You're desperate. It's embarrassing. I shouldn't think-" He shook his head again.

Sylar laughed openly. "Your disgusting fantasy is that your partner is willing and eager? You're such a Boy Scout."

"No!" Peter tried to find a better place to look or a possible distraction, but nothing presented itself. "You're humiliated. I'm better than you are. That with all your powers and everything you've done to me, you're still going to suck me off."

"Ah," Sylar said softly. "That only sounds honest."

Peter gave him a long look. "I'm … better than that. I'm supposed to be better than that. If I'm with you, then I shouldn't be thinking of you that way. It's wrong."

Sylar laughed again, but this time it was more of a low, amused chuckle. "You're a Petrelli, Peter."
You want to dominate and control. It's in your blood. I would have thought lying was, too, but you seem to have mostly avoided inheriting that one." He leaned forward, close into Peter's space and whispered, "Tell me – does your fantasy involve me bound and bleeding at your feet?"

"Uh … no."

Sylar's brows rose. He backed off only enough to clearly see Peter's expression.

"No," Peter reiterated. "You're there because you want to be. That's important. I don't … mistreat you. We don't fight. That's not part of it." More gently he added, "That's never been part of it."

Sylar studied his face and lightly, teasingly, kissed Peter's lips. "You really do want me 'willing and eager'. Me. Because of who I am to you. You wouldn't feel this way about anyone else. You want me, Sylar, to care about you."

"Well … yeah." Peter moved forward and rubbed his nose on the side of Sylar's, which was what the guy deserved for getting so close and staying there.

"I'm so deep under your skin." Sylar sounded pleased. "And you're embarrassed about these things you think about?"

"Sylar … We should be equals."

"We aren't. We never will be. Now that is a fantasy."

Peter swallowed and looked away. He reached out and took Sylar's hand. "Yeah. I'm embarrassed about it. I think about choking you with my cock and you coming back for more. I think about how much you have to want me to put up with this. I think about how much you could hurt me, but you don't. I think about how I'm making you crawl, and that you're willing to crawl, to be with me. It's not right."

"No. But it's hot."

Peter's eyes jerked back to Sylar's face. Sylar's expression was neutral. Unoffended.

Sylar went on, "I don't want to forgive you your fantasies. I want to indulge them. I want you to indulge mine, if your sense of fairness extends that far, and if it doesn't, that's still acceptable." Sylar leaned forward again, giving Peter another kiss, this one with a touch of his tongue behind it. "Because I am willing to crawl. Whatever it takes, right or wrong. To keep you."

Peter drew in a deep breath, blinking. "If … we weren't here, we got out, and you had other options … you wouldn't-"

"I have no other option here or elsewhere," Sylar said with a bitter, emphatic turn to his voice. "Even if I did, you're the one who's with me. If you will have me, I am yours. If you will not, then you are just like all the rest and I have misjudged you. The words came out stiff and angry.

"Sylar," Peter said, "I want you to be mine. That's what the fantasy's all about. Mine."

Sylar exhaled slowly, obviously thinking that over for a moment. "There's nothing to forgive. From either of us. I give no apology for how I feel about your family."

Now it was Peter's turn to chuckle. "Sylar, you don't apologize for anything." He didn't let the man respond. Peter pulled him forward and locked their lips together, leaving the argument behind them.
Good Morning Sex

Chapter Summary

Pure smut.

To the prompt: 'Sylar Waking up, lying in bed, playing with Peter's hair...or maybe his ass...'

Sylar woke before Peter, an unusual occurrence. He stretched, enjoying the comforting feeling of a warm body next to his, of the depression in the mattress caused by another. He felt good. Sleep was so restful now that they were actually sleeping...together. Not just in the same bed, but relaxed with one another. Peter was practically on top of him at times, or wrapped around him. Not at the moment, though.

This morning, Peter was on his side, facing away, but still very close. Sylar studied him for a long time – minutes, maybe. He listened to the man's breathing, looked at his hair, brushed his fingers along Peter's back. Peter dozed through it. Finally, temptation overtook him. It was morning anyway. There was no reason to make special accommodation to his bedmate.

Sylar leaned over and pressed his face into Peter's unruly mane. He moved it back and forth, inhaling as though he could draw this intimacy within himself and keep it there. Peter sighed and made a soft moan. It was a nice sound, obviously half (or more) asleep. Sylar pulled back and sank his fingers into the hair, starting at the base of the skull and combing up, cupping Peter's head.

Peter was obviously awake now. "Oh," he said breathily. "Yeah?"

"Yes," Sylar said decisively. It was probably unwise. Too pushy. Too dominant for what Peter had allowed in other settings. But it felt right and Peter's response wasn't an objection. Instead, Peter rocked his head back and forth, sighing noisily. He was breathing harder, Sylar noticed.

Sylar's other hand skimmed down Peter's back – he was wearing a t-shirt as he usually did to bed – to the waistband of his boxers. Sylar paused there, considering how forward he should be. Peter squirmed under his hand, saying, "Yeah, yeah," with growing excitement.

"Ah," Sylar purred, "you woke up in a good mood, didn't you?" His hand slipped under the waistband and he caressed that hot, muscular ass. It was smooth and in motion as Peter continued to move. He was rubbing himself on the mattress, Sylar was fairly sure. He gripped Peter's hair, tugging on it lightly. "Such a dirty boy," he whispered, running his hand back and forth over the twin globes of Peter's posterior.


"More of this?" Sylar ran his hand straight down the cleft of Peter's ass, palm flat and fingers straight.

"Yes!"

Well, that was definite. Peter spread his legs, the one nearer to Sylar sliding between Sylar's shins and then hooking him behind the ankle. The other went over the edge of the bed, as though he liked that sensation of being unable to close his legs. Sylar stroked the seam of Peter's rear end again, but
this time, a single finger pressed down the whole way. Peter gasped a little and stiffened.

"More!"

Sylar did it again, but when he got to the end, the ends of his fingers played with the back of Peter's scrotum. Peter huffed and panted happily. Sylar kneaded and grasped one butt cheek and then the other, mauling Peter's hair at the same time. He leaned in, further, and lifted away Peter's hair so he could put his mouth on the back of Peter's neck. Sylar pressed his teeth into the flesh.

"Ah! Ah, ah," Peter panted, outright humping the mattress by now. Sylar reached down to curl his fingers into Peter's inner thigh, lifting it to part Peter's legs even further. Peter whined with unrestrained lust.

"You are so easy," Sylar whispered to him. He wondered if Peter would stop him if he climbed on and started fucking him. "You want it so bad."

"Yes, yes," Peter said hoarsely.

Sylar could barely restrain himself. Peter was so available. His for the taking. Peter was ready. Hot. Bothered. Squirming and wriggling on the bed like he couldn't get enough. But penetration was a step too far for now. Instead, he reached around Peter's hips and found his erection. Peter immediately went to his side to make it easier.

Sylar arranged himself behind Peter to make the motion more natural. He also repositioned his arm – the one that had been toying with Peter's hair – so it was under Peter's head and wrapping around his front. In a second, Sylar saw another possibility. He raised that arm so Peter's neck fit in the crook of it, in the V of his elbow.

"Oh, oh, oh," Peter moaned loudly. His hips strained as he bucked into Sylar's pumping fist. Sylar tightened his arm until Peter's breathing became noisy. The dick in his hand was rock hard. Sylar's own erection was gleefully trapped between and against Peter's flexing buttocks, two layers of thin cloth between them. One of Peter's hands was on his hip and the other touching his elbow, but there was no interference.

With a delightful, full-body shudder and a choked whimper, Peter came undone in his arms. He spurted on the mattress in front of himself and over Sylar's hand. Sylar kept pumping, just slower. Peter kept twitching, his cock still mostly hard, his breath coming in orgasmic gasps. Sylar bit him on the shoulder and Peter arched suddenly, as though coming anew.

"Please, oh …"

"Such sweet begging." Sylar found a different spot to bite, closer to the join of neck and shoulder. Peter's cry was louder this time. One of his legs kicked. He shuddered again.

"Please, please nnn …" Peter tried to roll forward as though to escape him as Sylar continued, but only his lower body was free enough to do it.

Sylar released with his mouth and loosened the arm folded around Peter's throat. It wasn't choking him much, just providing a little pressure, but that had sounded a lot like an attempt to tell him 'no'. There was no doubt in Sylar's mind that Peter could physically speak well enough to tell him no, but mentally? He was less sure. Peter seemed lost in arousal and post-coital bliss. He let go of the man's cock. Peter panted heavily now, deep breaths as he recovered. Sylar watched and listened carefully, but there was no further rejection or hint of it.

After a moment, Peter reached back fumblingly, finding Sylar's dick. Sylar pushed the hand away,
wanting to show Peter didn't have to do anything. Peter didn't understand it that way. "Yeah," Peter said, "you do it then? Jerk off. Come on my back. Fuck."

Sylar's brows rose as he thought about what Peter was directing him to do. "That's disgusting." His hand was in his underwear immediately, pulling himself out and pistoning rapidly. Peter's hips were already mostly flat to the bed, boxers pulled half-down. Sylar pressed against him, half climbing on. The fantasy of fucking him like this was easy to conjure.

He was already aching for release, one he hadn't thought he'd be allowed, but here Peter was telling him to do it! He growled. Peter looked back over his shoulder and up at Sylar, like he wanted to see him when he came, wanted to see who was marking him with their semen. Sylar was coming within seconds, hot fluid jetting onto the exposed top of Peter's ass. The possibility of getting to come inside that ass didn't seem so far-fetched all of a sudden.

"Oh," Peter breathed out softly after Sylar had finished. "Fuck, fuck, fuck." His voice was soft, tired. Maybe sleepy, so the words that might have otherwise been alarming were just more of Peter's noises. Sylar slumped down on the bed again, pulling his boxers over himself. Peter was lying in his own come, with Sylar's on him.

Sylar sighed, trying and failing to rouse himself so he could clean Peter up. He was still trying to work himself up to moving when Peter gave one of those odd falling asleep twitches, followed by the deeper breathing of sleep. Sylar raised his brows at the man. Then he pulled up the sheet a little and let it be. If Peter wanted to sleep covered in Sylar's come … well, at the moment, Sylar was too bonelessly pleased to do anything about it.

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