

You look like my next mistake

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You look like my next mistake

by [Vendelin](#)

Summary

“So, are you dating someone new? Someone who doesn’t mind that you’re frigid?” Kate cocks her head to the side, smiling as though she just asked him about where he bought his shoes.

His entire body sighs in defeat as his shoulders grow square. Just as he opens his mouth, someone comes up to stand beside him, snaking an arm around his shoulders. When he glances to his side, expecting to see Isaac, his brain seems to malfunction. Because it isn’t Isaac. It’s Stiles Stilinski, the lacrosse talent of the year, a senior who Derek has seen multiple times from far away, but never *ever* talked to.

In which Derek is a nerd jock, and Stiles is a frat guy, and Derek falls for him even though he knows he shouldn’t.

Notes

This is a birthday gift to Freck/literaryoblivion. You wanted fake/pretend, and this is...sort of that. I hope you'll like it!

I want to thank [Josh](#) for the beta work. As always you did the most incredible job. I can't thank you enough. I always want to thank: [bleep0bleep](#), [Mad-Madam-M](#), [fauvistfly](#), [spellwovennight](#), [deleted-scenes](#), [infectiouspunk](#), and everyone who's been super supportive over tumblr, and twitter! Thank you!

(Obviously the title is from Taylor Swift's song Blank Space and therefore not mine)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Derek never liked parties much. It might be because the music is always so loud that the only thing he can hear is the heavy bass that makes him lose track of his own heartbeat and train of thought. Or it might be because the crowd of other college students drinks so much that there's puke where he least expects it, and hands wandering where he doesn't want them.

Frat parties are even worse. The house is too small for such a big crowd. The frat guys are too obnoxious, too self-aware, too confident.

Yet, here he is now, at Alpha Kappa Nu, wondering what the hell he's doing here. Well, he knows *exactly* what he's doing here. Isaac just really badly wants to become friends with Scott McCall, the president of Alpha Kappa Nu. Apparently they're lab partners and Isaac couldn't say no when Scott invited him to their annual "End of Orientation Week" party.

Derek also suspects that Isaac didn't *want* to say no, either.

And since Isaac begged him to come along, he couldn't say no. Swim practice hasn't quite started up officially yet, and even though he does swim every day, there's no coach there to yell at him for drinking.

Being a sophomore, Derek feels out of place. Scott is a senior, and many of the people Derek recognises here tonight are *at least* a year older than him. Just as someone climbs a table, shouting for another keg stand, Derek takes the opportunity to refill his cup and escape to the porch. Even though it's hot outside, the air here is easier to breathe. Rolling his shoulders, he sips his drink, grimacing at the stale beer.

There's a couple making out against the wall, but other than that the porch is empty, giving him a chance to clear his head a little bit. It's only a little past midnight, he realises as he checks his watch, and Isaac won't want to leave for another few hours. He seems to be having a lot of fun, being less prone to feeling suffocated in crowds. Derek doesn't want to spoil a good night for him.

He figures that standing out here for a few hours won't really hurt. It's better than his option – standing indoors for an equal amount of time. Well, that's until he spots the two people who made him consider transferring colleges last year.

Kate and Jen.

They're crossing the front yard, wearing their cheerleading uniforms, and Derek wants to run and hide. However, he's pretty sure that they've already spotted him, making that a non-option. They would just use that to torment him for the next few weeks, until they find something new. He doesn't like making it obvious that they've won. He really hates losing.

So instead, he hopes that there's a god after all, and that said god will help him out. But, of course, he has no such luck.

"Is that you, Derek?" Kate's tone is syrupy sweet. That's never a good sign.

When he looks up, he finds them both standing a foot away, eyeing him like hawks.

“Yup,” he says, nodding.

“I didn’t think I’d ever see you at a *party*,” Jen smiles.

He knows so well where this is going.

“Well, here I am.” He shrugs, trying not to meet their gaze. He’s heard that it can make predators more aggressive, so it probably counts for Kate and Jen, too.

“So, are you dating someone new? Someone who doesn’t mind that you’re frigid?” Kate cocks her head to the side, smiling as though she just asked him about where he bought his shoes.

His entire body sighs in defeat as his shoulders grow square. Just as he opens his mouth, someone comes up to stand beside him, snaking an arm around his shoulders. When he glances to his side, expecting to see Isaac, his brain seems to malfunction. Because it isn’t Isaac. It’s Stiles Stilinski, the lacrosse talent of the year, a senior who Derek has seen multiple times from far away, but never *ever* talked to.

He almost pulls away, but Stiles’ fingers squeeze the tense muscle in his shoulder, like a promise.

“Are you harassing my date?”

Derek is pretty sure that he looks just as surprised as Kate and Jen. Luckily for him, they’re too occupied staring at Stiles, giving Derek time to compose himself.

“Who’s your date?” Jen asks finally, once her surprise has been replaced by suspicion, her jaw jutting out in defiance.

“Do you think I’d stand here, with my arm around some random dude, while talking about another person?” Stiles snorts. “I’m talking about Derek, of course.”

And all Derek can think is: *he knows my name*. He doesn’t even know why he cares, because he also knows that Stiles is vice-president of Alpha Kappa Nu, and more than a little into casual sex. *Everyone* knows that. Which there’s nothing wrong with, of course. It’s just pretty much the polar opposite of Derek, who’s nineteen and still a virgin. By choice, FYI.

“What? You don’t think I’m hot enough for him?” Stiles asks, mock offended, as Kate and Jen continue to stand there, staring dumbfoundedly at him. Derek has trouble comprehending what’s actually happening. He gets that Stiles is saving him from their usual torture. But *why*?

“You’re not fooling me, Stilinski,” Kate scoffs finally, and there’s that pinched look on her face again, that always makes Derek feel like he’s about to lose. “*You* would not date someone like *him*. You want me to explain why?”

Derek wants to say no, but Stiles speaks first:

“Sure, go ahead.”

Both Kate and Jen smile wide at that, and if it wasn't for Stiles still squeezing his shoulder, Derek would probably run.

"Well, for one, this is probably Derek's first party since he started college. Which was last year," Kate provides. She's basically right. "And *you* like to party."

"Not to mention that we all know how you prefer someone with experience, Stilinski," Jen says, her gaze sliding over to Derek's for a moment, before turning her attention back to Stiles.

Derek's heart speeds up, knowing exactly what's about to come. Derek's not ashamed, he just hates feeling like he *should* be.

"And if he didn't put out for either of *us*, what makes you think he'd put out for *you*?"

There's a moment of silence, and Derek is waiting for Stiles' hand to slide off his shoulder and leave him alone with Kate and Jen again.

"Well, I don't know," Stiles says, his tone icy suddenly. "Right now I feel like I'm winning the personality contest pretty big."

Derek can't help but snort at that, and he's pretty sure Kate catches his wide grin before he can hide it behind his hand. Kate narrows her eyes at him.

"I'm still not buying it, Stilinski," she snaps. "I don't know why, but you're lying."

Derek's just about to shrug and say that it was worth a shot, when Scott exits the house and practically *beams* at him. "Derek! I'm so happy you could make it. Stiles has been talking so much about you."

Squeezing his shoulder again, Stiles pushes him towards the front door, into the thumping bass. Derek doesn't get the chance to catch the look on their faces, but he's pretty sure that the door closes behind Scott before Kate and Jen have the chance to enter.

Looking around, Derek's searching for clues, wondering if he's been roofied or *why* Stiles Stilinski is keeping an arm around him.

"Let me get you a drink," Stiles says, and steers Derek towards the stairs.

"I already have a drink," Derek protests, holding up his solo cup.

"Let's get you a new one."

Derek's too overwhelmed to protest. He knows exactly what just happened, but at the same time, he's got no clue. It all becomes a little clearer when Stiles brings him past the two guys standing guard at the second staircase, and shows him into a bedroom where Isaac and Scott are waiting for him.

"So," Stiles says as he closes the door, and everything is suddenly so silent. "I really hope I was saving you from nasty exes and not preventing you from asking them out."

“Definitely saved him,” Isaac says. “Thanks for volunteering. They’ve thrown drinks at me before.”

Derek grimaces at that memory.

“You okay?” Scott asks, frowning in concern.

“Uh.” Derek looks at them, trying to determine if he’s in shock or maybe had too much to drink. Probably a combination, he concludes. “I’m fine. I should probably head back to my dorm.”

“I’ll come with,” Isaac volunteers immediately.

Scott and Stiles exchange a look at that, before Scott says. “You should leave if you want to, but don’t let them prevent you from having fun.”

Derek’s about to explain that he doesn’t like parties very much, when Scott speaks again.

“If you really want them to think that Stiles invited you as his date, you should probably stick around for a bit. To get them off your back, I mean.”

Derek is so, *so* tempted to just go home, sleep and then get up early to practice. But he also knows that they’ve been at him for the better part of last year. He’d been hoping that they’d let this go during the summer, but apparently not.

“Fine,” he sighs. It’s not as much the opportunity to get Kate and Jen off his back for all eternity, as it is to let Isaac have the evening he hoped for.

Isaac places a hand on Derek’s shoulder, frowning. “It’s not a big deal if you wanna leave.”

“No, we’ll stay,” Derek promises. “Maybe they’ll back off if they think...” he trails off, gesturing vaguely towards Stiles.

Derek decides to look more closely at him now. They’re about the same height, but Stiles has a slimmer built. It’s still obvious that he’s athletic, judging by the way his long-sleeved shirt hugs his arms and shoulders. His hair looks tousled, like he’s just rolled out of bed, but Derek suspects that that’s exactly what Stiles was going for. And he’s got this spark in his eyes. Derek doesn’t need to ask anyone to know that Stiles is trouble.

“Just stick with me, and you’ll be fine,” Stiles says with a grin, and Derek feels his ears grow hot.

Stiles really does refill his drink before they go downstairs again. He digs out a bottle of wine from a desk drawer, and an opened bottle of Sprite. It tastes okay. Derek concentrates on sipping his drink, and does his best not to look at Stiles as they follow Scott and Isaac to the first floor. As soon as they’re visible to the crowd, Stiles puts his arm around Derek again. It’s sort of loose, and heavy, and he doesn’t squeeze like he did outside.

“Thanks for doing this,” Derek tells him quietly, just before someone yells and turns up the volume.

Stiles just grins at him.

The rest of the evening is like getting a glimpse of a different world. People suddenly *see* him. He's a person, not just an obstacle in front of the keg that needs to be removed. Stiles is there the entire time. Derek is surprised to find him sort of protective, despite the fact that they don't know each other. When he needs to use the bathroom, Stiles walks upstairs with him, and allows him to use one on the floor that is off limits to party guests. Derek stares at himself in the mirror, feeling his fingertips tingle from too much alcohol. He splashes some water on his face after he washes his hands, staring himself in the eye in the mirror, sort of hoping to see signs of this being a dream. When he exits, he finds Stiles sitting on the floor with his back against the wall, fiddling with his phone. He looks up and smiles when Derek turns off the lights in the bathroom.

Derek has no clue why Stiles is hanging out with him all evening, instead of picking up someone who wants to get in his pants.

"Ready to go back downstairs?" Stiles asks. "Or do you want more to drink?"

"No, I've had enough," Derek says, as he manages to lose his balance slightly, proving his point. He steadies himself against the doorpost, and watches as Stiles extends his legs and gets up.

"Need to take a break? Drink some water?"

Up here? Derek thinks that being alone with Stiles is a bad idea. Because Stiles looks at him like Derek is so drunk that he'll pass out at any second, and like it worries him. And *that* worries Derek, because he thinks his heart is beating too fast, or has stopped completely.

"No, I haven't had that much." Derek shakes his head. "I just don't drink very often, so my tolerance is pretty low."

Stiles looks at him intently for a moment, before nodding. "Okay, still gonna get you a glass of water."

After Stiles has retrieved a water bottle and chips from god knows where, they walk downstairs again. Stiles has his arm around him, but Derek suspects it's more because he wants to make sure that Derek doesn't fall down the stairs and break his neck, than anything else. However, he doesn't miss the way the crowd grins at them, and someone gives Derek a *wink* that says everything about their assumptions. Scrubbing a hand over his face, Derek feels his ears grow hot. Stiles doesn't say a word, though, and seems completely unfazed. Perhaps he does this so often that he doesn't care anymore.

Derek sobers pretty quickly after finishing the water bottle, and having watched several beer pong games. They're watching a particularly intense one between Scott and another guy wearing the Alpha Kappa Nu signs on his shirt, when Stiles' hand slides down Derek's shoulder to the small of his back. As Stiles leans in close, Derek can feel his breath against his cheek and ear, and for a moment all the bones in his body feel like Jell-O.

“Kate and Jen are watching,” Stiles says against his ear, and it’s not at all what Derek thought he was going to say. “They have been all night. They’re behind us. Don’t look.”

Derek kind of feels like all he wants to do is turn around and look. Or leave.

“Okay?” he asks instead.

“Can I touch you?” Stiles whispers suddenly, and it takes all of Derek’s willpower to not turn towards him and stare.

“What?”

“They’re not buying it.”

Touch where? Is all Derek’s brain asks. But on the other hand, it’s not like Stiles would slip his hand into Derek’s underwear, right? In front of everyone?

“Okay,” he finds himself saying.

“Don’t freak out.”

Derek feels like he’s going to freak out over that question alone, but he breathes through his nose, and does his best to look like his attention is on the game and not on Stiles’ hand slowly sliding lower. Stiles makes it seem like it’s no biggie. He’s talking to some other guy on the lacrosse team, with dimples and kind eyes, and sliding his fingers into Derek’s back pocket like they *belong* there. If Derek didn’t know better, he’d kind of agree.

His ears are buzzing, his skin feeling hot, and he really wishes that he could turn around just to see what Kate and Jen look like right now.

After a few minutes, with Stiles’ fingers still in his back pocket, Derek gets used to it. He can actually *see* the beer pong game again, and the way Isaac stares at him from across the table. Derek’s pretty sure that he’s not the only one staring.

The crowd slowly thins, as the hour gets later. Or earlier. Whichever. Stiles is still by his side, not constantly touching him anymore, but always close enough to make sure that people know that they’re here together. The guy with dimples is talking to *Derek* now.

“So, I’m creating this app that will block texts, calls and other apps during certain intervals that you can choose yourself,” Danny explains. “It’s great when you’re studying and Facebook is stealing your attention again.”

“You made it yourself?” Derek asks, and he’s not sure if it’s the atmosphere, or if he really does think that this is the greatest idea ever.

“Yeah, it’s not that hard. I’ll show you sometime.” Danny’s gaze slides over to Stiles, who’s talking to someone about the upcoming season. “I’m assuming you’ll be around from now on.”

“Uh.” Derek feels his ears growing hot again. They always betray him. “That’d be cool.”

A little while later, Isaac slides up next to him. “Wanna leave?”

Derek’s stomach sinks. “What time is it?”

“Four-thirty.”

“Really?” Derek thumbs his phone. 4:32. Jesus. He’s not even that tired. “We should probably go.”

“I mean, if you want to. You stayed for my sake.”

“It was fine,” Derek assures him. “Better than I expected.”

He pretends that he doesn’t see Isaac’s smug face. “Let’s say bye to Scott. He’s upstairs.”

Nodding, Derek trails after him. For a second it feels weird to leave Stiles behind without a word, but it’s not like they’re *actually* a thing.

Scott is talking to a guy Derek recognises from a course he took last year – he always arrived late and never apologised – but he smiles at them when they approach. Derek doesn’t know why he expected Scott to frown over being interrupted.

“Hey,” Isaac says, and wobbles slightly. Derek wonders how much he’s had to drink. “So, we’re thinking about leaving.”

“Had a fight with your boyfriend?” the guy Derek recognises asks, and he smirks like he expected this all along. It takes a heartbeat before Derek realises that the guy is talking to *him*.

“No?” he glances at Scott, who’s frowning, but not at him. “Why do you think that?”

“Because you’re thinking about leaving and Stiles isn’t here?” The guy continues to smirk.

“Matt, cut it out,” Scott says sharply. “Derek and Stiles aren’t joined at the hip.”

“It sure looked like it earlier.”

Derek does his best not to blush, but he doesn’t think he succeeds completely.

“Leave him alone.” Scott isn’t really the guy to raise his voice, but he actually looks annoyed.

“Fine.” Matt holds up his hands. “I’ll go see if Jen and Kate are ready to leave.”

Derek looks after him as he disappears down the stairs.

“So, you guys leaving?” Scott asks as soon as Matt is gone.

“Yeah.” Isaac nods. “I figured Derek’s stayed long enough. We should get back to our dorm.”

Suddenly, Stiles shows up in the staircase, cheeks flushed and hair wilder than it was when Derek first saw him, hours ago. “There you are.”

Derek smiles weakly. The fact that Stiles even noticed that his pretend date for the night disappeared without a word is more than Derek gave him credit for.

“Kate and Jen thought you left,” Stiles says, without waiting for an answer.

“Matt was just here, asking if you guys had a fight, since Derek and Isaac are about to leave,” Scott informs him.

“You’re leaving?” Stiles asks, turning towards Derek. Maybe it’s the lack of sleep, but Derek thinks he looks disappointed.

“Derek only stayed for me, and it’s getting late. *Really* late. We should probably head back to our dorm.”

“Or you could stay?” Stiles offer, exchanging a look with Scott that Derek can’t read.

When both Derek and Scott open their mouths to protest (or so Derek assumes, at least), Stiles continues.

“If you live in a dorm, you live on campus, and that’s hell a far at five in the morning. You can crash here and leave tomorrow.”

Derek glances at Isaac, who’s looking at Scott. Scott shrugs. “Yeah. Why not? Boyd’s not here yet. You can take his room.”

A second later, the sound of steps from the staircase reaches them. Derek just *knows* who it is before they get in sight.

Both Jen and Kate are smiling sweetly. Derek is partially terrified. “We’re about to leave. We just came to say thanks for having us.”

“Thanks for coming,” Scott says with a smile that doesn’t quite reach his eyes.

“Also, we wanted to ask Derek and Isaac if they wanted to walk with us to campus.” Kate’s smile gets wider.

“Actually, we’re just heading to bed,” Stiles says, and grabs Derek’s hand. “Enjoy your walk back to campus, ladies. Watch out for raccoons.”

Isaac just smiles at him when Derek catches his gaze for a brief second, before following Stiles towards a closed door. For a moment, it feels like his heart is stuck in his throat, but then he remembers that this is just for show, and manages to relax a little.

Stiles turns the lights on before he closes the door behind them. The room is kind of messy. There are piles of clothes on the floor, and sheets of paper spread out all over the desk. Stiles’ bed is quite big, taking up most of the space in the room. And it’s the only one. Clearly he doesn’t share rooms with anyone. That must be nice.

“You don’t have a roommate?” Derek asks, despite the fact that it’s obvious.

“No.” Stiles kicks a few piles of clothes in under the desk and the bed. “Perk of being the vice president, you know?”

“I’m jealous.” Derek just stands there, kind of awkwardly watching. He’s just waiting for Isaac to open the door and tell him that Kate and Jen have left, but Stiles is pulling his shirt over his head, like he’s *really* going to bed. Derek was right before. He’s fit, with wide shoulders and a slim waist. There’s a trail of hair from his navel, disappearing into his pants. Derek swallows and looks away.

“So you’re really going to bed?” he asks, just to make sure.

Stiles pauses, looking up at him, where he’s untying his shoes. “Yeah, aren’t you?”

“I thought we were just waiting for Kate and Jen to leave, so I could share Boyd’s room with Isaac.”

Stiles shrugs. “Sure. His bed is like half the size of mine, though, and you’ll have to share a room with Ethan. His feet smell.”

“Oh.”

Stiles looks at him, pausing halfway with unbuttoning his pants. “I get if you’d rather share a bed with your friend, but it’s cool with me if you’d rather crash here. If I know Kate and Jen, and I do, they’re gonna stay for a while just to make sure.”

Derek feels warm and a little dizzy for a moment, before he takes a deep breath. “Yeah, okay, thanks.”

Stiles smiles at him. “Cool.”

Derek looks away when Stiles pushes his pants down, and concentrates on pulling his own shirt over his head. Despite undressing with his team several times a week, he’s never felt this naked before. He carefully folds his shirt and puts it on Stiles’ desk chair.

“So,” Stiles says, and when Derek looks up, he’s only in his underwear. “What’s the deal with you and those two?”

Derek concentrates on unlacing his shoes, wishing he’d kept his shirt on for a while longer. “I used to date them. One at a time, I mean. For a month or so, last year.”

Stiles frowns at that. “Then what?”

“Nothing, really. I think that’s the problem.”

Stiles’ frown grows deeper, like he doesn’t quite understand, but Derek doesn’t feel like explaining. Stiles seems to catch on to that at least, because he says: “Which side do you want?”

“Whichever.” It doesn’t really matter to him. He hasn’t shared a bed with anyone before. Not like this at least.

“Alright. I’ll be closest to the wall.”

He almost expects Stiles to shuck his underwear, too, but he just gets under the covers and buries his face in one of the pillows. “Just turn off the lights before you come to bed.”

Derek pushes his pants down, once again wishing that he’d kept his shirt on. It would’ve felt less naked that way. Less like he’s about to get in bed with a hot guy, and more like sharing a bed with a friend.

He turns off the lights before getting under the covers, and everything is so quiet. He can even hear Stiles’ breathing so close to him.

“Uh, so thanks for saving me. I hope I didn’t ruin your night.”

Stiles shuffles around. Derek can’t hear anything but the rustling of the sheets, but he’s pretty sure Stiles has turned towards him. “It’s nothing. I didn’t exactly suffer, pretending to date a hot guy.”

Derek’s grateful for the darkness, because his face is burning. He’s also pretty sure that Stiles is grinning. “I mean, I could’ve done worse,” he stammers.

Stiles laughs at that. “You definitely could,” he agrees.

There’s a beat of silence, and Derek can almost feel the air changing between them. Crap.

“So, do you wanna fool around?”

Derek closes his eyes, suck in a breath, and briefly wonders if it’s better to just grab his clothes and get dressed outside after leaving, or the other way around.

“No,” he croaks.

“Okay, cool,” Stiles says, like Derek’s declined a cookie, not *fooling around*. He’s still not sure of what that means exactly. Is it sex? Is it making out? Are all kinds of sex on the table?

“It’s not... I’m just not... I haven’t done that before,” he says, and wonders if his face has melted off yet. He doesn’t know why it feels like he has to explain.

“It’s cool.” There’s a pause and Derek’s holding his breath without knowing why. “Just because I pretended to be your date for the evening, doesn’t mean I’m entitled to, or even expecting you to put out. I just figured I would ask, since you’re hot and in my bed.”

Derek’s not quite grasping what Stiles is saying, he thinks. “Do you want me to leave?”

“God no. I invited you to stay, right? I didn’t do it because I expected you to sleep with me.”

Derek’s heart is pounding so hard that he’s pretty sure that Stiles can hear it too.

“Hey,” Stiles says, and his fingertips graze Derek’s arm. “Breathe. We’re just going to sleep. I’m going to be on that side, and you’re going to be on this side, and nothing’s gonna happen,

okay? I'm not interested in sex with someone who doesn't want to have sex with me."

"Okay," Derek whispers. Then he clears his throat, and digs his knuckles into his thigh. "This is why they said the stuff earlier. When we were outside. Kate and Jen, I mean. About me being frigid."

"Well, what can I say?" Stiles mutters. "They've always been assholes."

Derek snorts, despite himself, and his chest feels a little lighter suddenly.

He's not sure when he falls asleep, but it's sometime after Stiles, who's out in a second. It's odd, listening to someone else's breathing so close. He's used to sharing a room with Isaac, but they have a side of the room each. Derek only ever hears him if he talks in his sleep. Derek's too tired to care about the crazy heat under their shared covers. Instead he just sticks his feet out and turns over with his back to Stiles.

He wakes again when someone cracks the door open.

"Derek?"

It's Isaac.

He grunts in response, swallowing as his mouth feels too dry and his head too heavy.

"Ready to head back? We can still catch breakfast."

Derek turns over on his back, looking at Stiles who's still fast asleep. For a second, Derek feels like he should wait for Stiles to wake up. But then he shakes his head to himself, he wonders why the hell he would do that.

"Yes, let's."

He dresses quickly, relieved that Isaac is waiting just outside the door. Derek's not prepared to go searching for him in a frat house he doesn't belong in. They're quiet until they're outside, and Derek pretends like it's completely normal to walk through a kitchen covered in empty bottles and a whole bunch of substances that he doesn't want a closer look at.

"So, how was your night?" Isaac asks carefully when they're outside.

"Very much a lot of sleep and nothing else," Derek says firmly. Isaac doesn't need to know about Stiles' question, or Derek declining.

"Not a lot of sleep, though, it's not even eight yet. I woke up because the other dude in the room knocked something over, and I figured that I might as well just sleep all day in my own bed."

"I think I'm gonna head to the pool," Derek says. He could need to swim this off.

Isaac sighs heavily, but he should be used to this by now. "After breakfast, though, right?"

Derek doesn't feel very hungry, but he knows that he's going to end up crashing pretty badly later if he doesn't eat properly.

Their usual breakfast place is rather empty. Derek goes here for their oatmeal, and Isaac for their vast selection of bagels. Everyone else has probably spent last night at a party and are too hungover to eat breakfast at 8:30. Derek's starting to feel it, too.

They don't say much while eating. Isaac looks like he's already half asleep by the time they're done.

"Have fun at the pool," Isaac says, as they part ways. Derek's starting to regret his decision.

The pool is empty, too. He isn't surprised. He doesn't push himself this morning. He just does laps for a little over an hour at a slow pace. At times he's basically just floating on his back, letting the water drown out any other noise. He likes the feeling of water in his hair. When competing or practicing for real, he always wears caps and goggles. This always feels so different. It's a little like being weightless. When he comes back to his room to crash, Isaac is already there, sleeping.



The first *real* week of school is so busy that Derek almost forgets about the party and Stiles. He's doing some last minute cramming for an in-class quiz at the library coffee shop when he looks up to find two familiar faces smirking at him.

Derek doesn't even bother with greeting them.

"You look lonely for a guy dating Stilinski," Kate says, sounding like she knows very well that Derek isn't dating anyone.

"Actually, you've looked pretty lonely for the past week," Jen adds.

"Are you stalking me now?" Derek sighs.

Kate opens her mouth to say something, when a hand lands heavily on Derek's neck and a take away mug is placed in front of him.

"Here's your coffee. Ready to head to class?"

Derek looks up, bewildered for a second, before he recognises Stiles. He looks like he's just rolled out of bed, in a t-shirt and team hoodie. He's smiling at Derek like he's happy to see him.

"Yeah, sorry, last minute cramming." Derek holds up his flash cards, before shoving them into his bag. He's trembling a little as he grabs the mug from the table. Stiles' hand slides from his neck, down his arm, to grasp his free hand. Derek should probably pull away. This isn't some party. This is in school. But he doesn't.

Kate and Jen look at Stiles as though he just ruined Christmas for them.

“Thanks again,” he says as soon as they’re out of sight. “I appreciate that.”

Stiles grins. “My pleasure. Where’s your class?”

“Richards Building.”

“Cool, mine’s there too, so I can actually walk you to class.”

Derek smiles a little, against his better judgement and is just about to hide his face in the coffee mug when he realises that it isn’t his. “Sorry, I don’t know whose coffee I’ve stolen.”

“It’s for you,” Stiles says, smiling again. “I was getting my own coffee, and saw you sitting there, looking busy. I figured you might need a coffee. It’s too early to study, man.”

“I stayed at the pool a little too long this morning, so I haven’t been studying as much as I wanted.”

“What the hell did you do at the pool? It’s not even *eight*.”

“I’m on the swim team,” Derek clarifies.

“You are?” Stiles pauses mid-step for a second, before he continues walking. “Why didn’t I know that?”

Because we don’t know each other, Derek wants to say. Instead he goes with: “I don’t know?”

“You any good?”

“I’m okay.” Derek doesn’t say that he’s won basically every meet he’s competed in. Or that he’s the holder of a whole bunch of school records, even though he’s only in his second year.

Stiles only looks at him for a moment, before nodding. “Okay, be secretive. I’m really good at finding things out on my own.” And then he winks, and Derek’s body suddenly feels wobbly, like he worked out a little too hard this morning.

He doesn’t realise that they’re still holding hands until they’re outside Derek’s classroom and Stiles lets it go.

“See you around,” he says, grinning, and Derek’s ears grow hot.

“See you.”

He looks after Stiles for a moment before entering his classroom. He’s relieved when he finds Erica’s familiar face in the second row. Derek can sacrifice his usual first row seat just to escape the feeling of being an animal in a cage. Everyone seems to be staring at him. Clearly, Stiles holding his hand didn’t just make an impression on Derek.

“Oh my god, *what?!* ” Erica stage whispers as soon as he sits down. “Was that *Stilinski* holding your hand?”

“Why don’t you say it a little louder?” Derek mutters, and instantly regrets it when Erica repeats her question with a raised voice. “Yes, for god’s sake, that was Stiles.”

“When did this happen?”

“It never happened,” Derek mutters, as he opens his laptops on the small desk in front of him.

“Excuse me,” Erica says, sounding offended. “When Stilinski walks you to class, *holding your hand*, something happened.”

Derek looks around, making sure that no one important is within earshot. “I was at that frat party with Isaac, and Kate and Jen showed up.”

“Oh no,” Erica groans. “What did they do?”

“The usual.” Derek grimaces. “And suddenly Stiles came up, put an arm around me, and pretended that we’re dating.”

Erica stares at him. Derek can relate to that feeling. “And then what? That party was two weeks ago.”

“And then nothing. Today I was at The Bean in the library, and guess who shows up?”

“Your terrible taste in women?”

“Yes. And they were talking about how they didn’t believe that Stiles and I were dating. Out of nowhere, he shows up, with coffee and everything.” Derek gestures towards the mug. “It was almost like he had it planned.”

“I would have totally guessed that it was his plan, if they hadn’t harassed you all through last year.”

Derek can’t agree more with that.



It’s another week later when Stiles plops down on across the table from Derek, while he’s studying in the library.

“Mind if I join you?” Stiles asks, smiling at Derek with a twinkle in his eyes that makes Derek feel a little sweaty.

“Go ahead.” Derek doesn’t mind company, as long as they respect his need for quiet and spreading out his papers and books.

“What are you studying for?” Stiles asks.

“Trying to finish this paper,” Derek explains, wondering if he’s coming off rude, but really, he’s got a deadline.

“Difficult?”

When Derek looks up, sighing internally because clearly Stiles is a talker, he finds Stiles looking at him with genuine interest. The irritation quickly dies down.

“Not really, but the word limit is pretty low, so I really have to choose my words and what points I want to push.”

Stiles nods thoughtfully. “Is it Mr. Yukimura for history?”

Surprised, Derek tears his gaze away from his computer screen again. Stiles smiles at him, like a reward for paying him attention.

“Yes, exactly. He seems to be pretty tough.”

“He really likes it when you focus on how one historical event, and the result of it, triggers other historical events. Like World War I and World War II. I took his class my sophomore year, and it was great, but it took me some time to figure out how to give him what he wanted.”

Derek blinks, and wonders why he’s surprised that Stiles is being helpful. “Um, thanks. That’s actually...really good advice.”

Stiles winks at him. “I’m good at those.” After that, Stiles pulls out a huge accounting book from his bag, and a calculator. Derek looks at him for a moment, where he’s suddenly scribbling fiercely, with all of his focus on his books, like Derek stopped existing a minute ago. He has really long fingers, Derek notices. Big hands and long fingers.

Much to his surprise, Stiles doesn’t bother him until several hours later, when he nudges Derek’s foot under the table. “D’you want coffee and a snack?”

Blinking, Derek looks up at him, and it takes him a minute before he understands the question. “That sounds like a good idea.”

“My treat,” Stiles says, and disappears behind the shelves before Derek is able to protest.

Derek stares after him for a moment, not entirely able to understand what’s actually going on. Maybe Stiles is just feeling protective of him after what happened with Kate and Jen? If Derek didn’t know that they’d never step into the library unless forced, he’d guess that Stiles had found them spying behind shelves. Maybe all the other tables were occupied.

Stiles comes back awhile later, balancing a tray of two coffee mugs and a paper bag. “You’re not allergic to anything, are you?” he asks, as he offers one of the mugs to Derek.

“No, not that I know of.”

“Good, because the blueberry muffins are crazy good. It’s like an orgasm in your mouth.”

Derek’s more embarrassed about his face heating, than by Stiles’ words. It’s like he’s embarrassed over being embarrassed.

“So, we have a party on Friday, wanna come?” Stiles asks, as he opens the bag and turns the opening towards Derek.

Derek shakes his head as he reluctantly accepts one of the muffins. He’s not supposed to eat this kind of stuff. “Can’t. I have a meet early on Saturday.”

Stiles looks at him with interest. “Really? Here?”

Nodding, Derek takes a sip of his coffee. “Yes.”

“Will you win?”

Derek wants to say *yes* again, but instead he shrugs. “I hope so.”

“Cool, I’ll be there.” Stiles flashes him such a brilliant smile that Derek can’t help but smile back.



Derek isn’t surprised that he really does win all of his races at the meet. What surprises him, however, is that Stiles is actually *there*. Looking severely hungover, sure, but he still cheers with the crowd and the fact that he’s here at 9 a.m. is pretty impressive. Derek can’t quite understand *why*. It’s not like Kate and Jen would have ever come. They’re more into football and lacrosse.

“Hey,” Stiles says, as he finds Derek just before he reaches the changing rooms.

His body is wrung out, too tired, and he feels like a deer caught in headlights, with his caps and goggles in his hand. “Hi.”

“That was very impressive.” Stiles smiles. He looks exhausted and maybe a bit pale, but he’s still smiling. “I had no clue you were that great.”

“Thanks.” Derek suddenly feels all too naked where he’s standing. He’s so used to walking around in swimwear, and it’s never been awkward before, but now he wishes that he at least had a towel wrapped around his waist. “It went pretty good. My turns still aren’t perfect, though.”

“Man, there’s room for improvement, too? Where’s this gonna end? The Olympics?”

“I doubt that,” Derek says with a small smile. “Thanks for coming. I didn’t think you would, because of the party.”

“Oh man, I never went to bed. As soon as I lie down, I’ll sleep for eternity, or die. You missed something, though. Maybe next time?”

Derek looks at him. How his hair is all over the place, how he looks super tired, yet happy.

“Maybe. Let me know.”

“Sure thing.” Stiles grins. “I really need to head back and sleep. I’m either going to pass out or puke. Not sure which.”

Derek grimaces at that. “I hope it’s sleep.”

Stiles groans. “Me too, you have no idea, I have a phobia of puking.”

Stiles waves as he leaves, and Derek still can’t quite understand that he’s actually been here, looking at Derek compete just because he wanted to. He even stayed up all night just to be able to go.

Erica finds him after he’s showered and left the changing rooms. “Stilinski was here,” is the first thing she says.

“I know,” Derek replies, hoisting his bag onto his shoulder. “We talked a little.”

“I know. I saw.”

Of course she saw.

“Then why did you point it out?”

“It wasn’t pointing it out. It was me asking *why*.”

“I have no clue,” Derek confesses. “He joined me in the library a few days ago, asked if I wanted to come to a party yesterday, and I said no, because I had the meet today. And all he said was that he’d be here. And here he was.”

“God, I just can’t quite grasp why.” Erica frowns. “He looked awful.”

“He hadn’t gone to bed after the party,” Derek informs her. He doesn’t add that he thinks Stiles looked pretty good for someone who must’ve been up for more than twenty-four hours straight, and through a whole lot of partying. “He must’ve been up for quite some time.”

Erica blinks, and eyes him for a moment. “That’s quite the compliment.”

“I don’t get it,” Derek confesses. Because he doesn’t. Stiles really had no reason to be here.

When he gets back to his dorm, he finds that *Stiles Stilinski* has added him on Facebook. Instead of accepting immediately, which he wants to do, he closes the browser and decides to take a nap since Isaac’s not around. There’s too much Stiles in his life right now. He doesn’t get why or where it’s coming from.



A couple of days later, Derek accepts Stiles’ friend request, and an hour after *that*, Stiles plops down at his table in the library again.

“Mind if I join you?” he asks, just like last time.

“Go ahead.”

Stiles smiles. “So how’s the school champion doing today?”

Derek’s ears grow hot again. “Are you talking about me?”

“Well, do you see any other *most promising talent of the year* on the swim team around here somewhere?”

Derek resists the urge to hide his face in his hands. “Who told you that?”

“I told you that I’m great at finding things out on my own, even when you don’t want to tell me. For example, that you’re the holder of pretty much every school record in your styles.”

“Well, you caught me,” he says, looking at Stiles’ hands instead of his face.

“I’m impressed.”

“Aren’t you on the lacrosse team, though?” Derek asks, seizing the opportunity to turn the focus to Stiles instead.

“Yep, kind of the star there, actually.” Stiles grins, and somehow it doesn’t come off as bragging at all. “Sharing that spot with Scott.”

“So I’ve heard.”

Stiles doesn’t ask from whom. Being part of the fraternity has probably made him used to people knowing things about him that he hasn’t told them himself.

“There’s a party on Saturday,” Stiles says randomly, after being silent and bent over his books for approximately half an hour. “Can you make it?”

Derek thinks for a moment. Sunday is usually his day off. If he doesn’t drink, it should be okay. “I think so.”

“Cool. You can bring Isaac and that other friend of yours.”

Derek frowns. “Who?”

“She has long, blonde hair.”

“Oh, Erica. Sure. Isaac will probably want to go. I’m not sure about Erica. She’s not too into that sort of thing.”

Stiles shrugs. “If she wants to come, she’s welcome.”

He’s surprisingly silent after that, focusing on the book in front of him, and highlighting every now and then. He keeps the cap in his mouth, pushing it around with his tongue. Derek shakes his head, and turns his attention back to his paper. He can’t seem to get the introduction right.

“Hey.”

Derek looks up, finding Danny, the app guy from the frat party, standing at their table.

“Sup?” Stiles asks, before Derek’s able to get a word out.

“Are you guys busy?”

“Kind of,” Derek says reluctantly. He’s prepared for an eye-roll and some comment about him not being cool enough for their crowd, but Danny just makes an apologetic face.

“I’ll keep it quick, I promise. I just wanted to check if you’re coming to our next game?”

Confused, Derek looks at Stiles for some kind of confirmation. Strangely enough, Stiles seems to intent on only looking at Danny.

“What game?” Derek asks.

Danny gives Stiles a look that Derek can’t decode, but Stiles makes a face in response, so it must’ve meant something.

“There’s a game next week,” he explains, turning away from Stiles and towards Derek. “A pretty important one. It’s against the only team that managed to beat us last season. Stiles was going to ask if you would come to cheer us on. We could use the support. Also, I was going to give you this shirt if you say yes.” Danny holds up a folded lump of fabric.

Derek looks over at Stiles again, who’s still looking at Danny as though he’s trying to communicate something without words. Honestly, Derek’s mostly confused.

“Um,” he says, saving the document on his computer, even though he did that just a minute ago, to buy himself time. “When’s the game?”

Why would Stiles want him to go? They always have a huge crowd of supporters cheering for them. Basically everyone in Alpha Kappa Nu is a lacrosse player, which means that they get an audience even without trying.

“Thursday next week,” Danny says, smiling at him and seemingly ignoring Stiles. “At seven. Wanna come?”

“I have practice ‘til seven, but I can probably stop by after that.” He rarely does anything except for studying after practice. A lacrosse game could be a nice change. Isaac would probably want to come, too.

“Great.” Danny’s smile widens, and then he hands the shirt over to Derek. “See you on Saturday, at the party?”

“Yeah.” Derek nods. “I’ll be there.”

As soon as Danny leaves, Stiles turns towards him, his gaze flickering between Derek’s face and the shirt he’s holding. “About the shirt,” he says, as though it’s something to apologise

for. “It’s... it was Danny’s idea to have a team on the stands as well.”

Looking down on the shirt again, Derek realises that it’s a team shirt. It’s the same rough fabric, and navy colour. “Sure,” he says. “I’ll wear it.”

“If you regret that, you know, when you try it on. It’s fine.”

Derek frowns. “What, is the front missing or something?”

Laughing, Stiles shakes his head. “Sadly no. I’d approve of that, though.”

Derek puts the shirt in his bag, silently wondering if he’s a complete weirdo for interpreting that as a compliment, and turns back to his work. Stiles nudges him under the table a few hours later, and then buys him coffee. Just like last time. Derek scans the visible tables around them, but there’s no sign of Kate or Jen, or anyone Derek knows that they hang out with.



Derek isn’t surprised that Isaac agreed to tag along to the frat party. He *is* surprised that Erica said yes, though. About five seconds after they enter the house, a tall black guy waves at Erica and she disappears, explaining: “He’s in my biology class!”

Isaac spots Scott and disappears a few minutes later. And Derek... well, Derek stops pretending like he isn’t scanning the crowd for Stiles from where he’s standing against the wall, after half an hour. He’s just about to give up and go searching, when Stiles walks down the stairs.

Derek swallows. Stiles’ hair looks a little wet, like he just showered, and he’s wearing a plain white t-shirt and dark jeans. Derek suddenly feels stupid for having waited for him, and he hurries over to Isaac who’s playing beer pong against Scott. He’s losing big time.

Scott misses several times, probably on purpose, and the game evens out a bit, when a hand slides across the small of his back.

“This is for you,” Stiles says, handing him a solo cup.

Derek looks at him, swallowing again. Stiles looks even better up close like this. “I’m not drinking tonight.”

“I know,” Stiles says, smiling. “You told me when I invited you. It’s just Sprite.”

“Oh,” Derek sips tentatively, and yes, it’s just Sprite. “That’s really nice, thank you.”

Stiles winks at him. “You’re welcome. I’m glad you came.”

“Thanks for inviting me.”

“So, I see that Isaac’s here, but did Erica make it?” Stiles asks, looking around. He’s holding a cup of his own too. It looks significantly more alcoholic, though.

“Yeah, she’s over there, talking to some guy in her class.” Derek points towards the kitchen.

Stiles cranes his neck as if to catch a glimpse, and taking a swig from his mug. “Oh, Boyd. Cool. He’s a great dude.”

It’s first then that Derek notices that Stiles hasn’t removed his hand.

“Wanna go sit down for a bit?” Stiles asks, when Isaac has finally admitted to his defeat.

“Yeah sure.”

Stiles leads him towards the stairs, up the first flight, and past the guards. He sits down in the middle of the next staircase, making room for Derek next to him. It’s not *empty*, per se. There are a few people that Derek knows are either in the frat, or friends with someone who is, lounging on the couches. Still, it feels a lot more private than downstairs.

“I just wanted to ask you how your meet went today?”

“Oh.” Derek glances at him, surprised that Stiles even remembered. “It went okay. Still need to work on my turns, though.”

Stiles smiles at that. “Did you win?”

“Yes, I did.”

“That’s great.” Stiles’ smile widens, and he gets that twinkle in his eyes again. Derek’s stomach tightens. “Well done.”

“Thanks,” Derek says quietly. “How was your day?”

Stiles leans back, with his elbows resting a couple of steps above the one they’re sitting on. Derek tries to not look at the slant of his stomach, and how his legs are spread. He has no idea why he cares about that stuff, all of a sudden, but it’s like he can’t look away.

“It was good. Studied for a quiz I have on Monday, and then I worked out. I forgot about time.” He points at his damp hair. “How was yours, besides your victories?”

“Good,” Derek says. Stiles is so secure and confident. Derek is quite sure that Stiles knows exactly what he’s doing when he smiles at people walking past them, or turning slightly towards Derek, still nonchalantly resting with an elbow on a staircase.

Swallowing, Derek looks down at his Sprite. Perhaps he should’ve gotten something with alcohol after all.

“You weren’t in the library on Friday,” Stiles says suddenly, and Derek looks up at him in surprise.

“No, I was studying in my dorm.”

“I thought we were study buddies,” Stiles pouts, but he grins when his gaze slides over to Derek’s.

Derek snorts, sipping his cup. “I’ll invite you next time.”

Stiles bumps their cups together. “Looking forward to it.”

They sit there for a few hours, and despite having talked to Stiles on multiple occasions, Derek has never talked to him about everything and nothing before. Not like this, just lounging in a staircase when people are shouting to house music downstairs. Derek laughs so much, his stomach starts to hurt. He tells himself that it’s because he’s competed earlier today, and not because Stiles knows exactly what to say to make him laugh.

Derek feels like he could spend the entire evening here, away from everyone else, until they hear the sound of footsteps and familiar voices.

“There you are!” Isaac grins, pointing at them. He looks pretty drunk, Derek thinks, but Scott’s with him and he looks a lot less drunk, so Derek isn’t too worried. “We’ve been looking all over for you!”

“Sorry man,” Stiles says, sitting up a little straighter. “We’ve been here all evening.”

“I’m gonna be right back.” Isaac points towards the nearest bathroom door.

“Don’t lock!” Scott shouts as Isaac closes the door behind him. “I’m trying to make him drink water,” Scott adds, turning towards Derek. “And also prevent him from locking himself up in a bathroom if he gets sick.”

“Where’s Erica?” Derek asks, suddenly remembering that he’s left her downstairs with a guy he knows nothing about.

“Talking to Boyd,” Scott informs him. “Don’t worry. They’re fully clothed on the porch.”

Derek’s relief must have shown on his face, because Stiles grins. “No need to worry about Boyd. He’s the gentleman of all gentlemen. He makes Scotty look like a bad guy.”

If Scott trusts him, Derek thinks, then it’s probably fine. Especially since Scott cracks the bathroom door open after they hear the toilet flush, to ask if Isaac’s okay.

Glancing at his watch, Derek realises that it’s pretty late.

“Thinking about leaving?” Stiles asks him.

“Not because I want to,” Derek assures him. Because he really doesn’t. “But maybe I should get Isaac home.”

“It’s fine,” Scott says, turning towards him. “There’s a futon in my room he can crash on.”

Derek hesitates, but when Isaac comes out from the bathroom, his gaze is more focused and he sits down on a lower step. When Scott offers him a bottle of water, he accepts it and

empties it in two chugs.

That calms Derek down a little bit, and his brain swirls focus to where Stiles' is drawing patterns on his arm with his fingertip. Probably unaware of what he's doing, but Derek's skin feels as though it's burning.

"So you're staying here, right?" Isaac asks him. "With Stiles?"

Derek glances at Stiles, who's shrugging. "You're welcome to share my bed, like last time."

Derek is surprised by the thrill of excitement that runs down his spine at those words. As though seeing Stiles in his underwear again is something he can't wait to do.

"Thanks. I think that would be for the best."

"Wanna go downstairs and dance?" Isaac asks Scott, who smiles.

"Sure," he says. "Let's just get you some more water first."

Derek looks after them as they disappear down the stairs again, and suddenly, it seems so quiet when there's just him and Stiles left.

"Did you want to dance, too?" Stiles asks him.

Derek grimaces. "I can't really dance."

"Is that a: please Stiles, teach me your moves, or a: please Stiles don't put me through that torture?"

"The latter," Derek snorts.

Stiles grins. "Alright," he says, and slumps back against the stairs again.

Derek has no idea how slouching like that can make anyone look sexually appealing, but it's really working for Stiles.

"So you're really staying, then?" Stiles asks and props his foot against the edge of the staircase, his shirt riding up an inch, revealing a strip of skin between the hem of his shirt and the waistband of his trousers.

"If it's okay?"

"Of course." Stiles nods. "There's room for you, you already know that."

Derek clears his throat, wondering why the hell he really wants to ask his next question, but he does it anyway. "I wasn't sure if you had promised that space to someone else."

Stiles looks over at him. He doesn't smile, or laugh. Derek isn't sure if that makes him feel better or worse. "I haven't."

Derek only *just* manages to prevent himself from sighing in relief. For a moment, he thinks about finding Erica and asking what the hell is going on with him, but then he remembers that she's most likely still talking to Boyd.

"Oh crap," he realises, as he remembers *Erica*. He can't stay here, and let her walk back all on her own. "I need to see if Erica's planning on heading back, or not."

Nodding, Stiles gets to his feet, and extends a hand, helping Derek up as well. "That's probably a good idea."

They find her on the porch, like Scott mentioned before, sitting on the railing with Boyd leaning against the wall beside her. She's smiling in a way that Derek's never seen before.

"Sorry to interrupt," he says, when he's close enough for them to hear.

Boyd shakes his head like it's no problem, and turns towards Stiles.

"So, Isaac's planning on staying and I was invited to stay, too." He ignores the way her eyebrows climb higher. "But I'm not going to let you walk back on your own, so just let me know when you want to leave?"

She smiles, then. It reminds Derek a little bit of how Laura smiled at him when he baked her cupcakes after her last boyfriend broke up with her.

"Boyd's roommate is out of town, so he invited me to stay," she says. "Isaac asked me before."

"Are you sure you want to, though?" Derek asks, carefully. "I don't mind heading back with you if you want to. It's not a problem."

"Yeah," she shrugs. "I've made it like H2O clear that there will be no sex and I'll sleep in my own bed. Boyd offered me his, and he'll take his roommate's."

Derek glances at Boyd. He's huge. On the other hand, Erica has a black belt in karate and has called people out just for *looking* at her the wrong way before, so if she's okay with this, so is Derek.

"Alright, but I'll be just down the hall. Call for me, or come get me if you need me, okay?"

She reaches out, ruffles his hair and nods. "I appreciate that. Thank you."

That's probably the most affectionate gesture from Erica Derek has ever gotten. "I'll leave you to it, then." He waves a little at Boyd. "Sorry for interrupting."

"Nah, man, she's your friend, interrupt all you want."

Derek smiles slightly, and wonders briefly if he should wait for Stiles, or just head back in himself. However, Stiles has included several more people in the discussion he had with Boyd, and seems to be busy. Derek isn't surprised. He's actually more confused over the fact

that Stiles willingly has spent the evening away from the crowd, sitting in an empty staircase with Derek.

He's just about to let his heart tick, when he sees two familiar faces in the living room. Oh, so *that's* why. Stiles has kept them both away from Kate and Jen. It wasn't because he wanted to hang out with Derek alone. They haven't seen him, though, so he decides to head back upstairs.

Clearing his throat, Derek pushes himself through the crowd at the front door, sighing internally as someone spills beer on his shirt.

He heads back upstairs, relieved when the two guys guarding the upper floors clearly recognise him and let him through. It's so quiet there now, and there's not a single person in sight. It makes him feel oddly lonely, as though this isn't better than Kate and Jen downstairs.

Except that it's not really only Kate and Jen downstairs. It's the laughing, and talking, and a certain someone touching the small of his back, or drawing patterns to his skin. Or Isaac having the time of his life, clearly. Or Erica finding a guy who seems to realise that she's incredible. But Stiles deserves to be down there, having fun, without thinking about keeping an eye on Derek to be able to save him if Kate and Jen decide to attack.

Derek knows he's being silly and self-pitying, but he doesn't really care. There's no one here to catch him doing it anyway.

He thinks about messaging Laura, but decides against it. She's always been of the opinion that Derek should stop compromising his life because of Kate and Jen. She'd probably tell him to go down there and tell them to leave. That won't happen.

Instead, he takes his phone out and checks Facebook. There are a bunch of pictures from different parties, but nothing else that's new. He plays Candy Crush instead, and spends almost ten dollars on new lives, before he hears someone walking up the stairs.

It's Stiles. Derek wonders why he's surprised. Of course it's Stiles. He looks a little stressed, and his gaze sweeps past Derek until it immediately snaps back. Stiles' shoulders slump.

"There you are, I've been looking all over for you."

Derek slides the phone into his pocket, before getting to his feet. "Oh, sorry, did Erica change her mind about leaving?"

Stiles frowns. "No? I don't know?" Then he shakes his head. "That's not why I was looking for you because you just disappeared."

Oh. Derek really didn't think about it like that. "Sorry. I saw Kate and Jen in the crowd and realised I should probably head back up here before they saw me."

"You should have told me," Stiles says, sitting down in the staircase. "I would've come with."

Shaking his head, Derek sticks his hands into his pockets. Realising that he's now going to sound like a whiny baby who wants attention. "No, I wanted you to have fun instead of just being up here all evening. It's your party after all."

"I was having fun," Stiles says, and he almost looks a bit annoyed. "Up here. With you. I would've gladly been having fun up here with you for the past hour and a half, instead of running around looking for you."

Derek grimaces. "Sorry. I didn't think of it like that." He feels incredibly dumb. Because he should have known that Stiles would look for him. He even did that the first time they met.

He glances at Stiles, whose eyes have grown soft. He pats the empty spot next to him at the step. "Hey, sit down. Let's talk for a bit."

Derek sits reluctantly.

"You need to stop selling yourself short," Stiles says, and his voice is just as soft as his gaze.

Derek looks down at his feet.

Stiles taps him on the wrist, and Derek glances at him briefly. "You need to stop selling yourself short, because the only one who seems to mind being around you is *you*."

Derek snorts at that, because he knows at least two other people.

"No, listen to me," Stiles says, sitting up straighter. "I like having you around. My friends like having you around. *Your* friends certainly like having you around. So I'm mostly wondering if *you* don't want to be around us—"

"No," Derek interrupts quickly. "That's not it." He likes being around them, too. He likes Danny, and Scott. And Stiles, of course.

"That's what I thought." Stiles nods, smiling. "Why do you let two assholes like Kate and Jen stop you from having a good time, when *you* want to have a good time?"

"I'm not too comfortable around people," Derek explains, picking at the seam of his pants.

"Okay," Stiles says, nodding again. "So smaller crowds are better?"

"Yeah."

"Did you enjoy being up here before, or did you just stay here because you knew Kate and Jen were downstairs?"

Derek clears his throat. "I enjoyed it. I didn't know they were downstairs. I didn't see them until I was talking to Erica outside."

"Okay." Stiles folds his arms over his knees. "Then we stay up here and hang out."

"Okay." Derek smiles.

Isaac comes stumbling up the stairs an hour later, when Derek is laughing so hard there are tears in his eyes, muttering that it's six a.m. and that they need to go to bed too, because he sure as hell will.

They stay for another while, and Derek can't comprehend why he isn't tired yet. He looks over at Stiles, whose hair is a little flat on one side, because he's been lying sideways in the staircase. And before Derek knows it, he leans in and kisses him. Maybe it's because his brain is so goddamn exhausted, or because Stiles has been getting to him somehow the entire evening, but it takes several seconds before Derek even realises what he's doing. His mouth feels clumsy against Stiles', and he's about to pull away in sheer terror, realising what he's done, when Stiles' hand finds his cheek, his thumb grazing Derek's earlobe.

"Get a room!"

Derek jerks back, and of course, his least favorite two people in the world are standing there. They're not smirking for a change. Instead, they look pretty annoyed.

"Good idea," Stiles says, and Derek is really happy that he's not on the receiving end of that glare. "Let's get to bed."

"Really?" Kate snaps, and Derek is surprised by the tone in her voice. "You're putting out for Stilinski *already*?"

"Leave me alone," Derek snaps, and starts walking up the stairs.

"I take you not answering my question as a yes, then."

Derek sighs, and turns around, despite Stiles trying to urge him to keep walking. "Is your life really so boring that it revolves around who I do or do not have sex with?"

Kate blinks.

"Because that sounds like a really terrible fucking life," Derek snaps, before he can stop himself. He rarely swears, but really, she deserves it.

Stiles makes a sound that sounds suspiciously like a laugh, and he presses a hand to Derek's back. "Come on," he says quietly. "Let's get upstairs."

When the bedroom door has closed behind them, Stiles drops down on his bed, snorting with laughter. "Oh my god," he whispers. "Amazing."

Derek blushes. "Well, I got annoyed."

"Amazing," Stiles says again, and kicks off his shoes. "God, I'm so freaking tired." And then he snorts out a laugh again.

Derek stands there, and looks at him. Just looks at him. At the way Stiles unbuttons his pants, opening them so that the blue front of his underwear is visible. At the way he pulls his shirt over his head, and tossing it aside, like he doesn't care. Derek swallows, eyes trailing over

the planes of his chest, the darker colour of his nipples, and how the trail of hair from his navel disappears into his underwear.

His face burns when he looks up, and finds that Stiles has been watching him the entire time. "Sorry," he blurts, and the slow smile spreading across Stiles' lips makes his heart feel like it's stuck in his throat.

God no, he's not ready.

"I need to go to the bathroom," he says quickly, voice raspy and thick, and hastily locks himself into the nearest bathroom. It smells like Stiles' cologne in there. He sits down on the edge of the bathtub, sucking in a breath. It's just sex. What is he afraid of? Lots of people have sex with people they're not dating all the time. Stiles probably knows what he's doing. It would probably be good. Better than with anyone who's got no clue, like him.

But he doesn't want to. It doesn't feel like he's ready.

Derek has no clue how long he's there. Probably longer than any excuse he can come up with. He already knows that it's Stiles when there's a knock on the door.

"Sorry," he says immediately, getting to his feet.

"Are you okay?" Stiles asks through the door.

Is he? "I'll be right there," Derek says, because he's got no clue.

There's a brief pause, while Derek's trying to gather enough courage to open the door and look Stiles in the eye.

"Are you still okay with sharing a bed?"

Derek stills with his hand halfway to the door handle. Stiles is standing out there, when he opens, in a t-shirt and sweats. He looks a little worried, Derek thinks.

"Yeah." Derek clears his throat. "Sorry about that."

Shaking his head, Stiles smiles softly. "There's nothing to apologise for."

Derek finds himself smiling back, a little hesitant, but still.

"Come on, let's get you to bed. You look exhausted."

The lightning in Stiles' bedroom is dimmer now. There's just a lamp on the nightstand, and Stiles gets under the covers after closing and locking the door behind them.

"Want me to turn the lights off?" he asks, as Derek sits down on the edge of the bed.

"It's fine." He's around people in basically just underwear all the time at practice. When he looks over, he finds that Stiles is still wearing his t-shirt, and probably the sweats too. "I'm okay with you sleeping in your underwear," he says quietly.

Stiles looks at him for a long time. "I'm okay with sleeping in this if it makes you more comfortable," he says then.

"It's not that." Derek toes off his shoes. "It's just... I'm not ready. For sex."

"I didn't mean to make you feel pressured." Stiles looks genuinely concerned.

Shaking his head, Derek tries smiling. "You didn't. I think I kind of pressured myself."

"Okay, just let me know if I'm the one doing something, so I can change that."

Derek wants to tell him that he's doing a lot of things, and none of them are bad. It's just that Derek needs more time.

"I will," Derek promises. "But before I tell anyone anything ever again, I need sleep."

Stiles laughs. "Yeah, it's seven. It's freaking morning."

Derek feels a little lighter, pulling his shirt over his head and pushing his pants down. When he slides under the covers, he notices that Stiles is still wearing his clothes. "I was serious when I said that it doesn't bother me if you sleep in your underwear."

Stiles looks at him for a second, before he pulls his shirt over his head and kicks the sweats off. Derek looks away from the arch of his back as he gets out of his clothes. Stiles just pushes them down to the foot of the bed, before he pulls the cover up to his stomach again. Derek reaches out and turns off the lamp, but despite the blinds, the room is only semi-dark. The sun is already rising.



Derek is getting dressed as quickly as possible, swearing internally over his swim practice running late. Stiles' game has already started. The others on the team are grinning when he pulls the shirt Danny gave him over his head.

"Nice, Hale," Jackson comments. "You've already gotten Stilinski's shirt."

Derek doesn't even have to look himself in the mirror to know that there's Stiles' number and name on the shirt. Oh well. Danny thought they were dating when he gave Derek the shirt. It's not that weird.

Instead of replying, he jogs towards the field, despite his legs feeling heavy and sore from practice. As he gets closer, he can hear the crowd cheering, and calls Erica. She was supposed to go too. After the party, she's been seeing Boyd every day. Derek has no clue how that happened, but she seems happy.

"Where are you sitting?" he asks as soon as she picks up.

"Second row," she replies, just as there's wild cheering around her. "I saved a spot for you."

Derek finds her, surrounded by a number of girls and guys wearing similar shirts as he is. Erica's wearing one too, he realises as he finds her. It says *Boyd*. Derek smiles.

"Finally," she says, when he sits down. "I was starting to think that you had changed your mind."

"Coach wanted us to stay longer," Derek sighs. "I ran here. How's the game going?"

"Decent. We're a little ahead. It's kind of brutal, though."

Just as she says that, Boyd tackles someone so hard they end up lying on the field for a minute. Derek's happy he stuck to swimming.

Stiles is a surprise. Derek already knew he was good, but he didn't really understand that Stiles is *good*. He's fast, and creates opportunity. His speed is probably a good thing, because Derek feels like looking away the few times Stiles gets tackled.

They win. It's by a hair, but it still counts. Derek finds himself standing and cheering, along with the people around him. When Stiles' gaze finds him in the crowd of supporters, Derek grins. The wide smile he gets in return makes his heart trip. For a moment, Derek has no clue what's happening, but then the realisation dawns on him.

He's falling for Stiles.

Swallowing, he pushes the thought away, and follows Erica down on the field. For some reason he expects the feeling to fade, but as soon as he stands face to face with Stiles it only seems to hit him harder.

"You made it," Stiles grins. He's sweaty and a bit dirty.

"I told you I would come, didn't I?" Derek smiles.

"I need to head to the showers," Stiles says, as his teammates start making their way toward the locker rooms. "Can I see you later this week?"

Nodding, Derek looks after him as he disappears. Oh no.



Six days later, when Derek is studying in his room as Isaac is at his evening class, Stiles messages him on Facebook.

> Hey :) Are you in the library?

< No, studying in my room tonight.

> Can I drop by? I promise not to bother you. I just have to read.

Derek doesn't know if this is a great idea. Lately he's been making sure to just see Stiles in the library, where there are lots of people around, and a table between them. However, that

doesn't seem to change the fact that he's fallen for Stiles. Or falling. He hasn't really stopped.

> Please?

Sighing to himself, Derek types his answer. Who's he trying to fool anyway? He really wants to see Stiles.

< Sure. Drop by whenever, I'll be here all night.

Stiles comes by thirty minutes later, carrying two coffees and a huge book. He looks like he comes straight from practice, with his hair wet and uncharacteristically flat. Derek wants nothing more than to kiss him again. They've never mentioned the kiss in the stairs again. It's like it's never happened. Sometimes Derek thinks that maybe it didn't.

"Thanks," Stiles says as a greeting, and hands over the mug. "I really can't concentrate in the library or at home right now."

"Why's that?" Derek asks, and doesn't say anything as Stiles kicks off his shoes and plops down on his bed without asking.

"Dunno." Stiles doesn't say anything else. He just cracks his book open and rests an arm behind his head, concentrating on his book. Derek's always thought that the idea of someone looking good in a bed was stupid, but seeing Stiles in his own makes him change his mind.

Derek swallows and turns back to his paper. God, he's got it so bad. He's so freaking stupid, because Stiles has become his friend in a way. He's done a lot to make sure that Derek hasn't had to put up with Kate and Jen. Derek is terrified. He's never been in love with someone like this before. Not to the extent that he can't concentrate on anything else, or that his entire day gets better just by seeing them around campus.

Now, Stiles is on his bed, and all Derek wants to do is lie down beside him and kiss him for a few hours. At least. It probably would be less scary, and a lot more exciting, if Derek didn't know that this is completely different to Stiles.

Forcing himself to concentrate on his paper, Derek manages to write another thousand words, before Stiles pulls him back to reality.

"I was gonna ask you something," he says, nudging Derek's thigh with his foot, from where he's still lying on the bed.

Looking up, Derek turns a little towards him. Stiles eyes are half-lidded, and he looks a bit sleepy.

"Maybe we can go watch a movie and grab ice cream on Saturday?"

Derek swallows heavily. He loves movies. And ice cream. Two weeks ago, he probably wouldn't hesitate for the same reasons as he is now. Because he wants to. He wants to go, he wants to sit there in the dark with Stiles and then talk about the movie over ice cream afterwards. But Stiles is the kind of guy who's used to getting what he wants, and there's no

doubt in Derek's mind that he would've made it clear if he was interested in Derek in more ways than just maybe *fooling around*. Or hanging out. As friends.

Derek closes his eyes for a brief second. If he doesn't put an end to this now, things are going to end up much worse.

"No," he says quietly. Then he sucks in a breath, looking away. "Actually I think it's better if you leave. I can't do this anymore."

The silence in the room is deafening, and Derek doesn't even dare to breathe. He doesn't even dare to look at Stiles.

The seconds tick by slowly, until Stiles suddenly grabs his shoes and hurries past him with a: "Clearly I misunderstood."

Derek stares blankly at his computer screen, swallowing furiously. There's something stuck in his throat, and his chest is aching. So clearly, he's never going to hang out with Stiles again. Derek doesn't know what it is that Stiles has misunderstood, but maybe the fact that Derek would be capable of being friends with him.

He isn't sure what he's written as a conclusion to his paper. It's like he can't read the words on the screen anymore. They don't have a meaning.

He goes to bed before Isaac gets back, and Stiles' familiar smell on his sheets makes him curl into a ball under the covers. He pretends to be asleep when Isaac returns, knowing full well that he won't be able to look Isaac in the eye without having to explain what happened.

However, it takes hours before he falls asleep. He's torn between wishing that Stiles never put his arm around him that first day at all, and somehow still being grateful that he did. It's like he made Derek's heart beat to a different rhythm, and then just made it stop. But it isn't Stiles' fault that Derek fell for him.

Derek spends all his free time at the pool, and in the library. He's switched floors to one of the quiet ones with booths. That way he doesn't risk anyone sitting down with him, nudging his foot under the table and buying him coffee. At the same time, that's also exactly what he wants.

He practices his turns. Perfects them. He outperforms his competition at his next meet and snags the last school record that isn't already his. But there's no one in the audience to watch him do it.

"This is for you," Erica says, sitting down next to him in the library one Friday evening a couple of weeks later. She hands him a bottle of Jack the way she would've handed him a cream cheese bagel. "To drink," she clarifies when Derek only looks at it.

"Why?"

"Because after you've had enough of it, we're going to a party."

“I don’t feel like going to a party,” Derek mutters, and pushes the bottle away. He doesn’t have a meet tomorrow, but alcohol still isn’t good for his body. It’s partially because the last party he went to, he kissed Stiles. Derek hasn’t been able to stop thinking of how it might have ended if they hadn’t been interrupted.

“Isaac and I don’t feel like having a friend who treats himself like poop,” she says, smiling.

He’s about to say that they don’t have to be friends with him, when he realises how whiny that would be. Ever since he mentioned, with as few words as possible, what happened between him and Stiles, they had both been trying very hard to be there for him. He’s been pushing them away for awhile now.

Also, he could kind of need getting a bit drunk. “Okay,” he sighs, and grabs the bottle from her. “Do you have something to drink from?”

She hands him an empty take away mug for coffee. One of the large ones. She fills it halfway before she stuffs the bottle into her bag.

Derek doesn’t need to drink that much, thank god. He’s still unsteady and pleasantly buzzed when Isaac makes him change clothes back in their room. Erica’s sitting on Derek’s desk, drinking from the jack bottle with a straw. They’re both pretty drunk, too.

“So, where are we going exactly?” Derek asks as he squints at his shoelaces.

“You’ll see. I’ve called a cab.”

Erica talks so much in the cab that Derek has no clue where they’re going, but it only takes a few minutes before it slows and stops. He’s halfway to a front door when he realises exactly where he is. The Alpha Kappa Nu frat house.

“No.” He stops, looking over his shoulder in hopes that the cab is still there, but it’s already gone. “I can’t go in there.”

Isaac puts a hand on his shoulder and pushes him forward a little bit. “Come on, Derek. You need this.”

Derek isn’t sure exactly *what* it is that he needs, but his feet seem to be going toward the house on their own. The music is as loud as ever, but he doesn’t care so much this time around. Instead he enjoys the way the bass effectively wipes his brain of anything coherent, and he just accepts the mug that Isaac puts in his hand.

He lets the crowd swallow him, and doesn’t even care that he accidentally drops his mug when someone dances into him. It might just be a minute, or three hours, that passes while he’s there. Someone talks to him. Derek thinks he recognises them, but he doesn’t know from where. It’s surprisingly easy to smile and come up with something to say.

Just as he finally admits to himself that he’s having a good time, he looks towards the stairs. His heart drops before his brain registers what he sees. There’s Stiles, talking to a girl Derek doesn’t recognise. She’s beautiful, though. Stiles is touching her arm, standing close to her,

leaning into her space. He looks like he's having a good time – laughing, smiling, never letting her gaze go.

Derek knows he's staring. Knows that he shouldn't.

He just wishes that he could take her place.

Then, it's like Stiles has felt Derek's gaze on him, because he looks up. His eyes search for a moment before the lock with Derek's. Swallowing, Derek tries to look away, but instead he feels like he's stuck.

It's not until someone bumps into him again, and he staggers, that he feels able to move. He just needs to leave.

Pushing through the crowd, Derek heads towards the door. He zig-zags between people, avoiding looking anyone in the eye. He almost makes it to the door when someone grabs his shoulder. Spinning around, Derek finds Scott standing there, smiling like Derek isn't breaking.

"It's so good to see you," he says. A second later, Scott's eyebrows draw together in concern. "What's wrong?"

"I just need to go."

"Hey, what's wrong?" Scott asks again, and doesn't let go of his shoulder.

"I saw Stiles," Derek confesses. "I can't be here." He pulls free, and heads outside. Breathing in the cooler air out here, he realises how suffocating it was inside. The walk back to his dorm will be good for him.

He's halfway there when his phone rings and his chest tightens. For some reason he thought it would be Stiles, but it's Erica.

"Where are you?" she says as a greeting. She's still at the party, he realises, with the sound of people shouting in the background.

"Almost home."

"Why did you leave?"

He knows that she already knows the answer to that, though. "I saw Stiles."

"Did you talk to him?"

"No. I don't want to. I can't."

She sighs. "Well, next time you see him, make sure you do." Then she hangs up.

Frowning, Derek puts the phone back in his pocket, and jogs the last bit to his dorm. It's blissfully quiet there, with everyone out or already asleep. As he's brushing his teeth, there's

a knock on the door. It's the third time this semester that Isaac has forgotten his keys.

With a sigh, Derek unlocks the door and pushes it open. But it isn't Isaac.

Of course it isn't.

"Hey," Stiles says. His shoulders are squared, drawn up, and his hands are in his pockets. If it wasn't warm outside still, Derek would think that he was cold. "Can I come in?"

Derek stares at him, toothbrush still in his mouth. The last time Stiles was in his room – well the *only* time Stiles was in his room – things went badly. Still, he finds himself stepping aside without a word.

Stiles walks past him, carefully leaning against his desk, with his hands still in his pockets.

Derek wants to break the silence, but he has no clue what to say. Instead, Stiles says: "I didn't know you were coming to the party."

Derek can't stop himself from snorting at that as he takes the toothbrush from his mouth and swallows the toothpaste. "And what if you had? You wouldn't have hit on someone right in front of me?"

Sighing, Stiles rubs a hand over his face. "Well, *you're* the one who turned me down."

"I'm not the right person for just sex," Derek whispers. He wishes he was, though. Because that way he could be with Stiles and they'd both be perfectly fine with it.

Stiles stares at him for a moment. "I know that!"

Derek's just about to reply, wanting to point out that him *turning Stiles down* clearly isn't a fair description then, when Stiles says:

"I wasn't going for just sex."

It's so quiet that it takes a moment for Derek to register the words. "What?"

Stiles sinks down on his desk chair, shoulders slumping. "I didn't want just sex with you. I thought that was obvious. I bought your coffee, never went to bed because I wanted to watch you compete, I spent five hours in a staircase with you *just talking*. How can you even say it was just about sex for me?"

Derek opens his mouth, but he has no clue what to say. "I assumed you did that because of Kate and Jen," he says finally.

Stiles scoffs. "I stopped doing anything because of Kate and Jen after the first night." He takes a heavy breath, looking at Derek for a long moment. "I asked you out on a date, and *you* turned me down, Derek."

Oh. "The movie and ice cream?" he asks, to make sure.

“Yeah, what else would it have been?”

Derek shrugs. “I don’t know. I thought maybe you wanted to hang out as friends.”

“We kissed!”

“I know,” Derek whispers, sitting down on the edge of his bed. His brain feels scrambled, and he doesn’t quite understand what Stiles is trying to tell him.

There’s a long silence, the only sound in the room being the slight squeak from his desk chair as Stiles twists from side to side on it.

“So, why did you turn me down then, exactly?”

Derek closes his eyes. It’s not like things can get worse than they are. “Because I’m in love with you,” he says quietly, and then a little louder: “Because I’m in love with you, and I couldn’t pretend to be just friends anymore.”

The squeaking from the chair stops. And then the mattress dips beside him, as Stiles sits down. Their knees bump together. “And you thought movies and ice cream is something I do with my friends?”

Derek shrugs, looking at the way Stiles’ fingers draw patterns against the knee of his own jeans. “I figured you’re, you know, more experienced so you’d tell me if you were interested in dating me.”

“There’s a huge difference between casually sleeping with people, and asking the guy you’re crushing on out on a date,” Stiles tells him, and his fingertips slide over to Derek’s knee. “I’ve never done that before.”

Derek looks up, and Stiles is just inches away. His eyes are huge, staring at Derek like he’s just given him everything.

“You wanted to date me?” he asks, just to make sure.

Stiles’ eyes crinkle at the corners, like he’s smiling, but Derek doesn’t want to break eye contact to make sure. “Yeah. Can I?”

Derek thinks his heart is going to collapse on itself. It’s beating just as hard as it did that first night in Stiles’ bedroom, but for a completely different reason.

“I know you’re not ready for sex,” Stiles says, just as Derek realises that it might be an issue. “And that’s okay.”

“I don’t know when I will be,” he confesses. “I don’t want to give you false hope.”

“There’s no false hope.” Stiles reaches out to squeeze his fingers. “You just let me know when you’re ready, and I’ll wait ‘til then.”

“But you’ve had sex,” Derek says, because he probably wouldn’t feel as terrified if Stiles had been a virgin just like him. If it didn’t feel like he was robbing Stiles of something he likes, just because Derek isn’t ready yet. “You *like* having sex.”

Stiles shrugs. “Yeah. But there are really only two options here: having sex with someone who’s not you, or waiting for you. And really, it’s not that difficult of a choice.”

“Are you sure?” Derek asks.

“I’m beyond sure.” Stiles’ gaze flickers down to his lips. “Kissing isn’t off limits, though, is it?”

“No,” Derek breathes. He isn’t sure if it’s him or Stiles that closes the last inches between them, but he doesn’t think he’s ever been kissed like this. Like it’s the only thing that matters. Like *he’s* the only thing that matters.

“Can I stay here?” Stiles asks, seconds or hours later, brushing their noses together before he kisses Derek again. “I just really want to be around you.”

“Yes.”

Derek’s heart feels so light when he undresses and gets under the covers with Stiles. There’s a lot less space than in Stiles’ bed, but Stiles just presses his face to the nape of Derek’s neck and his hand on Derek’s belly.

“What about a movie and ice cream on Wednesday?” he mumbles against Derek’s skin. Derek hides his smile in his pillow.

“Yes.”

THE END

End Notes

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