

A Harringrove Winter (-ish) Zine

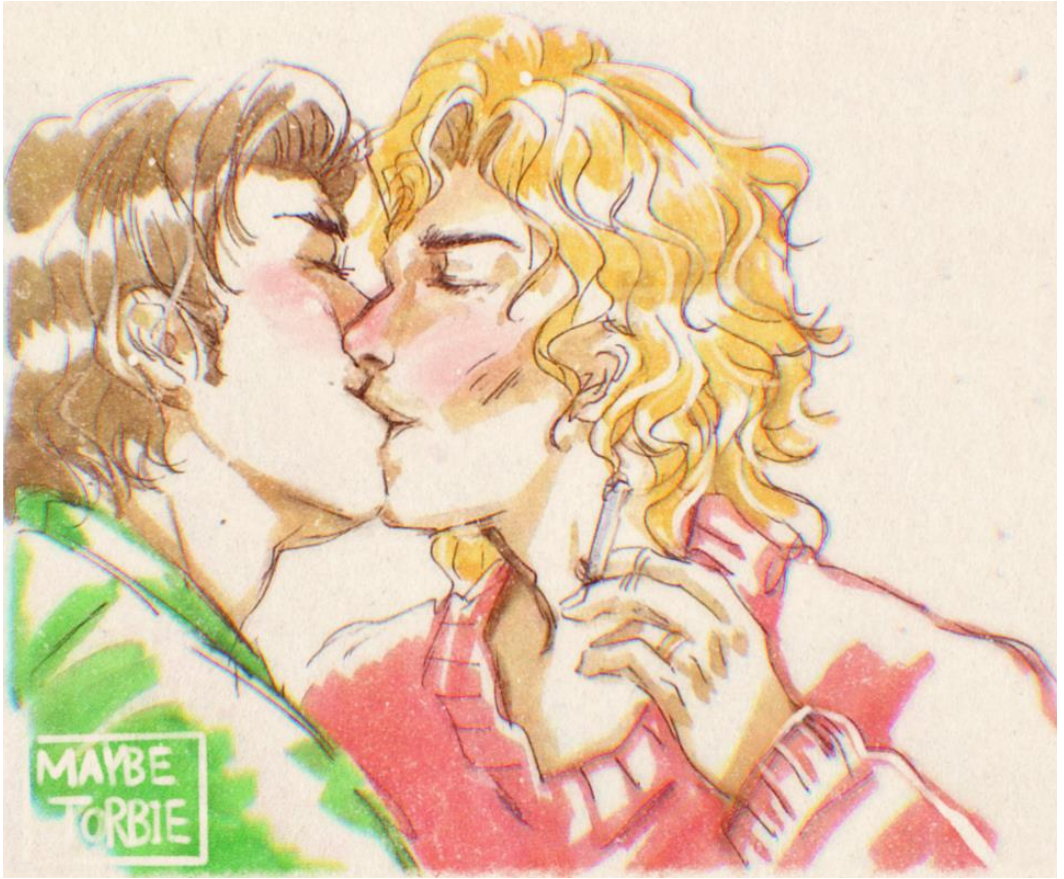


By members of the Harringrove community :)

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(Cover drawing by deathbyotpin123)



Art by maybetorbie

5:30, Mr Harrington

By shieldofiron

“Robin’s off today,” Heather snapped her gum. “Flu.”

Steve pulled at his bangs. “No. Are you serious? I have a standing appointment.”

Heather scowled. “It was an unplanned flu. You can meet with the new guy, he has an opening.”

“Can he even cut my hair?” Steve hated how it came out so whiny.

But he and Robin had a whole system. Every 18 days, on the dot. A wash, trim and style. She knew everything about his hair and about him. He followed her recommendations religiously. He was practically married to her, if she wasn’t a die hard lesbian.

Heather rolled her eyes. “We don’t have any other openings. You can wait a few days to see if Robin can squeeze you in.”

She wouldn’t be able to. Robin was booked out months in advance.

Steve sighed, running his hands through his hair. He had dinner with the firm in a few days. He might be able to make the 18 days but...

“Fine.”

Heather smiled around her gum, and penciled him in. “He’s just finishing up.”

This was basically Steve’s worst nightmare but he tried to look natural, perching on the cushy banquette in the salon’s waiting area.

He was about one second from bolting when a woman came from the back, her hair a long glossy mane.

“Thanks Billy,” She gushed, barely looking at Heather as she handed over her card.

“My pleasure,” The voice felt strangely masculine in the space, at odds. Yet again Steve was reminded of his petulant whining.

Billy was stunning. Gorgeous. Miles of tanned skin accented with gold everywhere- chains at his neck, earrings in both ears, golden curls spilling down his shoulders. Blue eyes that slid like butter from the woman’s face to Steve.

Steve shivered in his suit, feeling suddenly hot and cold all over. Maybe he’d caught the flu from Robin. Eighteen days was a long time to feel symptoms but who was Steve to second guess?

“Satisfied?” The bronzed god asked.

“Very,” she purred, sliding over a tip with trembling fingers.

Heather ignored them, pointing at Steve with her pencil, “Your new 5:30. Mr Harrington.”

God, Steve couldn’t do this. He physically could not be this close to this man. And he was coming closer.

“Nice to meet you, man, I’m Billy,” Steve took the hand more as a matter of habit but he instantly regretted it.

Billy’s hand was warm and huge, strong. It was the sort of handshake Steve’s dad would really respect.

Which should not have been hot. This was a place of business. This was Robin’s place of business. Steve felt like a sinner in church.

“Steve,” Steve managed to mumble.

“Steve,” Billy laid his other hand over the back of Steve’s. It was too warm. Was it possible to die from a handshake? Billy was saying something else then, leading Steve by the hand smoothly to the back. It felt more like floating than walking. Steve felt more like a bundle of raw nerves than a person, allowing himself to be led by the hand to a sink.

Robin cut his hair dry. She said it helped with his natural wave. But Steve couldn’t seem to protest.

Because Billy's hand was so warm, Steve almost felt bereft when Billy let go.

"What?" Steve asked.

"I said are you new or—"

"I'm normally with Robin," Steve's throat felt so dry. He felt like he was blinking really slowly.

Billy hummed, pressing down with one hand on Steve's shoulder until Steve sat down in the chair.

"Don't worry. I've got you. Wait here, I'm just going to help clean up a minute and then I'll be back to wash you," Billy said firmly.

"What—" But Steve couldn't go on because Billy had disappeared.

Steve waited what felt like an eternity, his head swimming. He ought to just leave, there was no way this was going to work. He felt like he was cheating on Robin. Or something.

And Billy was too attractive, much too attractive. He was going to fuck up Steve's hair and Steve would let him because he was helpless to Billy's big warm hands.

Steve had just gotten enough feeling back in his legs to stand when Billy returned.

"Where're you going, Pretty Boy?" Billy asked.

Steve bit his lip. "Robin normally does me dry."

Billy's artfully shaped brows rose. "Well, it's not my style to do it dry."

"Then I don't think this is going to work."

"Just try me. I promise I'll be very gentle."

Steve's legs had turned to jelly again, and he went down like a sack of bricks when Billy nudged him back into the chair.

"Don't worry, Billy leaned over Steve, a golden medallion shining over Steve's head. "Curls and waves are my specialty."

"You'll be gentle?"

Billy's smile was devastating even upside down. It was kind of infuriating.

He laid the cape thing around Steve and gently settled Steve's head back into the sink, cupping his neck.

"I promise, if you want me to stop just tell me. I can always blow ya."

Steve jolted, almost sitting up.

"Blow dry," Billy grinned. "Ok ready for it?"

Steve nodded. "Yeah."

He wasn't ready for it.

Strong hands massaged warm water into his scalp slowly, gently tugging against the follicles. Slowly, Steve started to relax into the seat.

And then the shampoo, scenting the air with rosemary and mint. It wasn't his normal shampoo, not what Robin recommended. But Steve couldn't muster a protest.

Billy dragged the blunt tips of his fingers from crown to nape, sending shivers down Steve's spine. He squirmed and Billy gentled him with a quiet murmur. But it almost seemed like it was coming from another room.

Steve was floating, his nerves shimmering. He forgot why he was here, why he'd even come.

Naturally, he must have come for Billy. For this, the fingers massaging him in circles. Every vertebrae of his spine melted into the cushions of the chair.

"Feels good?" Billy asked, his voice vibrating to the air at the same frequency as Steve's shivers.

The noise Steve made was impossible to recreate, somewhere between a hum and a groan.

It was so hard to get out of the chair when it was time, impossible to make his legs work. But he did it for Billy, feeling uncharacteristically fine with being wrapped in a towel out on the salon floor. Billy was leading him by the hand, and that was all it took.

“So what do you normally do?”

“Ah,” Steve blinked, trying to orient himself in space. His focus was only on the gentle pressure of Billy’s hand. He was staring back at his own face in the mirror, and he stiffened.

“Don’t worry, Pretty Boy. Close your eyes. I’ll figure it out.”

This was probably bad. It had to be bad, right? Robin never did it like this. Billy’s hands felt nothing like her slim cool ones. Billy kept a hand on Steve as he assessed and then he slowly began cutting, occasionally moving Steve where he needed.

Billy’s next words seemed to come through some sort of fog. Steve was leaning forward in the seat, nearly on the edge of sleep.

It wasn’t a fog, Steve realized blearily. He was blow drying Steve.

“What?”

“I said almost done, I’ll have you check it and then we can finish dry, alright?”

Something in Steve finally seemed to come to, and he curled into himself in shame. What was wrong with him? Billy was a hairdresser. This was his job. Whatever Steve was doing was inappropriate.

“Ah... okay.” Steve said.

“You doin’ anything after this?”

Curling up in shame in his office and researching new salons.

“No,” Steve said.

“There’s a great coffee place across the street.”

Steve finally opened his eyes. Billy was right there, fluffing Steve’s bangs with gentle hands. He was close enough that Steve could count his freckles, could finally name the sea green color of his eyes.

“Are you asking me out?” Steve asked.

“Are you saying no?” Billy asked right back.

“Depends on how good this haircut is.”

Billy smiled, and Steve fell a little further.

“Moment of truth,” Billy moved aside.

It was the best haircut Steve had ever had. His bounce was perfect. It wasn’t too short, but it was clearly neatened, his neckline perfect.

“Holy shit, I should buy you dinner.”

“Pretty boy, you know exactly the right thing to say,” Billy rested a hand on the back of Steve’s neck. “Is that a yes?”

“Hell yes.”

“Anything to finish-“

“Don’t touch a hair on my head,” Steve looked at Billy’s eyes in the mirror. “It’s perfect.”

It was perfect. Billy was perfect.

How the hell was he going to explain this to Robin?

Where's Billy?



Oh, he's not coming.
Said that he wouldn't
be caught dead on a
pair of skis.



So how is he keeping
busy at a SKI
RESORT, then?



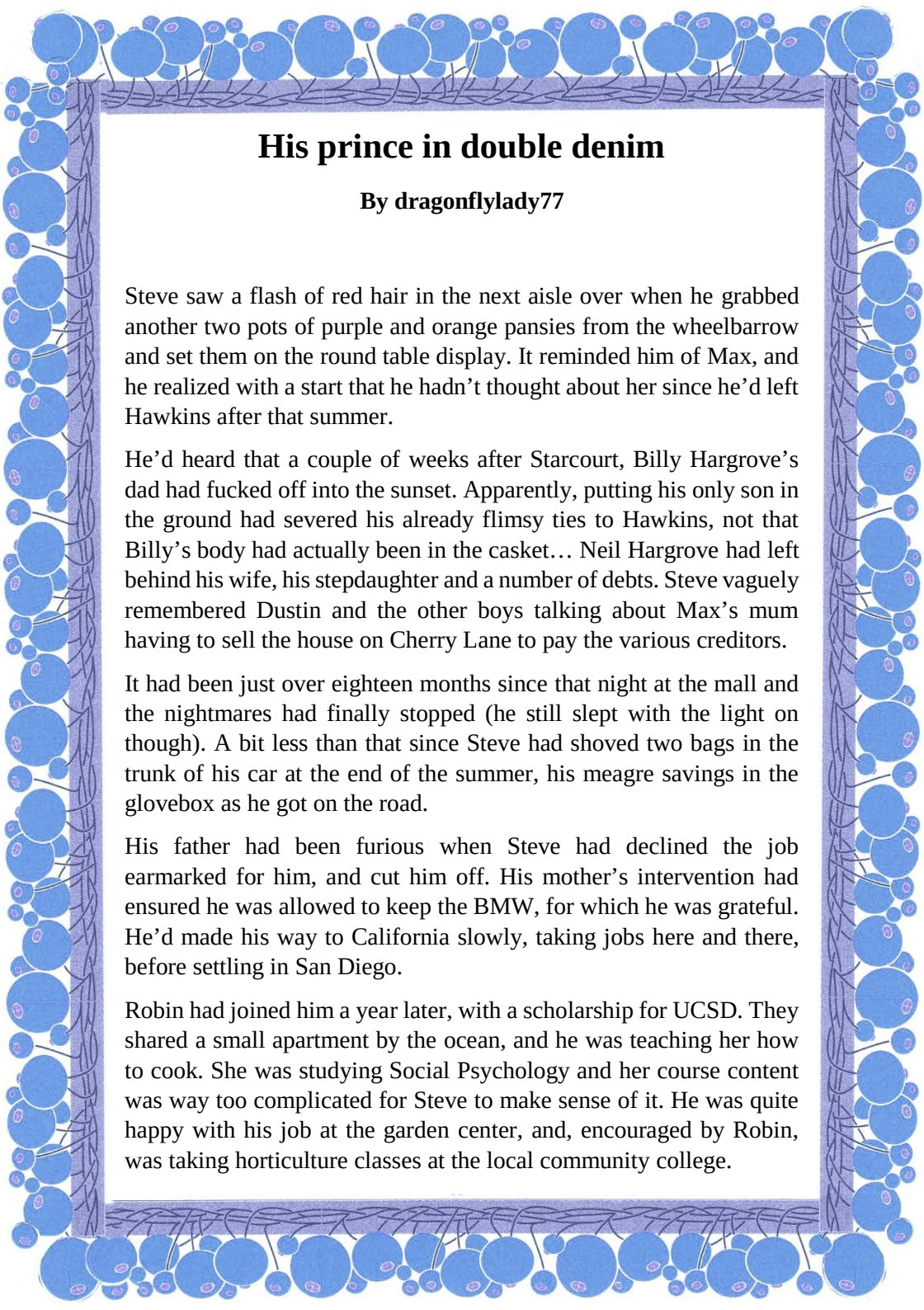
I left him at the
hotel, he said
he might try
snowboarding.
Said it
reminded
him of—



Art by ihni



Art by ihni



His prince in double denim

By dragonflylady77

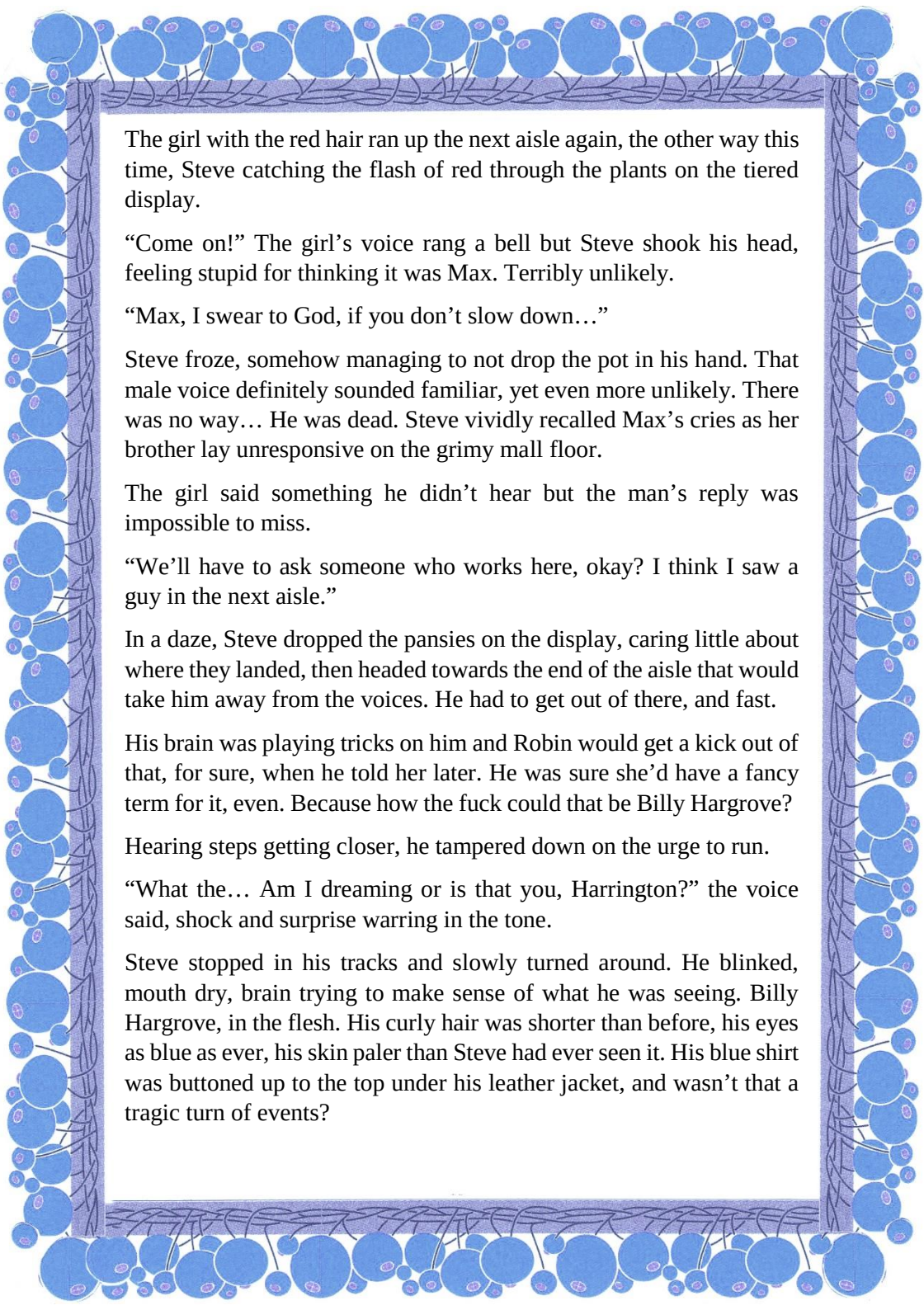
Steve saw a flash of red hair in the next aisle over when he grabbed another two pots of purple and orange pansies from the wheelbarrow and set them on the round table display. It reminded him of Max, and he realized with a start that he hadn't thought about her since he'd left Hawkins after that summer.

He'd heard that a couple of weeks after Starcourt, Billy Hargrove's dad had fucked off into the sunset. Apparently, putting his only son in the ground had severed his already flimsy ties to Hawkins, not that Billy's body had actually been in the casket... Neil Hargrove had left behind his wife, his stepdaughter and a number of debts. Steve vaguely remembered Dustin and the other boys talking about Max's mum having to sell the house on Cherry Lane to pay the various creditors.

It had been just over eighteen months since that night at the mall and the nightmares had finally stopped (he still slept with the light on though). A bit less than that since Steve had shoved two bags in the trunk of his car at the end of the summer, his meagre savings in the glovebox as he got on the road.

His father had been furious when Steve had declined the job earmarked for him, and cut him off. His mother's intervention had ensured he was allowed to keep the BMW, for which he was grateful. He'd made his way to California slowly, taking jobs here and there, before settling in San Diego.

Robin had joined him a year later, with a scholarship for UCSD. They shared a small apartment by the ocean, and he was teaching her how to cook. She was studying Social Psychology and her course content was way too complicated for Steve to make sense of it. He was quite happy with his job at the garden center, and, encouraged by Robin, was taking horticulture classes at the local community college.



The girl with the red hair ran up the next aisle again, the other way this time, Steve catching the flash of red through the plants on the tiered display.

“Come on!” The girl’s voice rang a bell but Steve shook his head, feeling stupid for thinking it was Max. Terribly unlikely.

“Max, I swear to God, if you don’t slow down...”

Steve froze, somehow managing to not drop the pot in his hand. That male voice definitely sounded familiar, yet even more unlikely. There was no way... He was dead. Steve vividly recalled Max’s cries as her brother lay unresponsive on the grimy mall floor.

The girl said something he didn’t hear but the man’s reply was impossible to miss.

“We’ll have to ask someone who works here, okay? I think I saw a guy in the next aisle.”

In a daze, Steve dropped the pansies on the display, caring little about where they landed, then headed towards the end of the aisle that would take him away from the voices. He had to get out of there, and fast.

His brain was playing tricks on him and Robin would get a kick out of that, for sure, when he told her later. He was sure she’d have a fancy term for it, even. Because how the fuck could that be Billy Hargrove?

Hearing steps getting closer, he tampered down on the urge to run.

“What the... Am I dreaming or is that you, Harrington?” the voice said, shock and surprise warring in the tone.

Steve stopped in his tracks and slowly turned around. He blinked, mouth dry, brain trying to make sense of what he was seeing. Billy Hargrove, in the flesh. His curly hair was shorter than before, his eyes as blue as ever, his skin paler than Steve had ever seen it. His blue shirt was buttoned up to the top under his leather jacket, and wasn’t that a tragic turn of events?



He was smiling. That was the thing that threw Steve the most. Billy Hargrove was alive and he was smiling. A little voice deep inside Steve's brain piped up, reminding Steve of the last time he'd heard that sentence come out of those plush lips. How warm Billy's chest had felt under his fingers before he got the shit kicked out of him.

Endless conversations with Robin about that time in their lives had forced him to accept the fact that Billy's anger that night at the Byers' house had not been directed at him. She had also forced him to see things from Billy's point of view and how Steve lying to him about his sister being alone in a stranger's house with a bunch of teenage boys hadn't been his greatest idea.

He blinked again and waited for his brain to reboot. "Um... how are y—you were... I mean, hi."

"Hey, Steve," Max piped up with a familiarity that Steve had all but forgotten. "Not that it's not nice to see you again and all, but we don't really have time for you two to have a catch-up right now."

"Maxine," Billy said with a glare that his sister ignored.

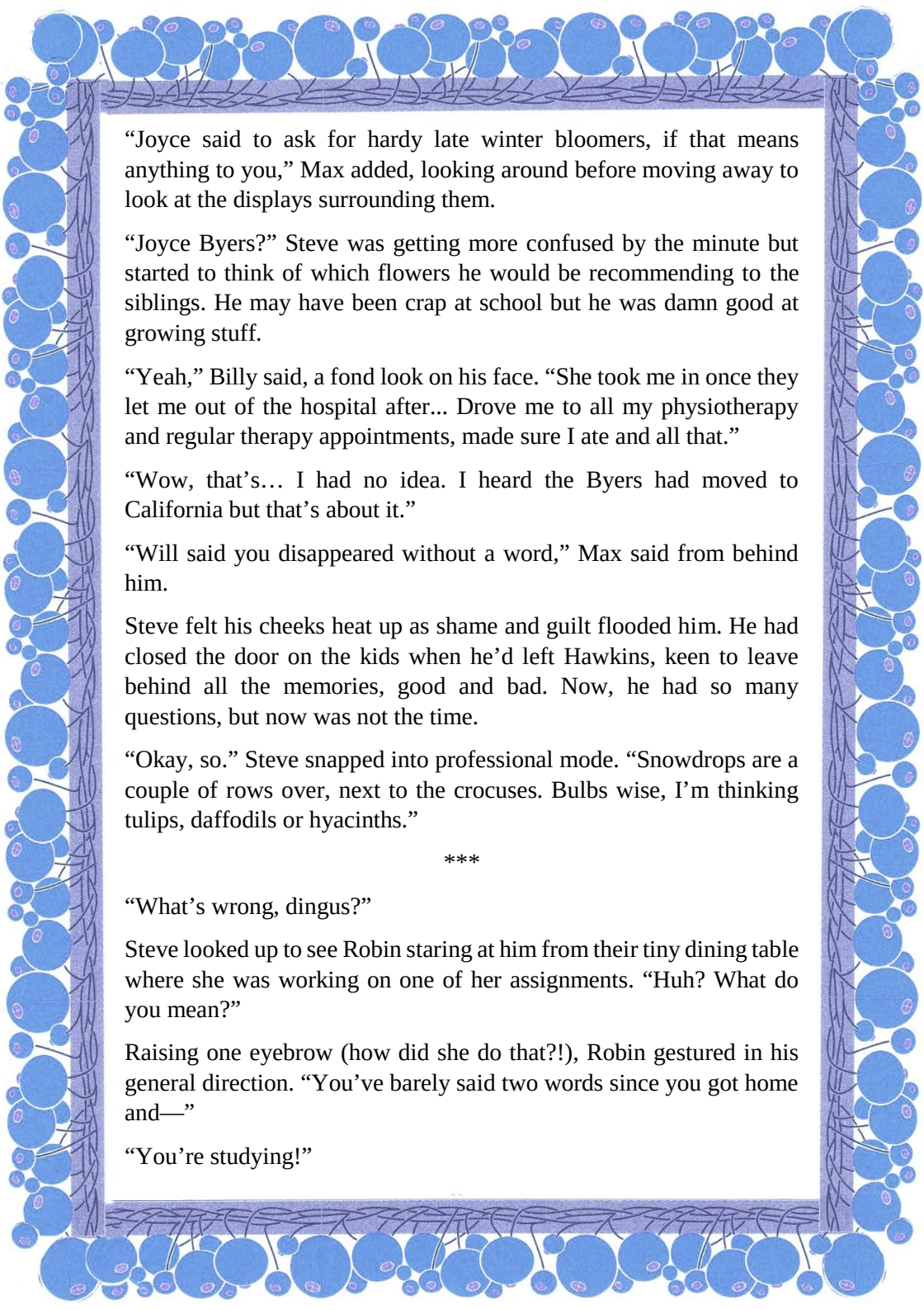
"William," she replied, turning to him while Steve stood there, watching the interaction. "We're on a mission with a time crunch, so how about we get what we came here for, and you and your boyfriend find another time and place to discuss whatever it is you need to discuss?"

Steve choked when Max's words registered.

"Ignore her, Harrington," Billy croaked, clearing his throat. "Please."

"So, what, um, what kind of flowers are you looking for?" Steve stammered, trying to move on from what Max had said because he did not want to examine how that made him feel.

Billy pulled a crumpled piece of paper out of his pocket and glanced at it before looking at Steve again. "Snowdrops, and a bunch of bulbs so Susan can have flowers in the garden when she comes out of rehab in a couple of months."



“Joyce said to ask for hardy late winter bloomers, if that means anything to you,” Max added, looking around before moving away to look at the displays surrounding them.

“Joyce Byers?” Steve was getting more confused by the minute but started to think of which flowers he would be recommending to the siblings. He may have been crap at school but he was damn good at growing stuff.

“Yeah,” Billy said, a fond look on his face. “She took me in once they let me out of the hospital after... Drove me to all my physiotherapy and regular therapy appointments, made sure I ate and all that.”

“Wow, that’s... I had no idea. I heard the Byers had moved to California but that’s about it.”

“Will said you disappeared without a word,” Max said from behind him.

Steve felt his cheeks heat up as shame and guilt flooded him. He had closed the door on the kids when he’d left Hawkins, keen to leave behind all the memories, good and bad. Now, he had so many questions, but now was not the time.

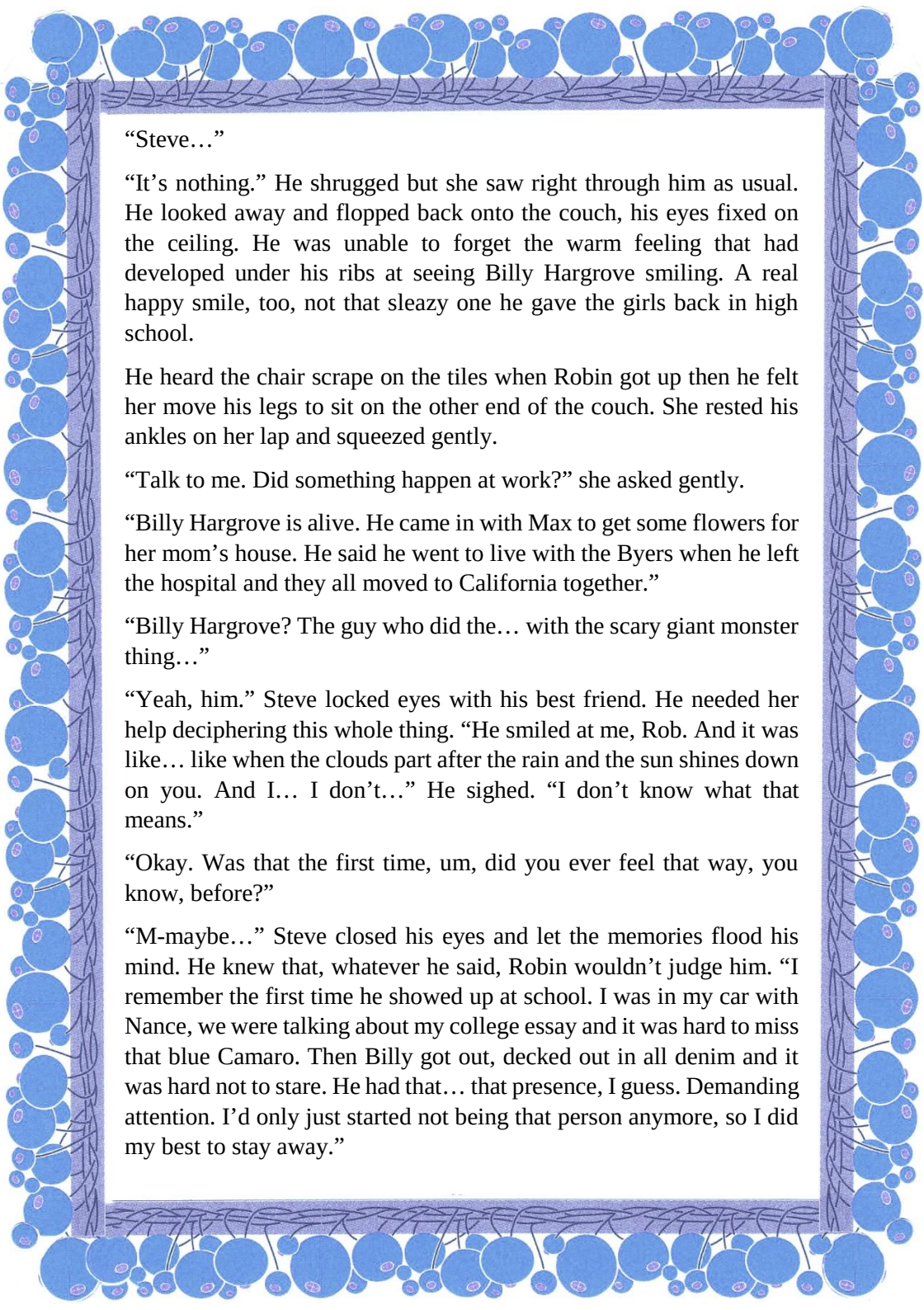
“Okay, so.” Steve snapped into professional mode. “Snowdrops are a couple of rows over, next to the crocuses. Bulbs wise, I’m thinking tulips, daffodils or hyacinths.”

“What’s wrong, dingus?”

Steve looked up to see Robin staring at him from their tiny dining table where she was working on one of her assignments. “Huh? What do you mean?”

Raising one eyebrow (how did she do that?!), Robin gestured in his general direction. “You’ve barely said two words since you got home and—”

“You’re studying!”



“Steve...”

“It’s nothing.” He shrugged but she saw right through him as usual. He looked away and flopped back onto the couch, his eyes fixed on the ceiling. He was unable to forget the warm feeling that had developed under his ribs at seeing Billy Hargrove smiling. A real happy smile, too, not that sleazy one he gave the girls back in high school.

He heard the chair scrape on the tiles when Robin got up then he felt her move his legs to sit on the other end of the couch. She rested his ankles on her lap and squeezed gently.

“Talk to me. Did something happen at work?” she asked gently.

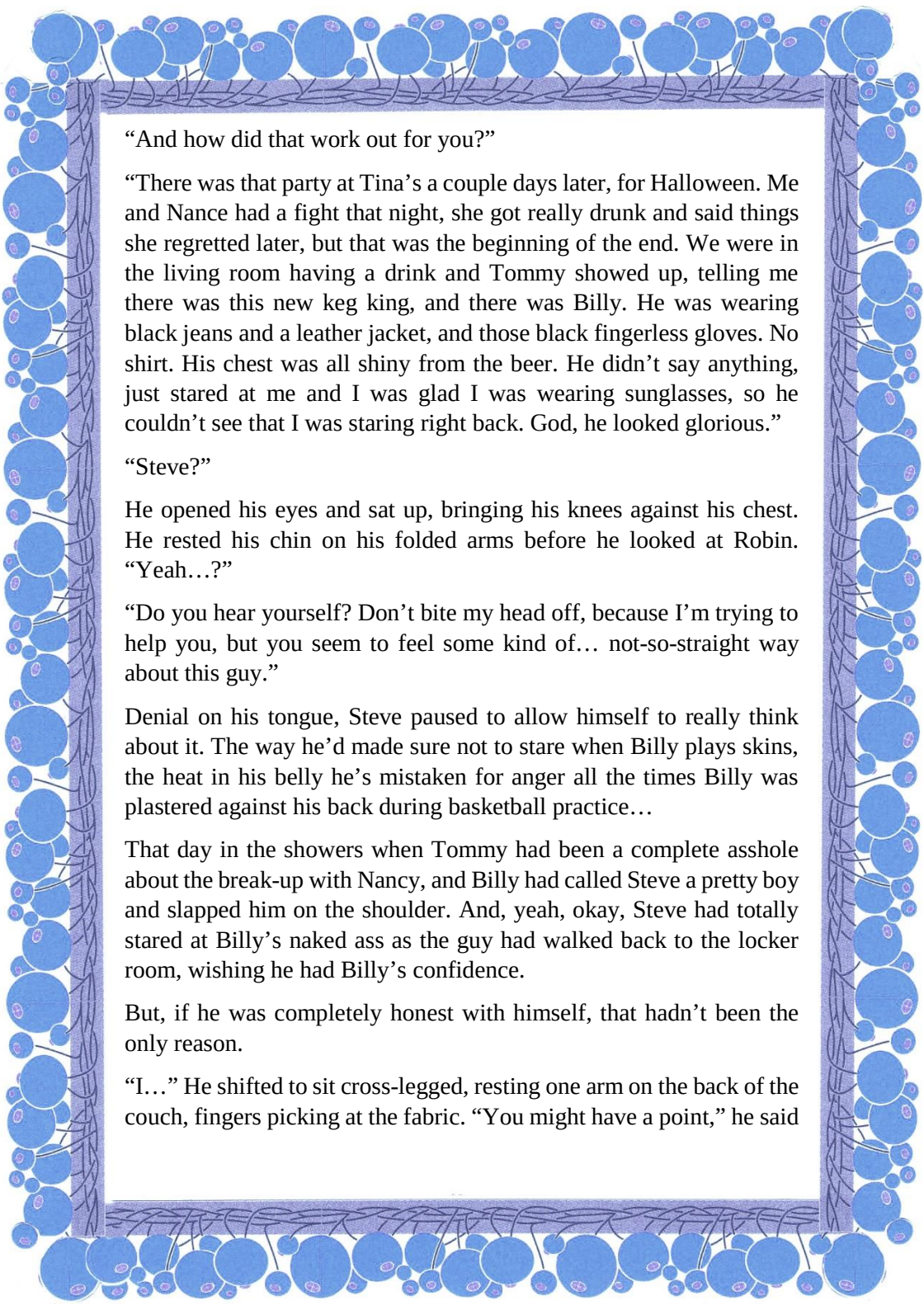
“Billy Hargrove is alive. He came in with Max to get some flowers for her mom’s house. He said he went to live with the Byers when he left the hospital and they all moved to California together.”

“Billy Hargrove? The guy who did the... with the scary giant monster thing...”

“Yeah, him.” Steve locked eyes with his best friend. He needed her help deciphering this whole thing. “He smiled at me, Rob. And it was like... like when the clouds part after the rain and the sun shines down on you. And I... I don’t...” He sighed. “I don’t know what that means.”

“Okay. Was that the first time, um, did you ever feel that way, you know, before?”

“M-maybe...” Steve closed his eyes and let the memories flood his mind. He knew that, whatever he said, Robin wouldn’t judge him. “I remember the first time he showed up at school. I was in my car with Nance, we were talking about my college essay and it was hard to miss that blue Camaro. Then Billy got out, decked out in all denim and it was hard not to stare. He had that... that presence, I guess. Demanding attention. I’d only just started not being that person anymore, so I did my best to stay away.”



“And how did that work out for you?”

“There was that party at Tina’s a couple days later, for Halloween. Me and Nance had a fight that night, she got really drunk and said things she regretted later, but that was the beginning of the end. We were in the living room having a drink and Tommy showed up, telling me there was this new keg king, and there was Billy. He was wearing black jeans and a leather jacket, and those black fingerless gloves. No shirt. His chest was all shiny from the beer. He didn’t say anything, just stared at me and I was glad I was wearing sunglasses, so he couldn’t see that I was staring right back. God, he looked glorious.”

“Steve?”

He opened his eyes and sat up, bringing his knees against his chest. He rested his chin on his folded arms before he looked at Robin. “Yeah...?”

“Do you hear yourself? Don’t bite my head off, because I’m trying to help you, but you seem to feel some kind of... not-so-straight way about this guy.”

Denial on his tongue, Steve paused to allow himself to really think about it. The way he’d made sure not to stare when Billy plays skins, the heat in his belly he’s mistaken for anger all the times Billy was plastered against his back during basketball practice...

That day in the showers when Tommy had been a complete asshole about the break-up with Nancy, and Billy had called Steve a pretty boy and slapped him on the shoulder. And, yeah, okay, Steve had totally stared at Billy’s naked ass as the guy had walked back to the locker room, wishing he had Billy’s confidence.

But, if he was completely honest with himself, that hadn’t been the only reason.

“I...” He shifted to sit cross-legged, resting one arm on the back of the couch, fingers picking at the fabric. “You might have a point,” he said



softly. It wasn't that he was scared to say it out loud, he knew they were alone in the apartment.

Robin picked up his hand in hers, her touch familiar and comforting. "There's nothing wrong with you if you do, you know that, right?"

Steve nodded.

"Also, liking Billy doesn't mean you don't like girls anymore as well, you know that too, don't you?"

"Yeah. Do you think I'm... what's the word again?"

"Bisexual," Robin replied with a grin. "And I can't tell you, only you can decide how you feel, Stevie."

"Ugh, this is so hard," Steve groaned, running a hand through his hair. "I don't know what I'm supposed to do now."

"Well, from what you've told me, I think there's a good chance he feels the same way towards you. Do you have any way to get in touch with him?"

"No. I helped them pick the bulbs they were after then they left. Max kept rushing, said they were on a mission, and—oh my god!"

"What?!?"

"She said they were in a rush to get the plants they needed and she called me Billy's boyfriend, something about me and him finding another time to have a conversation."

"Dingus! Why didn't you lead with that? Do you know if he's going to school here, or where he works?"

"No, I don't know anything." Whatever hope that had started sprouting in his chest died a quick death.

"Don't despair, my lovely," Robin said, wrapping him in a hug. "We'll find your prince in double denim, I know we will."



“Hot chocolate for Robin?” Billy called out, handing the cardboard cup to the blonde woman with a smile. His smile wavered when she took the drink but kept staring at him without saying a word. “Um, do you need anything else?”

“You’re Billy Hargrove!”

“How do you—”

“Can we talk for a minute? I’ll explain everything, I promise.”

Billy checked his watch then called out to Heather, who was in the back office they shared. “Hank, I’m going on my break!”

He waited for her to confirm she’d heard him, before he moved around the counter to follow the mystery customer who knew his name towards the booth by the bookcase in the corner. As he sat down, he heard Heather ask Jess to take over making the drinks and knew the customers were in good hands.

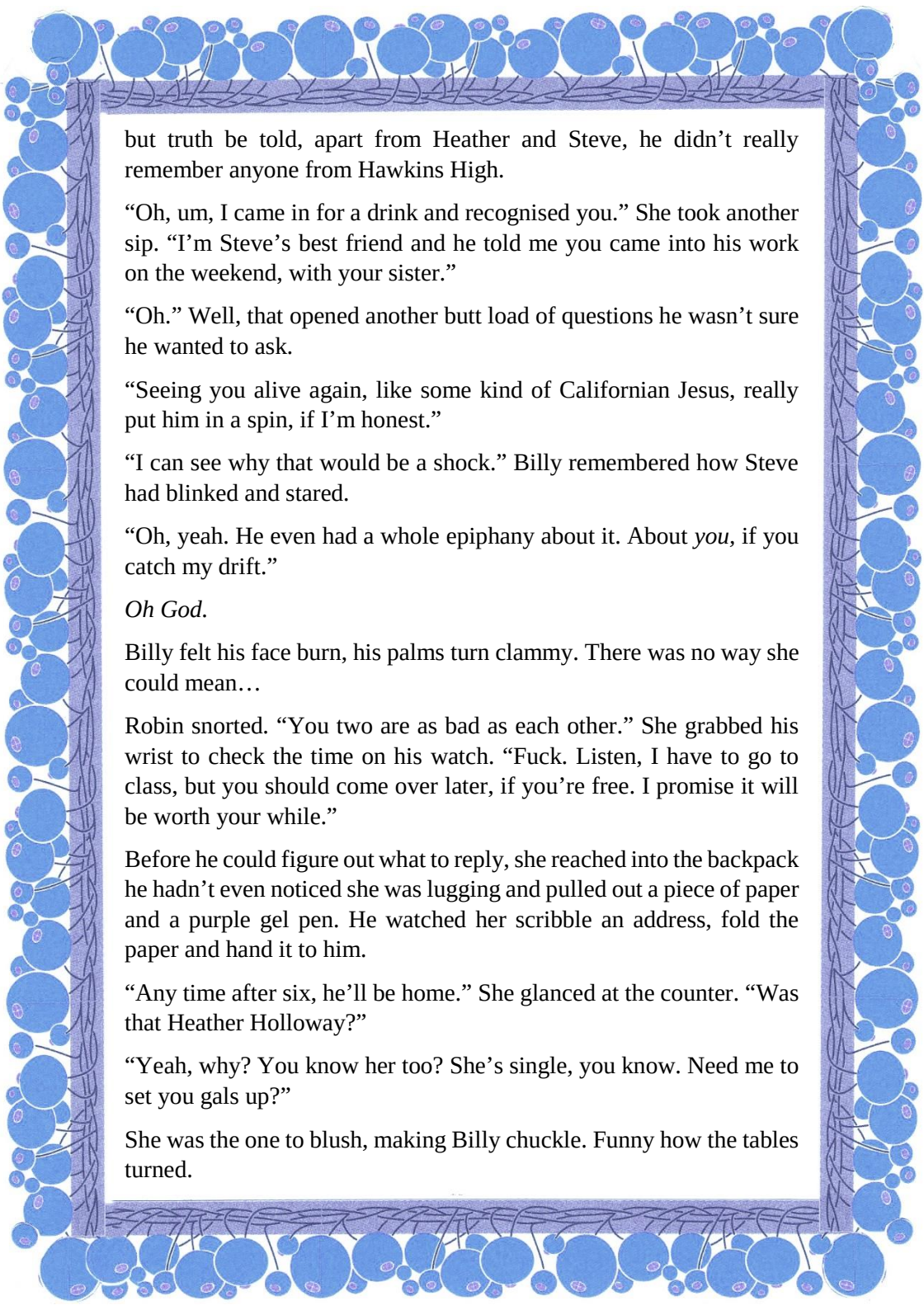
He watched, amused, as the woman took a sip of her hot chocolate and moaned contentedly.

“Sorry, it’s been a long day, and I needed that,” she said, putting the cup down on the formica table. “College is hurting my brain.”

“I wouldn’t know.” Billy shrugged. He had missed the start of senior year because he was in hospital and once he’d moved away, Joyce hadn’t pushed him to go finish high school. “Who are you and how do you know my name?”

“My name is Robin. Robin Buckley. We went to school together in Hawkins, though I don’t expect you to remember me. I was at Starcourt that night, with all the weird stuff and the...” She leaned forward to whisper, nearly knocking over her cup, “The thing.”

“Okaaay... Yeah, that still doesn’t explain how you found me and why you don’t seem more surprised.” Billy was feeling confused and wary, trying to connect the dots. He wished he could say she was familiar,



but truth be told, apart from Heather and Steve, he didn't really remember anyone from Hawkins High.

"Oh, um, I came in for a drink and recognised you." She took another sip. "I'm Steve's best friend and he told me you came into his work on the weekend, with your sister."

"Oh." Well, that opened another butt load of questions he wasn't sure he wanted to ask.

"Seeing you alive again, like some kind of Californian Jesus, really put him in a spin, if I'm honest."

"I can see why that would be a shock." Billy remembered how Steve had blinked and stared.

"Oh, yeah. He even had a whole epiphany about it. About *you*, if you catch my drift."

Oh God.

Billy felt his face burn, his palms turn clammy. There was no way she could mean...

Robin snorted. "You two are as bad as each other." She grabbed his wrist to check the time on his watch. "Fuck. Listen, I have to go to class, but you should come over later, if you're free. I promise it will be worth your while."

Before he could figure out what to reply, she reached into the backpack he hadn't even noticed she was lugging and pulled out a piece of paper and a purple gel pen. He watched her scribble an address, fold the paper and hand it to him.

"Any time after six, he'll be home." She glanced at the counter. "Was that Heather Holloway?"

"Yeah, why? You know her too? She's single, you know. Need me to set you gals up?"

She was the one to blush, making Billy chuckle. Funny how the tables turned.



“You, um, you could bring her along, if, um, if she, um...”

“You got it. I’ll ask.”

Robin nodded as she stood, picking up her backpack. “See ya.”

“Yeah, see ya.”

“Tell me again why this is a good idea?”

Groaning, Heather turned the car off and pulled the keys out of the ignition. “Don’t start again.”

“But—”

“No, Blue. You’ve been told in no uncertain terms that the guy you’ve liked for over two years has finally opened his eyes to the awesomeness that is you, so you’re going to grab that gift life is giving you with both fucking hands.” She smirked. “From the rumors I heard in high school, you’re gonna need both hands too.”

“Hank, I swear to God...”

“Pfft, like you don’t know. You were naked in the showers with him after gym class for months and you’re telling me you never looked down? Not even once?”

“I may have sneaked a glance or two.”

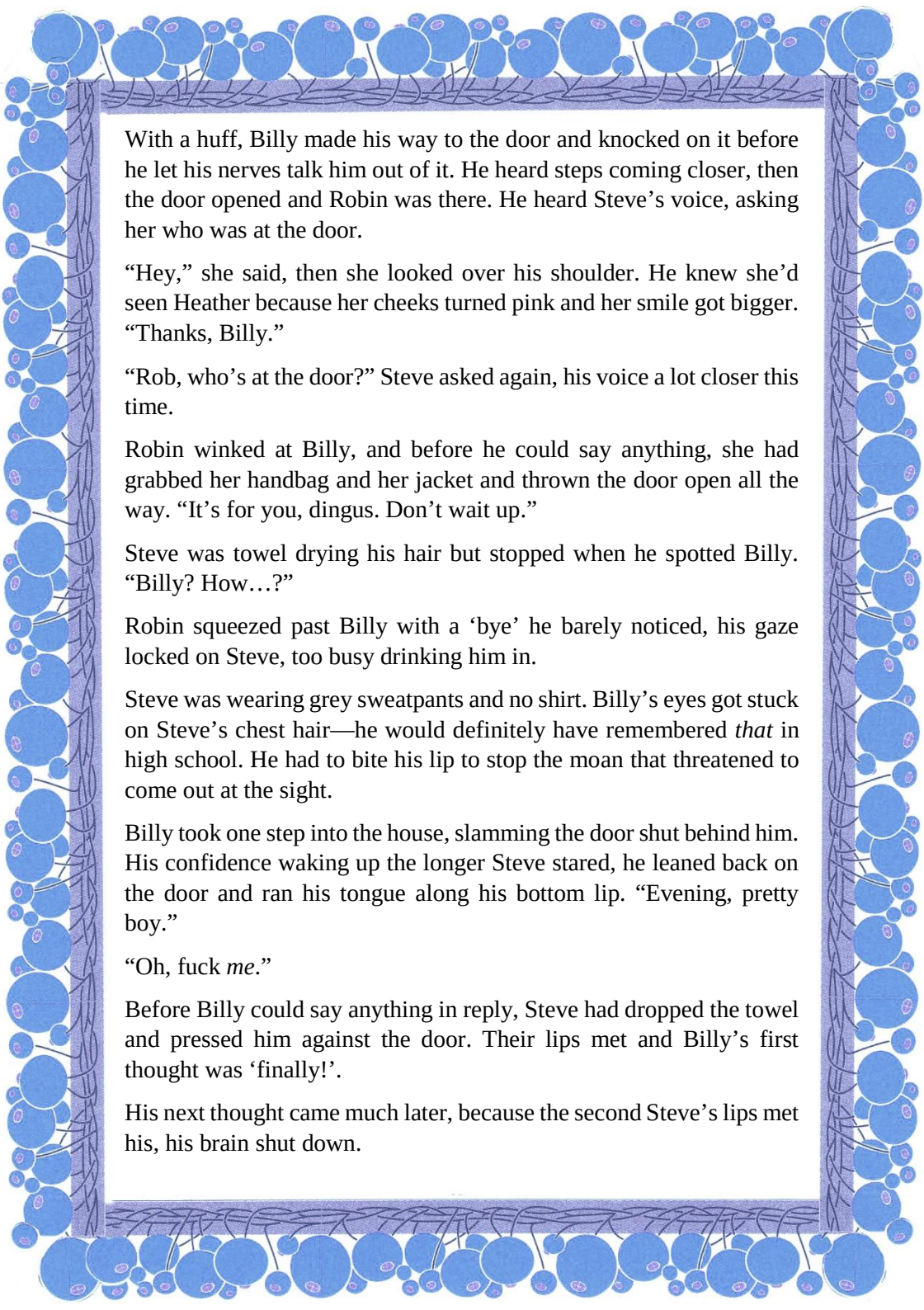
“Ha! Knew it!”

“Shut up.”

“No, you shut up. Get out of my car and go get your man. Robin Buckley might have been a band geek, but she’s cute and from what you said, she’s into me. I’m not going to pass on a date with a cute girl because you’re scared of seeing your crush again.”

“Fine!” Billy relented and got out.

Heather locked the car, walking around it to where Billy was standing. She leaned on the passenger door. “Go on, I’ll wait.”



With a huff, Billy made his way to the door and knocked on it before he let his nerves talk him out of it. He heard steps coming closer, then the door opened and Robin was there. He heard Steve's voice, asking her who was at the door.

"Hey," she said, then she looked over his shoulder. He knew she'd seen Heather because her cheeks turned pink and her smile got bigger. "Thanks, Billy."

"Rob, who's at the door?" Steve asked again, his voice a lot closer this time.

Robin winked at Billy, and before he could say anything, she had grabbed her handbag and her jacket and thrown the door open all the way. "It's for you, dingus. Don't wait up."

Steve was towel drying his hair but stopped when he spotted Billy. "Billy? How...?"

Robin squeezed past Billy with a 'bye' he barely noticed, his gaze locked on Steve, too busy drinking him in.

Steve was wearing grey sweatpants and no shirt. Billy's eyes got stuck on Steve's chest hair—he would definitely have remembered *that* in high school. He had to bite his lip to stop the moan that threatened to come out at the sight.

Billy took one step into the house, slamming the door shut behind him. His confidence waking up the longer Steve stared, he leaned back on the door and ran his tongue along his bottom lip. "Evening, pretty boy."

"Oh, fuck *me*."

Before Billy could say anything in reply, Steve had dropped the towel and pressed him against the door. Their lips met and Billy's first thought was 'finally!'.

His next thought came much later, because the second Steve's lips met his, his brain shut down.



Art by thatgirlwithasquid

Cali vs Hawkins

By ihni

In Cali, there's surfing and clubbing and racing;
Adrenaline rushes abound to be chasing
Billy could leave home right after first light
And not come back home until late, late at night

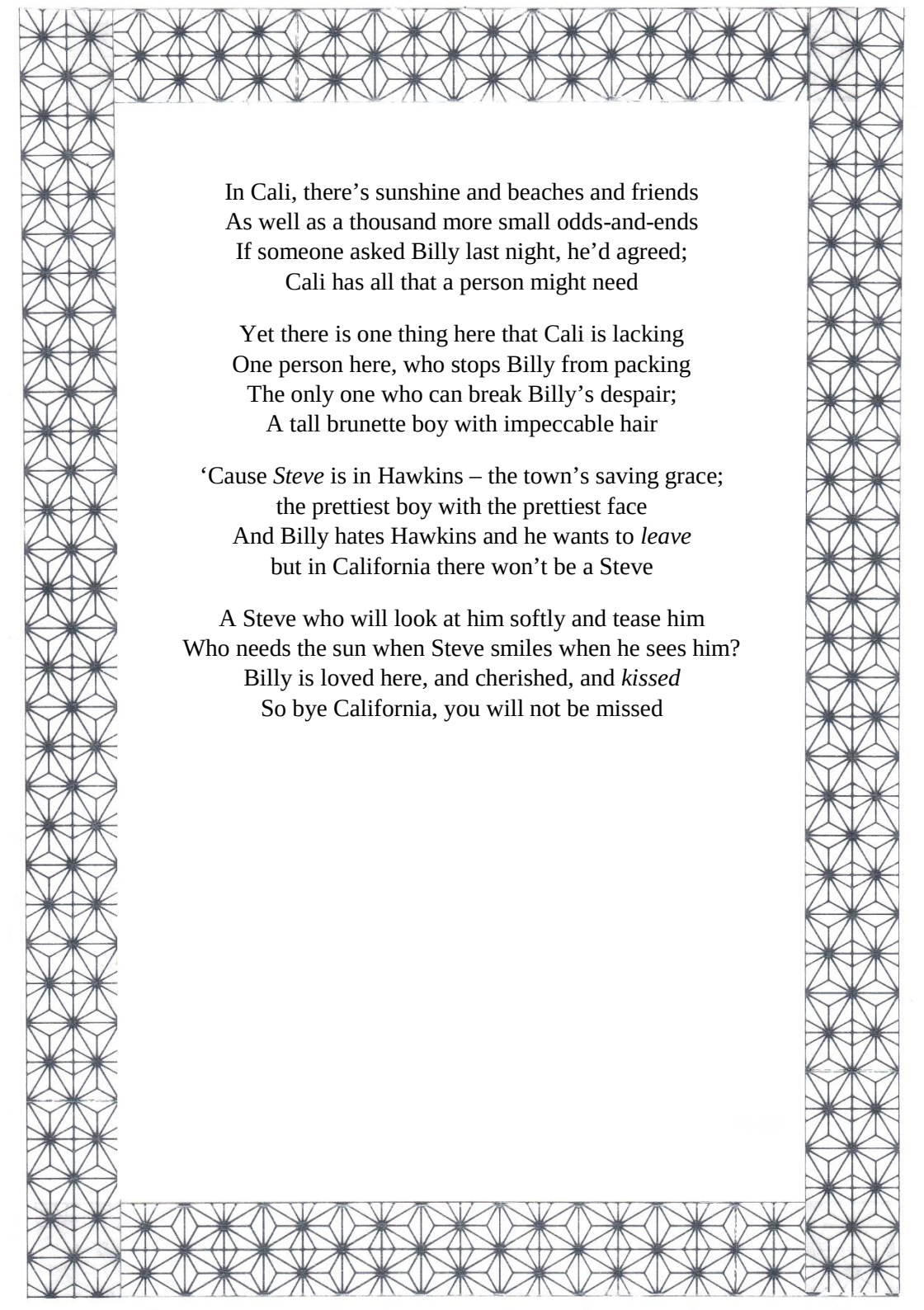
In Hawkins, there's basically nothing to do
The town takes two minutes, if that, to drive through
Billy can't loiter; can never find peace
'Cause some nosy fuck always calls the police

In Cali, there's food that has actual spices
Which one can purchase for moderate prices
There's food carts aplenty, an endless selection
Of various foodstuffs, all cooked to perfection

In Hawkins, there's salt and there's pepper for spice
If someone wants Asian food here, they cook rice
You can't get Korean or Mexican food
And just about everything else here is stewed

In Cali, the winter is never a bother
If Billy's kicked out of the house by his father
A good spot to drive to is never too far;
It's never too cold out to sleep in his car

In Hawkins, it's snowy and icy and freezing
The thought of a night in his car is displeasing
So he walks on eggshells and swallows his pride
So he gets to sleep in a warm bed inside



In Cali, there's sunshine and beaches and friends
As well as a thousand more small odds-and-ends
If someone asked Billy last night, he'd agreed;
Cali has all that a person might need

Yet there is one thing here that Cali is lacking
One person here, who stops Billy from packing
The only one who can break Billy's despair;
A tall brunette boy with impeccable hair

'Cause *Steve* is in Hawkins – the town's saving grace;
the prettiest boy with the prettiest face
And Billy hates Hawkins and he wants to *leave*
but in California there won't be a Steve

A Steve who will look at him softly and tease him
Who needs the sun when Steve smiles when he sees him?
Billy is loved here, and cherished, and *kissed*
So bye California, you will not be missed

I'm hungry like a wolf

By Zeros83

Billy had played it smart for the first two months in Hawkins. He had kept a low profile and stayed away from Harrington so there would be no chance or cause for a confrontation. He'd made sure to have a reason to sleep out of the house when the time came, and then driven himself away from Hawkins for the night, face still smarting where Neil had struck him.

He's been so cautious and calculated.

Not so much today.

Today, he spent the school hours feeling antsy and this close to exploding, but still in control. Told himself he'd do it as soon as Neil set foot in the house. He'd do it. Just, in a minute. Soon. Later. Later later later laterlaterlaterlater.

It's hard as hell to fight the territorial part of the brain that insists that this shithole of a town, this crappy house, they're Billy's place, his territory, he shouldn't leave them now, shouldn't drive one hour away, not on *this night* of all nights!

That stupid side keeps on whispering that he can wait a minute more, just a little longer, nothing much, he'll do it soon, so soon.

And then it's *later* enough that the moon is calling too loud and too sweet, and Billy knows that if he were to use the usual tactics, if he tried to antagonize Neil to the point he would throw Billy out of the house for the night, it would end badly.

I-lost-control-and-showed-my-father-I'm-a-monster kind of *badly*.

Possibly even I-lost-control-and-hurt-someone kind of *badly*.

So, Billy acts the model son all evening even if the moon is screaming in the back of his head. He grits his teeth through dinner and lies in

bed after, door closed, hands splayed on the comforter, taking slow, deliberate breaths while he stares at the ceiling and counts the minutes.

When Billy, at last, slips out of his window, late enough that everyone's asleep, the moon is high and screaming non-stop in his veins. He'd swear he can taste the moonlight on his tongue as he walks faster and faster away from the house.

The car is not an option anymore, too late for that.

Too late to drive away from the town and Harrington and this shitstorm that's been silently brewing since late October.

Maybe if he's lucky...

But he hasn't been lucky a single day of his life, so that's just wishful thinking.

He walks and then runs in the night, through the woods. The snow crunches under his boots and glints in the moonlight. He has the residual presence of mind to pile his stuff under a bush, before the call becomes too strong and he's already shifted.

He's moon-stupid and forest-drunk, snow cold under big paws, fur-warm and four-legged. The wolf is on the forefront and Billy sinks to the depths and can only let himself *be*.

The night tastes like the moon, home, big-space, no-marks from him. He trots and runs, sniffs every odour, marks trees and rocks here and there, learns the shape of winter-nights in this corn-place. Not like Home. Colder. Different critters. Prey prey prey predator prey predator prey.

The rot-sweet smell of dead meat leads him not towards the danger of the asphalt-stench of a road, but deeper through a tangle of trees. It's air-dried meat, days old carcass, a deer's ribcage-blossom open for the moon, its contents long gone.

He rips a bone off and lies down to munch on it. Hard-crunch and tart-tasting marrow. The moon bathes him in her light, silent-blessings of sweet-peace.

When the bone is splinters, he goes to roll in the carcass to leave his scent on it, so it might overpower-or-mix with the other scent lingering there. Mine-too. My-place-too. My-snack-too. We-are-one-so-let-me-stay.

There are more trees to mark, more scents to follow, more piles of snow in which to roll, so he gets moving and lets the hours pass him by, free and unthinking.

He tries to avoid it, but it still happens.

They still meet.

They stop in their tracks and look at each other, ice-still, steel-intense.

Different. Alike.

Four-legged, fur-warm.

Big alike. Strong alike. Scent alike.

The other's darker, but still alike him.

He takes a step back.

This has only one possible end, it's a marrow-deep knowledge. He's intruding, so it's gonna be challenge-fight-submission.

Challenge-fight-submission, no other option, none-none-none.

It's the first time he meets someone like him, like this. He doesn't want to challenge. Nor to fight. Nor to submit. Nor to force the other to submit.

The wolf's always meant being free from all that bullshit. He's not gonna do that. He's not!

He takes a step back, and then a second.

The other wolf doesn't follow. Doesn't growl. Just lays down, front paws crossed on the snow, eyes closed, chin-on-paws. A long sigh.

Tired-sigh or weary-sigh or satisfied-sigh, he can't tell.

Never another wolf in his life to be able to know.

What should he do? What-what-what?

He paces in place, antsy-footed like the pup he's never been. The other wolf opens an eye and heaves another sigh.

They look at each other. Bone-naked branches rattle through a gust of wind. No dangerous smells.

But what if it's a trick?

What if-what if-what if?

The other wolf heaves yet another sigh, longer, deeper, and closes that eye up.

He walks towards the other wolf, slow, wide-circle, low-body. Wary-nosed and even more wary-eyed. The other doesn't react, almost still in his fake-rest. Only an ear flicks and turns to follow the crunch of each cautious steps.

He sniffs the other wolf's side, noses at where tail curls against ribs. Smells good. Healthy. Happy. Well-fed strong.

Both eyes are open when Billy's in front of the other wolf again. That ear flicks back and forth. They wait.

Small step after small step, Billy gets close enough he could touch his nose to the other wolf's nose, if he wanted. Does he, tho?

What if-what if-what if?

He jerks his head back when the other wolf boops their noses together and then looks at Billy, open mouthed, tongue-lolling smug.

Billy darts forward and licks the other's snout, and from there it's on. They lick and nip and push each other, play-fight and play-growls and play-hunt.

They roll through the snow and the underbrush, dart here and there and back, up a boulder and down a frozen stream, and Billy's never felt this alive and it's exhilarating.

They go to rest under a big rock, word-scratches and people-stuff and people-smells all around. The other wolf didn't hesitate to come here and Billy couldn't be any less brave.

They curl side by side, the other wolf resting his chin first on his own paws, and then on Billy's back.

He flicks an ear and rumbles, the other just heaves one of his long sighs and rubs his chin back and forth. Itch-scratching as much as scent-rubbing.

The night's cold but they're warmer than summer.

The other wolf wakes him up way before dawn. Leads him through the woods, sure-footed and light, all the way to the smell of humans, houses and cars.

To the edge of the backyard of a big house. Lights on outside, dark inside. Pool-chlorine lingers. The smell of water is gone. House-wood, garden chemicals, dormant earth. People. One strong, two faint.

Billy blinks at the other wolf, gets a shoulder shoved against his that makes him stumble to the side.

It's heart-pounding dangerous, and yet, he follows the other wolf out of the woods and to the snow-free deck. Click-click-click their nails go on the wood.

The other wolf changes in one long, fluid ripple of fur and skin, human nails scratching the wood at the last second. Billy's never seen it from

the outside, only felt from within. It looks scary and beautiful, makes him hesitate.

Steve Harrington rubs a hand on his face and casts a glance to him. He's waiting. Daring.

Billy lets the change roll through him, pushes the wolf down, knowing that that instinct won't fight back, now, not with how sated and tired it is after a night of running and *being*. Fur retreats and bones rearrange, and, one deep breath later, he's crouching on the deck, as naked as Harrington, cold wood under his feet and hands.

In the silence, Harrington grins and slowly stands up, and Billy does the same, eyes trained on Harrington's face and not an inch lower.

For the first half-hour after changing, Billy always feels like words are too complicated to form, let alone wield. Harrington might feel the same way, because he gestures to follow and heads to the back door of the house, which turns out to be unlocked.

They make their way through the rooms in silence. There's nobody else. Just them, the expensive furniture, the pictures hung on the walls, and the humming of the fridge.

Upstairs, the shower in guest bathroom #500 has such good pressure and perfect temperature that Billy wants to marry it.

Maybe he'll just find a way to sneak in when Harrington's out, so he can have his filthy ways with this shower from heaven.

The soap has only the slightest scent, thank God, so Billy can focus on the task of removing at least the smell of deer carcass that still lingers on him from earlier. He always has the worst ideas when he's shifted, Jesus!

When he leaves the bathroom, he's clad only in a big, fluffy towel and he doesn't smell like dead animals anymore. There's a remnant of Harrington's smell, if he's being honest, but it's so subtle that it doesn't really count as being there. He's not even sure Harrington himself will notice.

And it's not like there's anyone else other than the two of them who *can* notice, so... all good.

Clean clothes are piled on the dresser of the guest room. They smell like laundry detergent and clothes hung outside to dry, not like the linty insides of a dryer. He wears the sweatpants and the old, long sleeve henley, but skips the socks and sweatshirt altogether.

He finds Harrington in front of the stove, busy cooking bacon and eggs, wearing frayed sweats and a cable-knit sweater that looks warm as hell. A little shake of his shoulder is the only outer signal that he noticed Billy's arrival.

They don't talk while Harrington cooks and for sure not while they scarf down breakfast. Billy internally bemoans the lack of tabasco or some other spicy sauce to give more oomph to the eggs, but that's no reason not to eat every crumb of food on his plate. He'd have starved by now, if that were the case.

"I thought you'd keep on avoiding me and my shadow forever and ever," is what Harrington at last says to break the silence.

"That was the plan."

The other werewolf licks his lips and for a moment his tongue looks too long, too wolf-like, but Billy's sure it's only a trick of the light.

"What changed?"

Billy shrugs, because he can't admit he simply gave in to his territorial urges, nothing more, nothing less. It would paint him as an idiot who can't even control himself, and fuck that, honestly!

"Do you need a lift home?" Harrington asks, like it's the most normal thing in the world.

"How generous of you," Billy says in his most sickly-sweet tone, before going gravelly and adding: "No, I don't need your help, Harrington."

He stands up and heads for the sliding doors. Just before he leaves, and only because he wasn't raised by literal wolves and his mom would be embarrassed if he didn't say it, he shouts:

"Thanks for the shower!"

The next moment he's back on the deck, peeling off clothes and shifting. He hasn't got much time left to find his own stuff and return home before everyone's up.

He stops trying to avoid Harrington after that, and Harrington... Well, it seems like Harrington can't decide whether he wants to actively look for Billy or keep away.

It's weird.

It's probably a wolf thing.

Billy's been one for too little time to know.

They eat lunch together twice or thrice a week, and Harrington is always there, waiting for him in the parking lot, both in the morning and before leaving in the afternoon, but ignores him the rest of the time. Billy had hoped to keep him at bay by smoking, because maybe Harrington's nose hates the smell of cigarettes, but instead King Steve is a smoker too, dammit. So, they meet, morning and afternoon, and smoke together, and don't really talk, but also... talk? Sort of? A few words here and there, about school or movies, mostly. Nothing much. It still is more than Billy actually talks with anyone else.

They seem to gravitate towards each other on the basketball court, where the whole thing turns a bit freaky. Billy can't but know where Harrington is, always, no matter who Coach wants him to cover, or to whom he's supposed to pass the ball, or in which direction his eyes are actually looking. It's as much awareness as wariness, but in a nice sort of way he can't even start to explain to himself.

He can't really make heads or tails of it all.

It's not bad, but can it really be good?

What if it bites him in the ass?

Around the new moon, Billy feels tired and cranky as fuck, as per usual. Harrington must feel likewise, because his hair is floppier than ever and his eyes glaze over so fucking often it's a bit ridiculous.

"I hate this," Billy hears him say, as they lean against that expensive burgundy eyesore of a car.

He makes a low questioning sound, to which Harrington answers with a mutter of:

"I want to just go back home and sleep."

Billy pulls a cigarette from his packet and lights it before asking:

"What's stopping you?"

Harrington steals the cig from his fingers, ignoring Billy's low growl of protest, and takes a drag. He exhales it while saying: "I won't sleep anyway."

Billy snatches the cigarette back, doing his best to ignore Harrington's smug expression at Billy's annoyance, or the weird feeling it lights up inside him, or how warm it feels to close his lips around the spit-wet paper of the filter. He plunges his hands in the pockets of his jacket so he won't do something stupid out in the open, and instead smokes in silence. In through his mouth, out through the nose, like he's a dragon ready to spit rivers of fire on this shithole of a town.

"Why?" he asks at last, eyes still safely away from Harrington's strong features and floppy hair.

"Too silent," King Steve answers without missing a beat. "Too alone. My parents are away for a few more days."

Billy makes a noise like he understands. He doesn't, honestly. He'd pay to be alone.

Harrington plucks the cigarette from his mouth once more and this time Billy doesn't care, because Max is heading his way and the time's almost up and there are stupid words burning in his throat and—

“Wanna go for a run?”

It's out before Billy can stop himself. Harrington grimaces around the filter, but still nods.

“I'll come by,” Billy says, and that's it, because Max is standing in front of them, and there's one of those obnoxious kids trailing behind her, eyes trained on Harrington and looking like he's been betrayed.

“What were you and Steve talking about?” Max asks as soon as they're alone in the car.

“None of your business.”

Lucky them, she's learned that when he's in this bad of a mood, she better let it go *immediately* if she doesn't want him to be his worst total dick self. They both hate Billy's worst total dick self.

Darkness falls early, this time of year. By then, Billy is already in the treeline, at the back of Harrington's house. In less than a minute, Harrington's bounding out of the house and peeling off clothes.

The pull of the moon is so feeble that Billy is just floating under the surface of his own mind, present enough to want to laugh at how Harrington is jumping on one foot while fighting the shoe on the other. He's also there enough to salivate at Harrington's naked upper half and then at the rest of his naked skin once he's shucked his pants and boxers too. God, he wants to look and touch so fucking much...

Two steps and Harrington's shifting. Two more, and he's running towards Billy, who's turning tail and leading him away from the houses and to freedom.

They run and run and run and run. They find tracks, deer-feet, minutes-fresh. He's never hunted in group. It's heady. The moon is new and

dark but it still sings in his veins when they drag the deer down and kill it and gorge themselves on it.

Harrington once more leads him to the space under the big rock, with the graffiti and garbage littering the area.

He tries to wrinkle his nose at the fresh smell of people, they left not long ago, but Harrington just goes and marks one side of the rock. Billy marks the other and follows, finds himself thrown to the ground, and, in a moment, they're play-fighting again, rolling on the packed earth while outside it starts snowing.

As if of one mind, they shift back to human mid-fighting, it becomes tickling and laughing and biting skin instead of growling and pawing at soft fur. There's blood around Harrington's mouth, it makes him look even more beautiful, a savage, untamed creature of the night.

Billy kisses him and then rears back, surprised by his own action, scared for what the reaction might be, only for Harrington to follow him and kiss him back, hard and demanding. Harrington straddles him, and holds Billy's face in his hands like he's breakable, and kisses him like he wants to devour every last piece of Billy and leave nothing behind.

Billy lets him.

Billy holds him back, runs his hands along muscles and moles, traces all the strength and all the trembling emotions hidden under the hunger.

He's never felt this powerful and important in his life.

When Harrington stops kissing him, he still cradles Billy's face in his hands. He looks down at Billy, those dark eyes even darker than usual, and murmurs:

"Knew you'd taste good."

And then, he shifts into the wolf and basically collapses on Billy, fast asleep before Billy even can finish protesting.

God, is this asshole heavy!

Billy mutters a curse and rubs a hand on his face, eyeing the underside of the rock.

Well, at least Harrington's also soft and warm, he has to concede, once he starts petting through his thick fur.

And whines in his sleep like a little puppy, the dork!

By the time the February full moon is rising, they've gone past simply making out. Harrington has pushed him against a tree one too many times, left trails of quickly-fading hickeys on all kinds of stretches of Billy's skin. They've tasted each other and slept in the same bed and washed under the same shower with the perfect water pressure.

Harrington leans against his burgundy eyesore of a car with him and looks at the throngs of people leaving the school without really seeing them. He pitches his voice so low only Billy can hear him and asks:

"In a different world, would you have ever said yes if I asked you to be my boyfriend?"

"Steve..." he whispers, and he has no idea what his voice is doing, but it must be something bad, because the other werewolf raises his hands in a placating gesture and smiles that plasticky King Steve smile of his.

"Hey, it was just, you know, a hypothetical. Nothing more. Just to talk."

Which is a lie, they both know it, and it breaks Billy's heart that Steve feels the need to lie like that, to protect all the fragile feelings involved in this shit.

"I'd say yes, asshole," Billy mutters. "Of course I'd say yes."

Like it's even a question. Like he wouldn't give his left nut to...

He takes a deep breath and talks as low as Steve did earlier, if not lower:

“I’d kill for that. I’d shout it to the whole school and kiss you right in the hallway where everyone can see, in a different world.”

Steve’s breath catches and then whooshes out, and for the briefest fraction of a second, their pinkie fingers brush against each other and Billy burns with the need to do it. To turn and grab Steve Harrington’s face and mash their mouths together so anyone with eyes can know that King Steve is Billy’s, all Billy’s, nobody else’s.

But Steve’s finger moves a fraction of an inch to the side, and the moment’s broken, and Billy can think with his brain again.

“Fucking full moon,” he mutters.

“Fucking territorial instincts,” Steve mutters back.

They exchange a glance and start laughing, like the two lunatics they are, and oh, God, that’s so stupid, it has no right to feel this funny!

“See you later?” Steve asks, a hopeful twinge in his voice, once they stop laughing.

Billy watches Max stalk their way, red hair billowing in the wind.

“Wouldn’t dare to miss it,” he answers, and heads to his own car.

“You look happy,” Max says, as they drive towards the shitty little house on Cherry Lane. “Whose puppy did you kick?”

“No puppy,” he mutters, a grin still pulling a side of his mouth despite her words.

“So, what? Did you win the lottery, by chance?”

“Not really, no, but sorta.”

He refuses to elaborate and that only makes her even angrier and more insistent, which Billy can’t but find entertaining as hell.

Yeah, it's a good day, not even Max's trying to pry into his business can ruin it.

They wait two weeks after graduation before they decide it's the right day to leave Hawkins.

They've had months to make plans, and get cold feet, and overthink everything, at length. They're not done overthinking yet.

They can't stay. Not with Neil's eyes always on Billy; or the local newspaper running article after article about the dangerous wolves prowling the woods; or Steve's father insisting, louder and louder, that if Steve doesn't go to college, then the least he can do is accept the position ready for him at the investment firm; or the way both Billy and Steve crave to be together more than they can out in the open in such a nosy stupid town.

Leaving is the only solution that works, really, even if it's scary as hell.

The official story is that, thanks to how well they play together, they both have basketball scholarships at UCSD. The truth is that they're still not sure if they'll actually head back to California, and even *go* to college, or if instead they'll just swerve North and find some place with a lot of wild spaces where they'll be just two more weird nobodies living in the woods.

Scary as it is, they still haven't decided. It's both terrifying and exciting.

He promises Max that he'll write soon, and after a honking sniffle, she bawls that she'll write back, and they both know there's a chance they won't, but there's also a chance they will. He hugs her tight, wondering when, exactly, he stopped tolerating a little brat and started loving his stepsister instead.

Even without looking, Billy knows that Steve is pretending to be listening to all the recommendations the Henderson kid is giving him,

and instead is watching him and Max, and smiling. When Billy chances a glance his way, yep, there he is, eyes misty and looking smug as hell, like Billy's better relationship with his stepsister is Steve's doing.

It probably is.

Max is the only thing he regrets leaving behind, once he and Steve are done with their goodbyes and drive out of Hawkins.

The Camaro roars louder than Billy's allowed it for a long time and, in the passenger seat, Steve laughs and howls with the engine, more beautiful than the full moon.

The world they live in is crappy, no two ways about it, but maybe, somewhere away from Hawkins, either in California or deep in the woods somewhere else, they can start building a new world. A better one.

One where he can kiss Steve in public, and hold his hand while they walk down Main Street, and not have to hide who they are behind being great friends or roommates.

One where he's gonna be able to say out loud: "This is Steve, he's my boyfriend."



Art by tallula03

Kissing in the cold

By Thei

Stupid Harrington.

Stupid Harrington with his stupid perfect hair.

Stupid Harrington with his stupid perfect hair and stupid tolerance to the Midwestern winter cold.

It wasn't Billy's first winter in Hawkins, but it was definitely the coldest. It hadn't been this cold last year, had it? And back then, he had strutted around in nothing but a buttoned-up shirt and his leather jacket. If anything, he should be goddamn *toasty* by comparison, with all the layers he was currently wearing – but no. Instead, he was huddled up in a truly hideous winter jacket and doing his best impression of a turtle with the way he was trying to withdraw into it, while Steve Harrington, former king of Hawkins High, strutted around with a smile on his face like he was *enjoying the cold* or something.

Case in point:

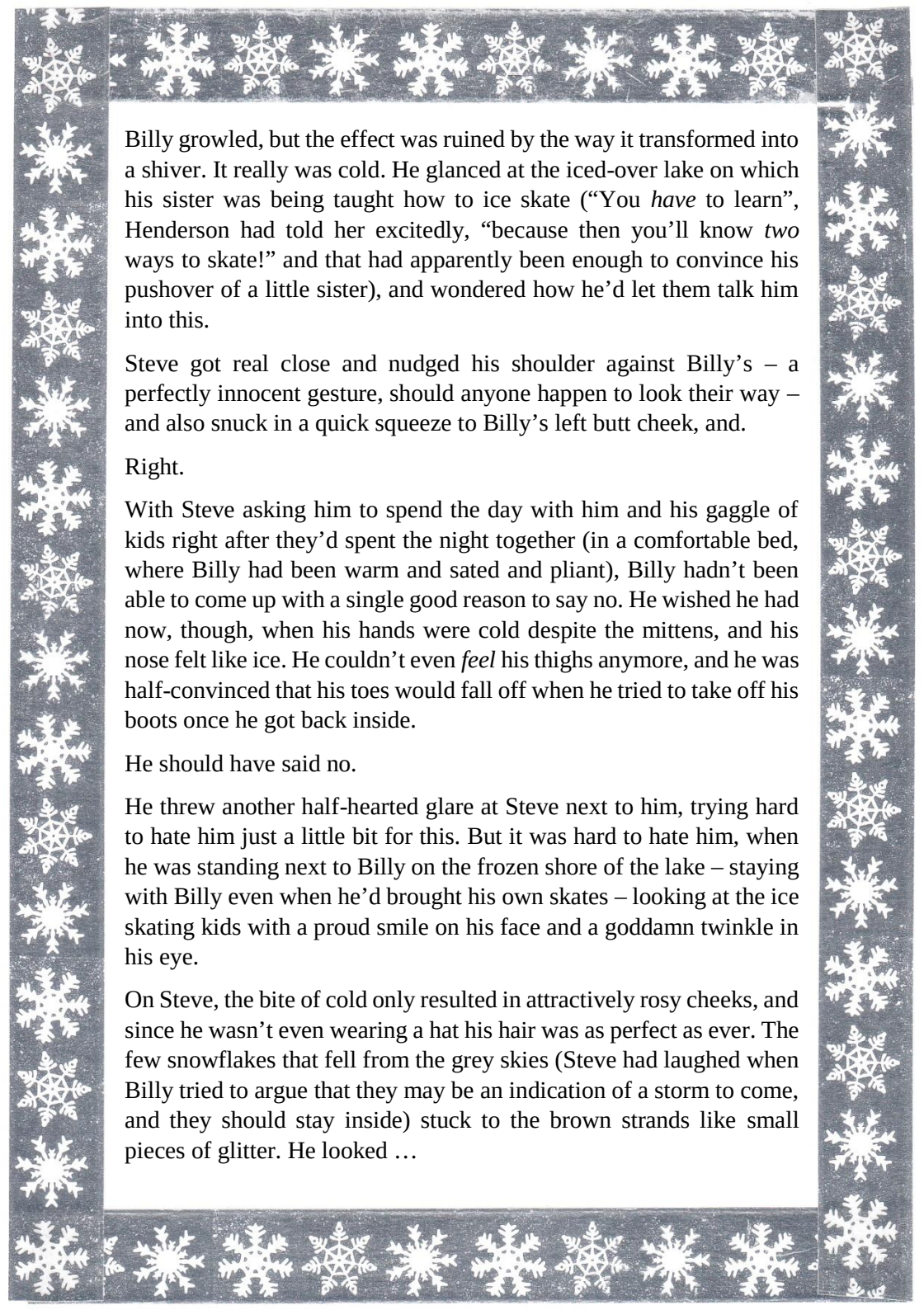
“Ahh, it's crisp outside today, isn't it?”

Billy shuddered – his body's attempt at keeping from freezing to death, probably – and glared at him over the top of the scarf, which was wrapped several times around his neck and reaching over his nose. At the sight, Steve let out an amused snort.

“Too cold for you, Mr. California?”

“Fuck you,” Billy said, muffled by the scarf. He narrowed his eyes so Steve would get the gist even if he couldn't make out the words. By the way Harrington laughed, he got it.

“Fuck *me*?” Steve said with a glint in his eye. “That's not what you said last night, but sure, we can switch it up tonight if you want.”



Billy growled, but the effect was ruined by the way it transformed into a shiver. It really was cold. He glanced at the iced-over lake on which his sister was being taught how to ice skate (“You *have* to learn”, Henderson had told her excitedly, “because then you’ll know two ways to skate!” and that had apparently been enough to convince his pushover of a little sister), and wondered how he’d let them talk him into this.

Steve got real close and nudged his shoulder against Billy’s – a perfectly innocent gesture, should anyone happen to look their way – and also snuck in a quick squeeze to Billy’s left butt cheek, and.

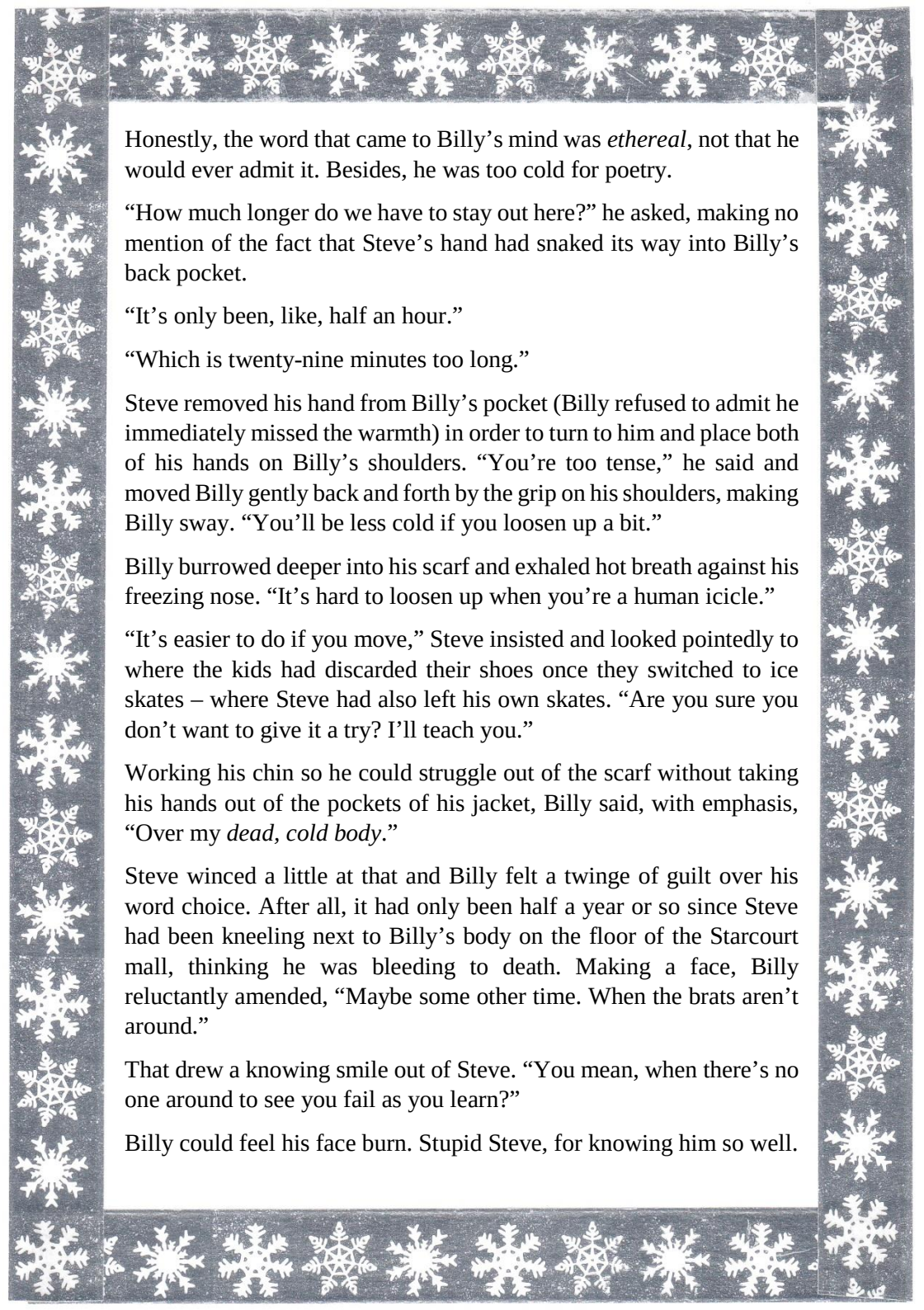
Right.

With Steve asking him to spend the day with him and his gaggle of kids right after they’d spent the night together (in a comfortable bed, where Billy had been warm and sated and pliant), Billy hadn’t been able to come up with a single good reason to say no. He wished he had now, though, when his hands were cold despite the mittens, and his nose felt like ice. He couldn’t even *feel* his thighs anymore, and he was half-convinced that his toes would fall off when he tried to take off his boots once he got back inside.

He should have said no.

He threw another half-hearted glare at Steve next to him, trying hard to hate him just a little bit for this. But it was hard to hate him, when he was standing next to Billy on the frozen shore of the lake – staying with Billy even when he’d brought his own skates – looking at the ice skating kids with a proud smile on his face and a goddamn twinkle in his eye.

On Steve, the bite of cold only resulted in attractively rosy cheeks, and since he wasn’t even wearing a hat his hair was as perfect as ever. The few snowflakes that fell from the grey skies (Steve had laughed when Billy tried to argue that they may be an indication of a storm to come, and they should stay inside) stuck to the brown strands like small pieces of glitter. He looked ...



Honestly, the word that came to Billy's mind was *ethereal*, not that he would ever admit it. Besides, he was too cold for poetry.

"How much longer do we have to stay out here?" he asked, making no mention of the fact that Steve's hand had snaked its way into Billy's back pocket.

"It's only been, like, half an hour."

"Which is twenty-nine minutes too long."

Steve removed his hand from Billy's pocket (Billy refused to admit he immediately missed the warmth) in order to turn to him and place both of his hands on Billy's shoulders. "You're too tense," he said and moved Billy gently back and forth by the grip on his shoulders, making Billy sway. "You'll be less cold if you loosen up a bit."

Billy burrowed deeper into his scarf and exhaled hot breath against his freezing nose. "It's hard to loosen up when you're a human icicle."

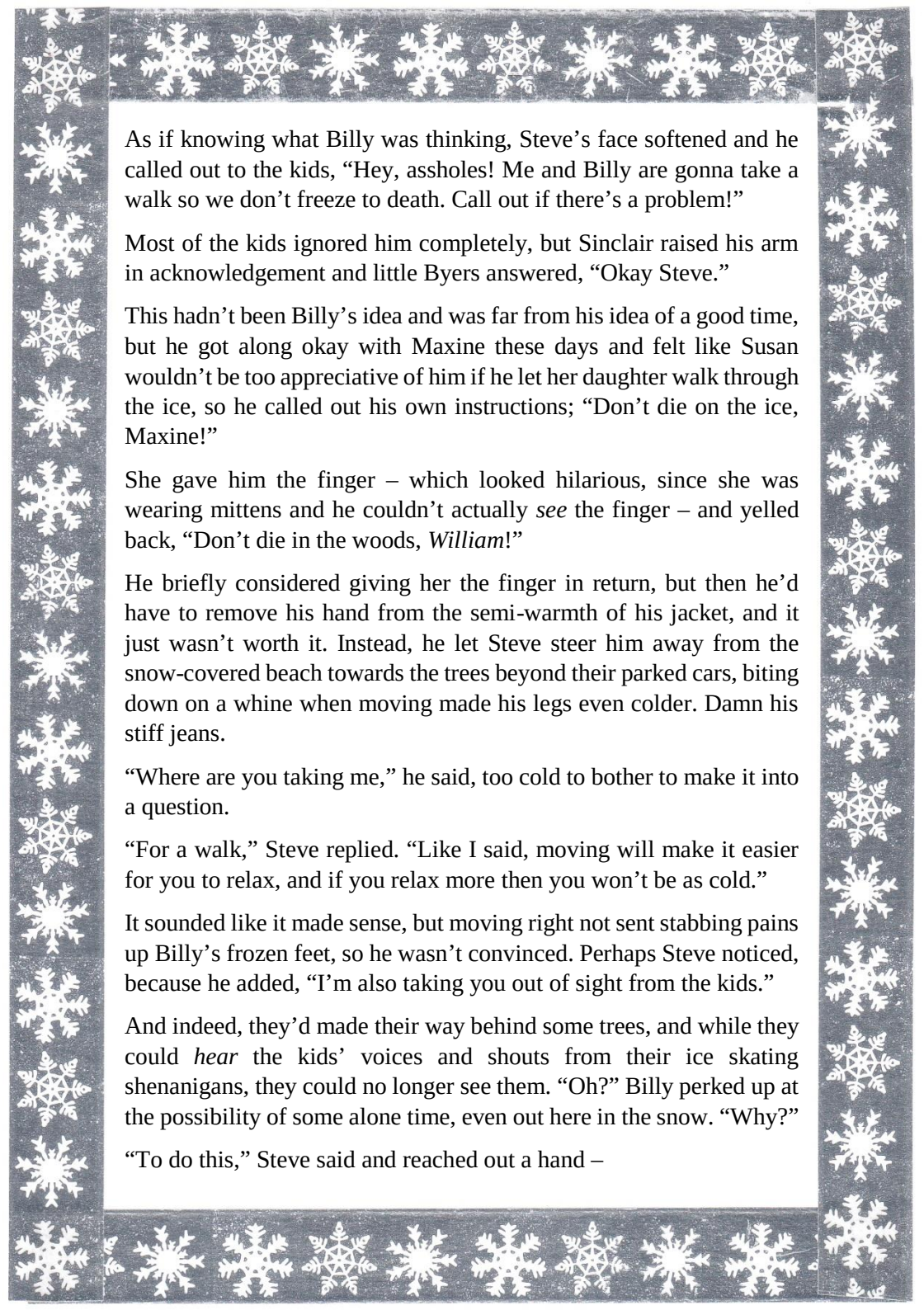
"It's easier to do if you move," Steve insisted and looked pointedly to where the kids had discarded their shoes once they switched to ice skates – where Steve had also left his own skates. "Are you sure you don't want to give it a try? I'll teach you."

Working his chin so he could struggle out of the scarf without taking his hands out of the pockets of his jacket, Billy said, with emphasis, "Over my *dead, cold body*."

Steve winced a little at that and Billy felt a twinge of guilt over his word choice. After all, it had only been half a year or so since Steve had been kneeling next to Billy's body on the floor of the Starcourt mall, thinking he was bleeding to death. Making a face, Billy reluctantly amended, "Maybe some other time. When the brats aren't around."

That drew a knowing smile out of Steve. "You mean, when there's no one around to see you fail as you learn?"

Billy could feel his face burn. Stupid Steve, for knowing him so well.



As if knowing what Billy was thinking, Steve's face softened and he called out to the kids, "Hey, assholes! Me and Billy are gonna take a walk so we don't freeze to death. Call out if there's a problem!"

Most of the kids ignored him completely, but Sinclair raised his arm in acknowledgement and little Byers answered, "Okay Steve."

This hadn't been Billy's idea and was far from his idea of a good time, but he got along okay with Maxine these days and felt like Susan wouldn't be too appreciative of him if he let her daughter walk through the ice, so he called out his own instructions; "Don't die on the ice, Maxine!"

She gave him the finger – which looked hilarious, since she was wearing mittens and he couldn't actually *see* the finger – and yelled back, "Don't die in the woods, *William!*"

He briefly considered giving her the finger in return, but then he'd have to remove his hand from the semi-warmth of his jacket, and it just wasn't worth it. Instead, he let Steve steer him away from the snow-covered beach towards the trees beyond their parked cars, biting down on a whine when moving made his legs even colder. Damn his stiff jeans.

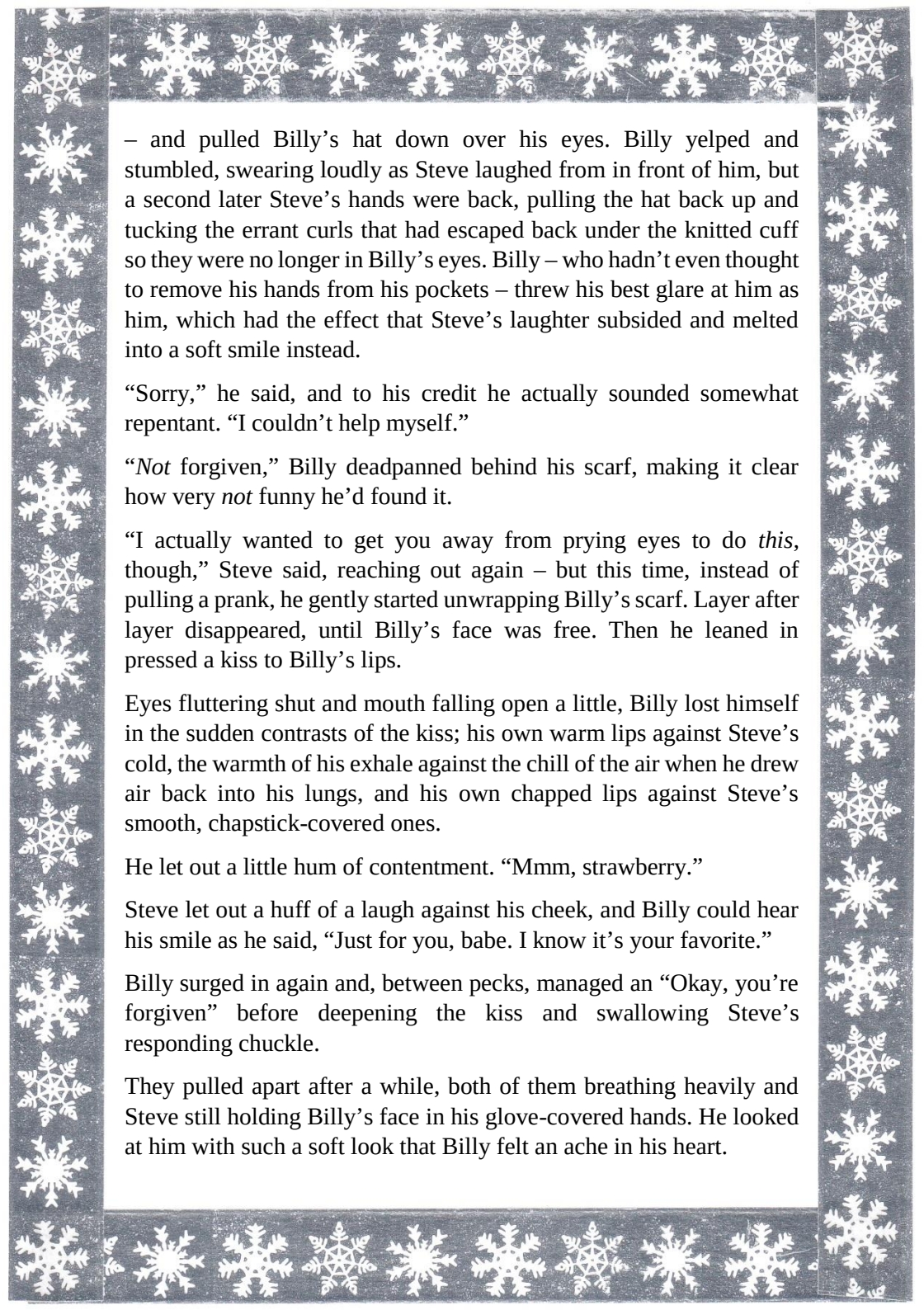
"Where are you taking me," he said, too cold to bother to make it into a question.

"For a walk," Steve replied. "Like I said, moving will make it easier for you to relax, and if you relax more then you won't be as cold."

It sounded like it made sense, but moving right not sent stabbing pains up Billy's frozen feet, so he wasn't convinced. Perhaps Steve noticed, because he added, "I'm also taking you out of sight from the kids."

And indeed, they'd made their way behind some trees, and while they could *hear* the kids' voices and shouts from their ice skating shenanigans, they could no longer see them. "Oh?" Billy perked up at the possibility of some alone time, even out here in the snow. "Why?"

"To do this," Steve said and reached out a hand –



– and pulled Billy’s hat down over his eyes. Billy yelped and stumbled, swearing loudly as Steve laughed from in front of him, but a second later Steve’s hands were back, pulling the hat back up and tucking the errant curls that had escaped back under the knitted cuff so they were no longer in Billy’s eyes. Billy – who hadn’t even thought to remove his hands from his pockets – threw his best glare at him as him, which had the effect that Steve’s laughter subsided and melted into a soft smile instead.

“Sorry,” he said, and to his credit he actually sounded somewhat repentant. “I couldn’t help myself.”

“*Not* forgiven,” Billy deadpanned behind his scarf, making it clear how very *not* funny he’d found it.

“I actually wanted to get you away from prying eyes to do *this*, though,” Steve said, reaching out again – but this time, instead of pulling a prank, he gently started unwrapping Billy’s scarf. Layer after layer disappeared, until Billy’s face was free. Then he leaned in pressed a kiss to Billy’s lips.

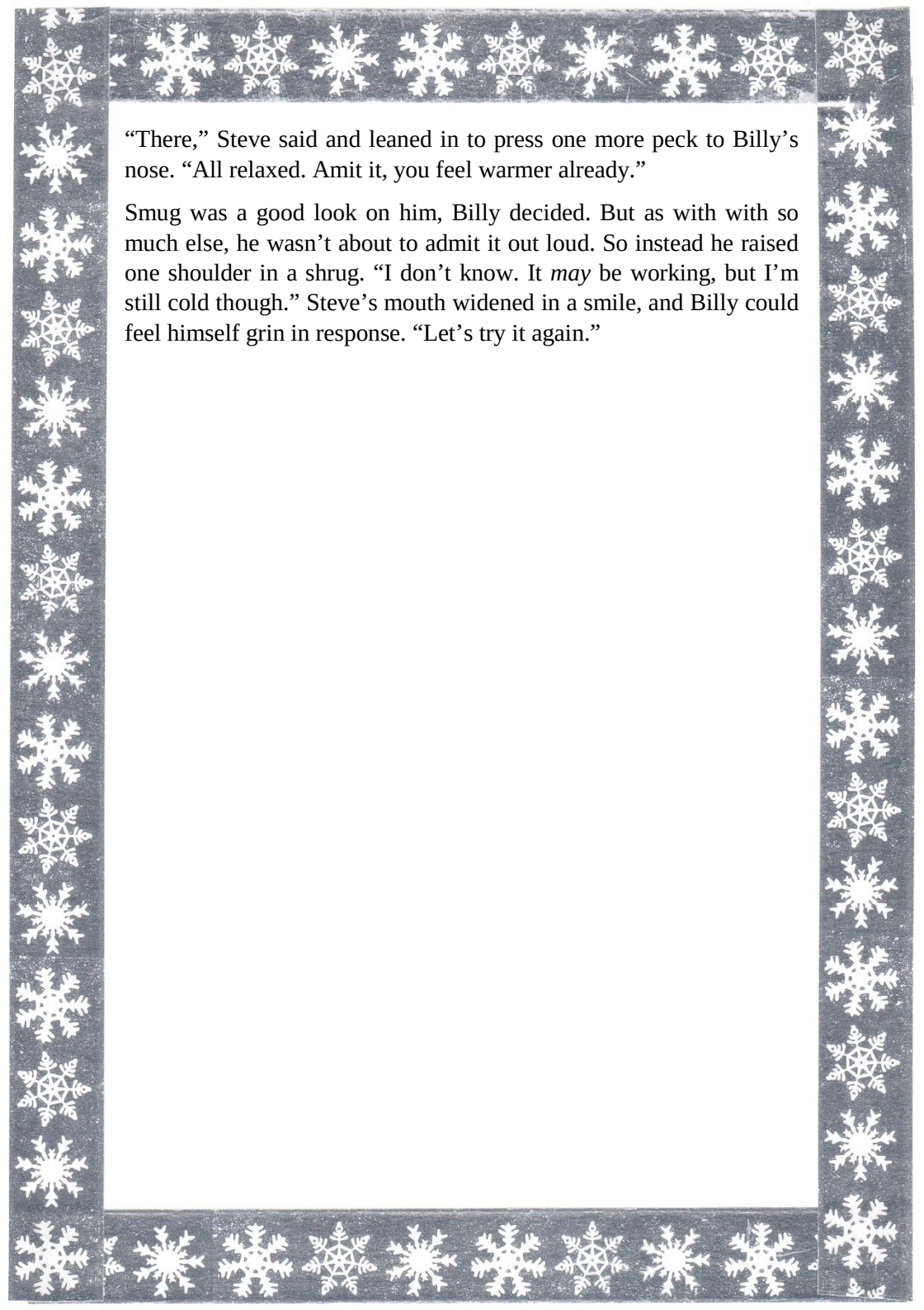
Eyes fluttering shut and mouth falling open a little, Billy lost himself in the sudden contrasts of the kiss; his own warm lips against Steve’s cold, the warmth of his exhale against the chill of the air when he drew air back into his lungs, and his own chapped lips against Steve’s smooth, chapstick-covered ones.

He let out a little hum of contentment. “Mmm, strawberry.”

Steve let out a huff of a laugh against his cheek, and Billy could hear his smile as he said, “Just for you, babe. I know it’s your favorite.”

Billy surged in again and, between pecks, managed an “Okay, you’re forgiven” before deepening the kiss and swallowing Steve’s responding chuckle.

They pulled apart after a while, both of them breathing heavily and Steve still holding Billy’s face in his glove-covered hands. He looked at him with such a soft look that Billy felt an ache in his heart.



“There,” Steve said and leaned in to press one more peck to Billy’s nose. “All relaxed. Amit it, you feel warmer already.”

Smug was a good look on him, Billy decided. But as with with so much else, he wasn’t about to admit it out loud. So instead he raised one shoulder in a shrug. “I don’t know. It *may* be working, but I’m still cold though.” Steve’s mouth widened in a smile, and Billy could feel himself grin in response. “Let’s try it again.”



Art by deatbyotpin123

Lot of cleavage for work

By lorifragolina

When the community pool closed in winter, it seemed to them a good idea to apply for jobs in the new diner just at the side of the highway.

Billy didn't want to deal with people, so he took the cook position, while Heather was more than happy to work as a waitress, because she thought the uniform enhanced her figure and she was good with people.

They had just opened and the property was still searching for another waitress, so they waited expectantly that morning, when they had been told the new girl would start.

The bell over the door jingled.

"Hello, and welcome to Griddle Gossip diner, how can I help you?" Heather greeted the boy who just entered. They knew him, the infamous Steve Harrington from high school, with his luscious hair, cheeky smile and a narrow waist wrapped in tight jeans.

"Hello, I'm the new waiter, they said you were waiting for me."

Billy was frozen in the door to the kitchen, the spatula in hand and with his mouth open.

"They didn't say..." Heather murmured, as shocked as Billy even if for totally different reasons, while Steve headed with confidence to the locker room, taking the spare apron with the heart neckline.

He smiled at Billy. "Hey Billy. Nice to see you again," he winked, tying the apron over his open shirt and hiding his chest only partially. Billy blushed and dropped the spatula and couldn't pick it up from the ground until Steve went with Heather to the cash register.

The owner of the diner also owned Scoops Ahoy, and they hired Steve for the diner in the winter months. And it was immediately clear that Steve knew how to deal with people, especially a certain kind of customers. The diner was always full of teenage girls and stay at home moms, and during the evening it filled up with families where the women kept winking and purring at him. Heather had her own fan club, but apparently they were able to keep things more or less professional.

Billy spied discreetly from his little window, peeking at people and eavesdropping on their conversations, and in the calm moments when he was grilling only a couple of patties, he found himself enjoying the view of the new captains of the school basketball and swimming teams, who were both tall and well-shaped seniors who came to the diner after practice with almost all the members of both teams, all pretty and hot guys. They were chatty and funny, and they stayed there at the diner for a long time. Too long, he noticed after a couple of weeks. They were there every other day, cheerfully entertaining the waiters. Both the waiters, apparently.

"I got two soups of the day and a cheeseburger with ranch on the side, order in, Billy," Steve winked at him chewing his gum and smiling with those lips that were too shiny to be natural. He gave the little paper to Billy, who stared at him, unable to think.

"Hey, hey sleeping beauty!" Heather snapped her fingers in his face, looking annoyed.

Billy jumped.

"Are you ok, Billy?"

"Is...is he wearing lipgloss?" he babbled, while the patties on the grill started to quietly smoke a little too much.

"Oh, for Christ's sake!" snapped Heather, walking away.

“Billy, what do you think about these new uniforms?” Heather turned around showing the new pink shirt the owners had given to the waiters, with a shiny zipper in the center and a matching skirt. “I love the color,” she continued, tying the new apron, in a darker pink with polka dots and a lovely bow on the heart neckline.

Billy nodded, starting his work in the kitchen while sipping the first cup of coffee of the day. It was almost the opening hour, but as usual Steve was late, leaving them to do all the hard work.

The bell jingled.

“Hi Steve, so nice for you to join us,” snapped Heather, tired of him always being late. She didn't look at him at first, busy arranging the chairs around the tables. “I hope you got the new unif...” she raised her eyes, and the words died in her mouth.

Billy heard her fall silent and raised his eyes too.

“Oh, shit,” he said, and nearly fainted.

“Hello,” said Steve while taking off his jacket to reveal the pink, stretchy shirt, zipped all the way down on his chest - less hairy than Heather could remember from the swimming classes, though - and tight on his hard nipples and showing the curve of his man boobs through the opening.

Heather didn't skip a beat, not impressed by all that sluttiness. “I see you're wearing the new uniform... looks nice on you, honey,” she said without smiling. Steve started smiling, but she continued. “If you think that it's not a lot of cleavage for work”.

Steve didn't seem to take offense and leant almost all his body on the window to Billy, batting those insanely long eyelashes that, again, couldn't be natural.

“I think they sent me the wrong size,” he pouted. “It's so small I can't close it, do you see?” He shook his shoulders, and Billy's jaw dropped.

The shirt wasn't too small, the fabric was more than enough to close the zipper all the way up. "I fear it could break if I force it too much, maybe you want to help me?"

Heather scoffed while Billy instantly forgot how to function, and he mechanically raised his hand to the zipper, and he found he was unable to use his opposable thumb.

"See?" Steve giggled. "It's too small," he took a spare apron that didn't really cover his boobs, and looked at Heather.

She raised a hand to stop him. "I wouldn't touch you with a stick," she growled, and Steve chuckled and went to work.

Billy was still there, in the kitchen, with his hand up and a idiotic expression, he couldn't even blink.

"It's too early in the shift to bear the slut and the dumbass," she snorted, throwing some napkins to where Billy was standing. "Here, mop up your drool or you'll slip and break a hip."

Steve showed off a lot that day, as he did every day anyway, but the new malfunctioning uniform was all the rage and he took advantage of it. Billy burnt more meals that he would like to admit, staring at Steve hanging out by the tables to tidy them up, the eyes of the customers darting up and down his cleavage.

"Really, Billy?" Heather sighed at the umpteenth delay in the kitchen. "I swear to Dolly, Billy, you need to get laid, and do it now, for Christ's sake, because he's throwing himself at the basketball captain right now."

Steve was leaning on the basketball team's table, winking at the captain who, along with half of the team, was barely capable of speaking and totally unable to take their eyes off of Steve's chest.

"Ok, I got a chicken soup, I have a grilled cheese, chicken fingers for my darling," Steve winked at the team's table, and pointed to the

captain with the pencil, “and you’re getting the Mac and Cheese. Order in, Billy,” he batted his eyelashes at Billy, indulging in staring at him a second longer than usual.

“There’s literally a pool of drool under that table, it’s indecent,” growled Heather, collecting her plates.

“It’s not...” murmured Billy.

“Oh, come on! Men! You’re all the same. Show a little breast and you lose all ability to think.”

Steve came collecting his plates too.

“Can I have five, honey? My tables are all done.”

Heather shrugged and nodded. Steve took off the apron, causing Billy to swallow his tongue, and smiled at him.

“A cig, Billy?”

Billy had to clean his throat. “Of course,” his voice was pitched high.

“Really, sweet Jesus,” Heather shook her head.

Billy smoked his cigarette in silence for a while. Steve didn’t say a word, but he was staring at Billy with a smirk, chewing his gum. Billy couldn’t take his eyes from the shadow of his nipples under the revealing shirt.

He felt like a mess with his white shirt, stained and sweaty, but Steve didn’t seem to care about that, and moved a little closer to him, clearing his throat. Billy took a last drag from the cig and threw it away.

Now or never, he thought, hearing the basketball team laughing inside. He finally raised his hands to Steve’s zipper. “Maybe I can help you now.”

He felt the heat of Steve’s body and had to focus a lot to not shake, but he could finally zip the shirt all the way up. He nearly fainted when

Steve let a little moan out and his nipples became hard and evident under the fabric.

“Oh,” Steve said, with a slutty smile. “It worked, so nice. But I think I’ll need help to unzip it later, at the end of the shift...” he purred.

Billy blushed furiously, but managed to stand firmly.

“I’ll be happy to help,” he babbled.

“I have more things to unzip,” continued Steve.

Billy blanked and grabbed him by his collar, dragging him closer, and he pressed a wild kiss on Steve’s glossed lips. It was cherry lip gloss, he thought, while Steve, caught by surprise, opened his mouth for Billy’s tongue.

Billy pressed his boner to Steve’s crotch, finding him with a massive hardon too.

“I’ll need help to unzip things too,” Billy smiled on his lips, when they parted.

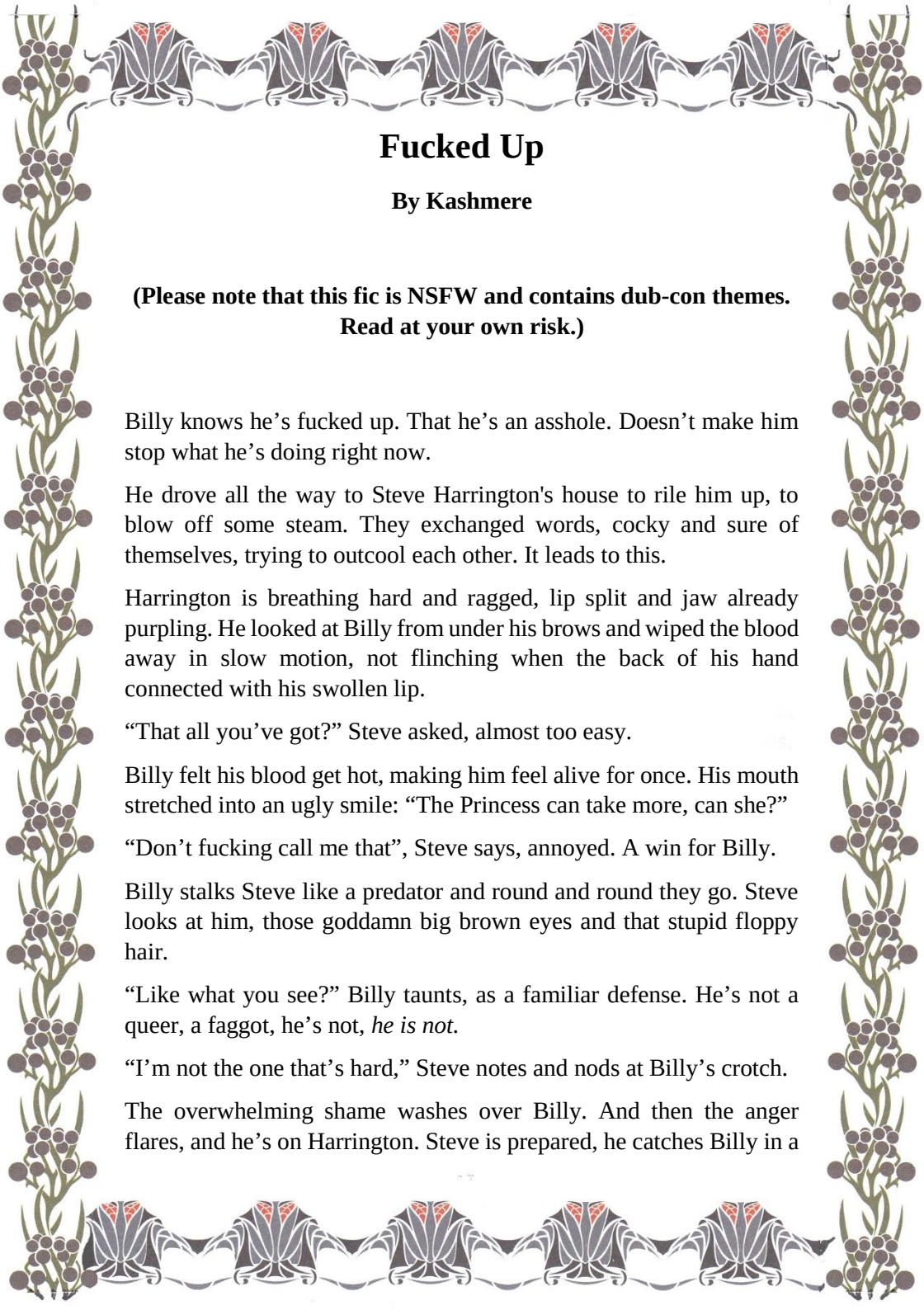
He turned to walk back inside and Steve followed him, hitting his delicious butt before entering.

Billy smiled, and Heather raised her eyes, but finally smiled, relieved.

Steve swayed his hips in when he went back out into the restaurant, then turned his head, chewing his gum, and gave Billy a wink.



Art by ValentineFairDesign



Fucked Up

By Kashmere

**(Please note that this fic is NSFW and contains dub-con themes.
Read at your own risk.)**

Billy knows he's fucked up. That he's an asshole. Doesn't make him stop what he's doing right now.

He drove all the way to Steve Harrington's house to rile him up, to blow off some steam. They exchanged words, cocky and sure of themselves, trying to outcool each other. It leads to this.

Harrington is breathing hard and ragged, lip split and jaw already purpling. He looked at Billy from under his brows and wiped the blood away in slow motion, not flinching when the back of his hand connected with his swollen lip.

"That all you've got?" Steve asked, almost too easy.

Billy felt his blood get hot, making him feel alive for once. His mouth stretched into an ugly smile: "The Princess can take more, can she?"

"Don't fucking call me that", Steve says, annoyed. A win for Billy.

Billy stalks Steve like a predator and round and round they go. Steve looks at him, those goddamn big brown eyes and that stupid floppy hair.

"Like what you see?" Billy taunts, as a familiar defense. He's not a queer, a faggot, he's not, *he is not*.

"I'm not the one that's hard," Steve notes and nods at Billy's crotch.

The overwhelming shame washes over Billy. And then the anger flares, and he's on Harrington. Steve is prepared, he catches Billy in a



tight grip and they fall to the ground, trying to rip into each other, leaving their mark, anything, anything, anything.

Steve is on top of Billy and it's unusual, he is superior to Harrington in power but he is tired from getting beaten into a pulp by that piece of shit of a man he calls his father.

Billy pants as Steve pins him down and he wants to cry, for a moment, being at the mercy of another and having lost, if only for a moment.

"Can dish it out but can't take it?" Steve laughs and it's high-pitched and manic.

And the rage makes Billy do the unthinkable. He grinds his pelvis to Steve's ass.

Steve lets go like burned and Billy is on top of him in a blink of an eye.

"Don't tell me that pretty boy is a virgin? No real man to pop your cherry in this shithole of a place?" Billy leers. He's mad, he has to be, to be doing this. Steve could ruin his reputation, and shatter everything he has built for himself in Hawkings.

Steve is flushed: "Fuck you."

"No, you," Billy hisses near to Steve's face. He can taste the other one's breath, its beer, and the crisp copper of blood.

It seems that Steve is mad too, for he does the unthinkable. He smashes their mouths together in an ugly parody of a kiss. But a kiss nonetheless.

Billy slots their mouths together and bites Steve's lip, making it bleed again. Steve lets out an 'ah' of pain and Billy takes it as an opportunity to slip his tongue in.

Steve's mouth is hot and wet and damn if it doesn't make Billy even harder. He grinds his hard-on against Steve's crotch and Harrington moans, letting Billy taste him.



And then Billy remembers, they're in public. Anyone could see. He grabs Steve's hair and man-handles the other one to his feet.

"What's wrong?" Steve pants, eyes glassy.

"We're not going to fuck here", Billy promises and Steve's Adam's apple bobs when he swallows thickly. Billy's eyes trace the movement and he licks his lips, mouth suddenly dry.

"What are you waiting for? Let's go", Steve says and walks into the house that is lit.

Nobody's home. It's weird, it's too much room. But Steve just throws a look in his direction and walks upstairs and Billy has no time to hesitate.

When they get to Steve's room's door they are again at each other. They are pulling at each other's clothes, biting and kissing and licking.

Steve falls to the bed and Billy is on him again, slipping his tongue into the other one's mouth. Steve answers in kind, nipping and licking.

Billy grips Steve's hair and rumbles: "I'm going to fuck you, Harrington."

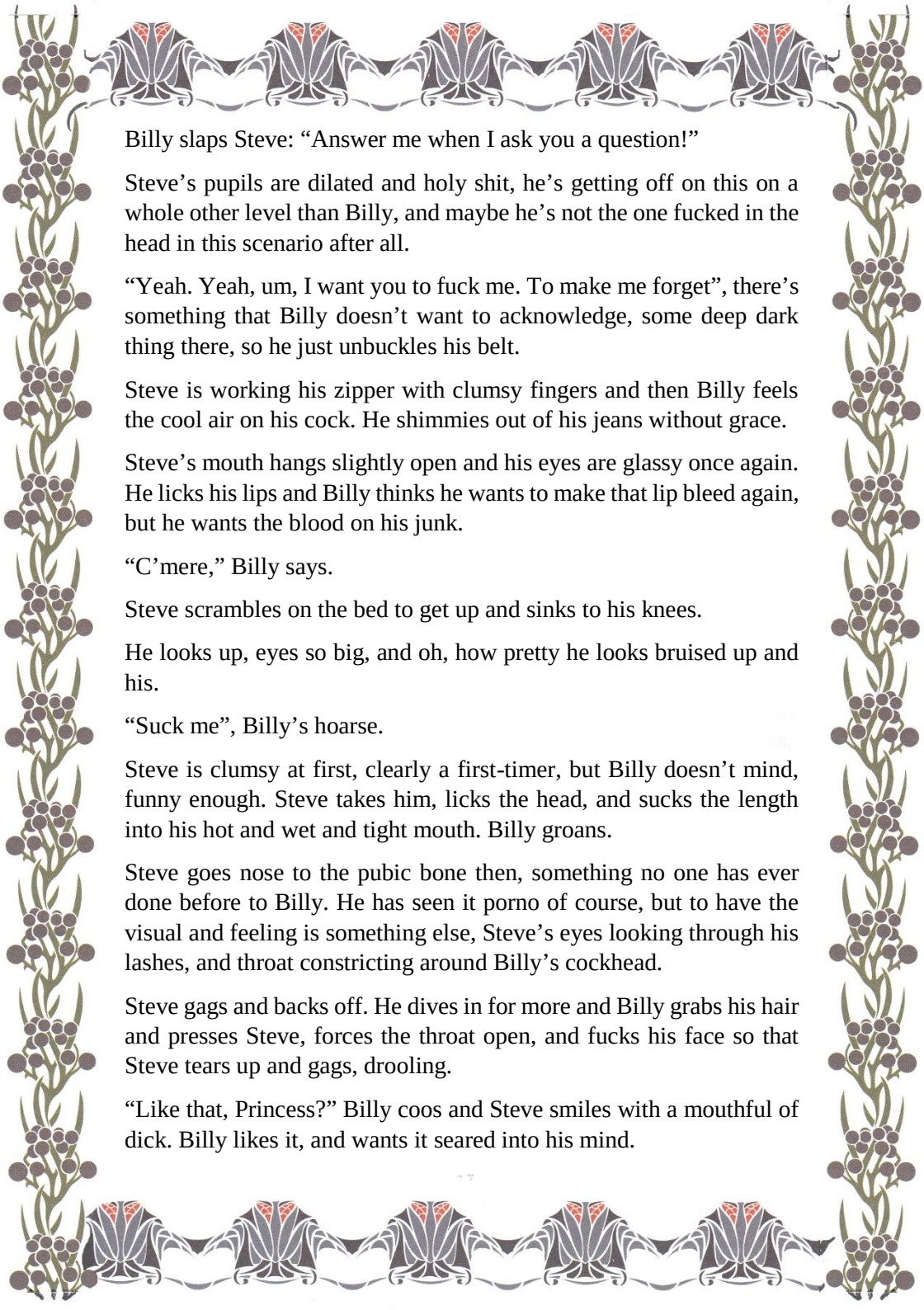
Steve goes pliant in his grip and moans.

Billy's mouth runs off without his mind as he continues: "I will make you forget anyone and everyone. The only thing you'll be able to think is me."

Steve exposes the vulnerable flesh of his neck and Billy bites it. Steve whines and rubs himself against Billy, hands weak and gripping at his biceps.

"You like that? To be taken like a bitch in heat?" Billy lets his voice be on that side of mean but Steve just grins.

What they are doing is not something they could tell their friends about. It's fucked up, just like Billy, it's not something anyone would be able to understand. Or at least that's what Billy thinks.



Billy slaps Steve: "Answer me when I ask you a question!"

Steve's pupils are dilated and holy shit, he's getting off on this on a whole other level than Billy, and maybe he's not the one fucked in the head in this scenario after all.

"Yeah. Yeah, um, I want you to fuck me. To make me forget", there's something that Billy doesn't want to acknowledge, some deep dark thing there, so he just unbuckles his belt.

Steve is working his zipper with clumsy fingers and then Billy feels the cool air on his cock. He shimmies out of his jeans without grace.

Steve's mouth hangs slightly open and his eyes are glassy once again. He licks his lips and Billy thinks he wants to make that lip bleed again, but he wants the blood on his junk.

"C'mere," Billy says.

Steve scrambles on the bed to get up and sinks to his knees.

He looks up, eyes so big, and oh, how pretty he looks bruised up and his.

"Suck me", Billy's hoarse.

Steve is clumsy at first, clearly a first-timer, but Billy doesn't mind, funny enough. Steve takes him, licks the head, and sucks the length into his hot and wet and tight mouth. Billy groans.

Steve goes nose to the pubic bone then, something no one has ever done before to Billy. He has seen it porno of course, but to have the visual and feeling is something else, Steve's eyes looking through his lashes, and throat constricting around Billy's cockhead.

Steve gags and backs off. He dives in for more and Billy grabs his hair and presses Steve, forces the throat open, and fucks his face so that Steve tears up and gags, drooling.

"Like that, Princess?" Billy coos and Steve smiles with a mouthful of dick. Billy likes it, and wants it seared into his mind.



Steve has kept his hands on the sides of Billy's thighs, leaving half-moon marks of his nails behind. He still has his boxers on and he is humping the air in little jerks, trying to get any kind of friction but not getting any. Billy could tease Steve about that but he doesn't. Doesn't want to.

Billy's had enough, he yanks Steve off of his dick and Harrington keens at the loss and Billy shushes him. He bends down to kiss Steve and can taste his precum on the other's tongue. Steve's lip is a mess of spittle and blood, it's delicious.

"Let's get you on the bed, Princess," Billy is almost tender and Steve doesn't say anything, just lets Billy maneuver him on the bed, on his back.

"What a pretty picture you make," Billy says and yanks Steve's boxers down. Steve sucks in a sharp breath when the erection springs free.

"Fuck," Billy says and he's wrecked, working both of them in his hand, comparing size and thickness.

Steve is flushed to his chest and he throws his head back. Billy presses against him, hot skin on skin, working them in slow jerks. He kisses Steve's bruises and love bites.

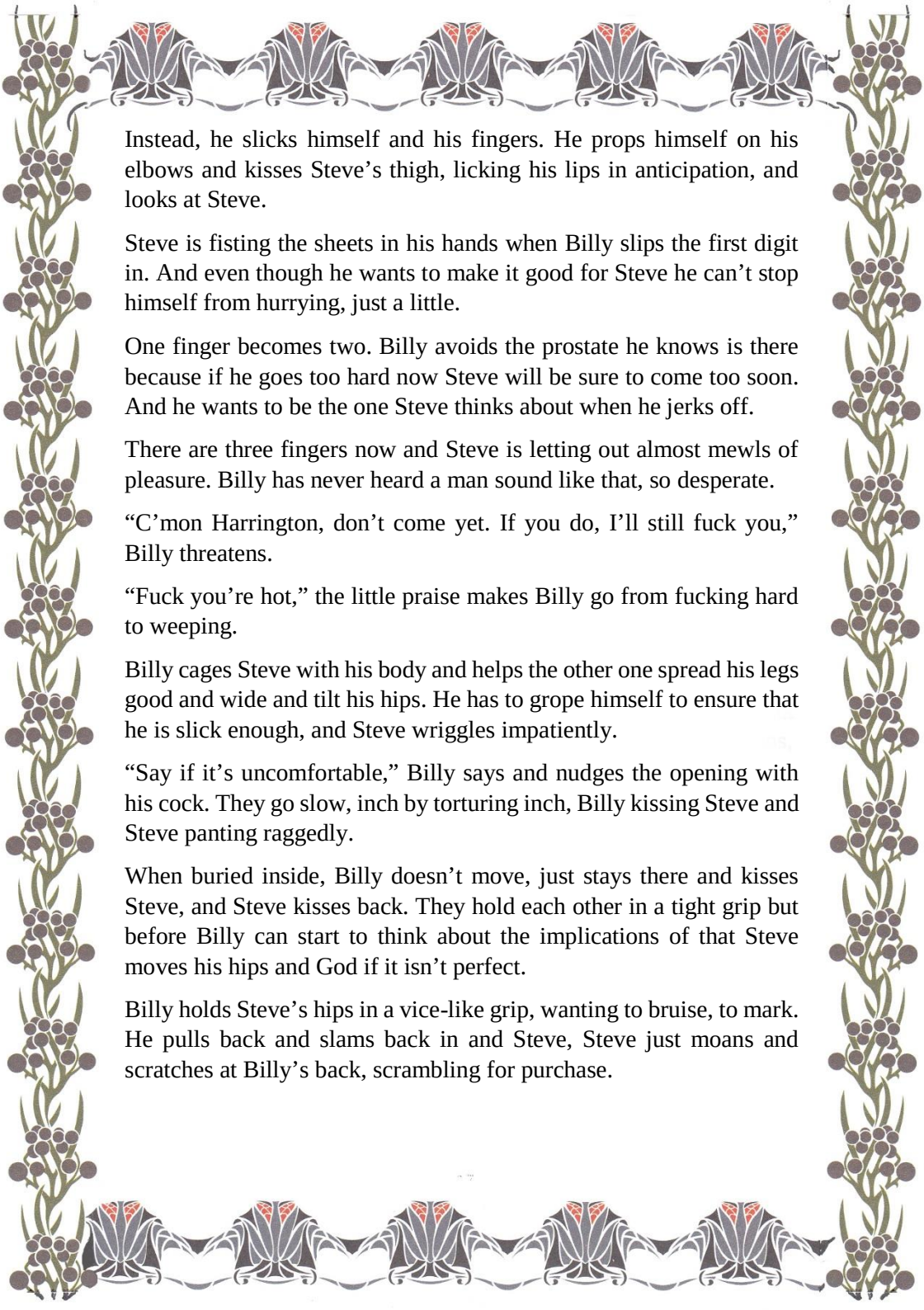
Steve says something but Billy is almost too lost to hear it.

"What?" Billy asks, dazed and confused.

"Fuck me," Steve shudders in Billy's hand and clearly has to hold off to not come.

"Okay, okay, I'll... Do you have anything to make it easy?" Billy is suddenly nervous. He wants it to be good, he wants to be Steve's first and best. How ridiculous.

Steve digs for a lubricant from underneath his pillow and Billy wants to whistle. But he's too horny to do that.



Instead, he slicks himself and his fingers. He props himself on his elbows and kisses Steve's thigh, licking his lips in anticipation, and looks at Steve.

Steve is fisting the sheets in his hands when Billy slips the first digit in. And even though he wants to make it good for Steve he can't stop himself from hurrying, just a little.

One finger becomes two. Billy avoids the prostate he knows is there because if he goes too hard now Steve will be sure to come too soon. And he wants to be the one Steve thinks about when he jerks off.

There are three fingers now and Steve is letting out almost mewls of pleasure. Billy has never heard a man sound like that, so desperate.

"C'mon Harrington, don't come yet. If you do, I'll still fuck you," Billy threatens.

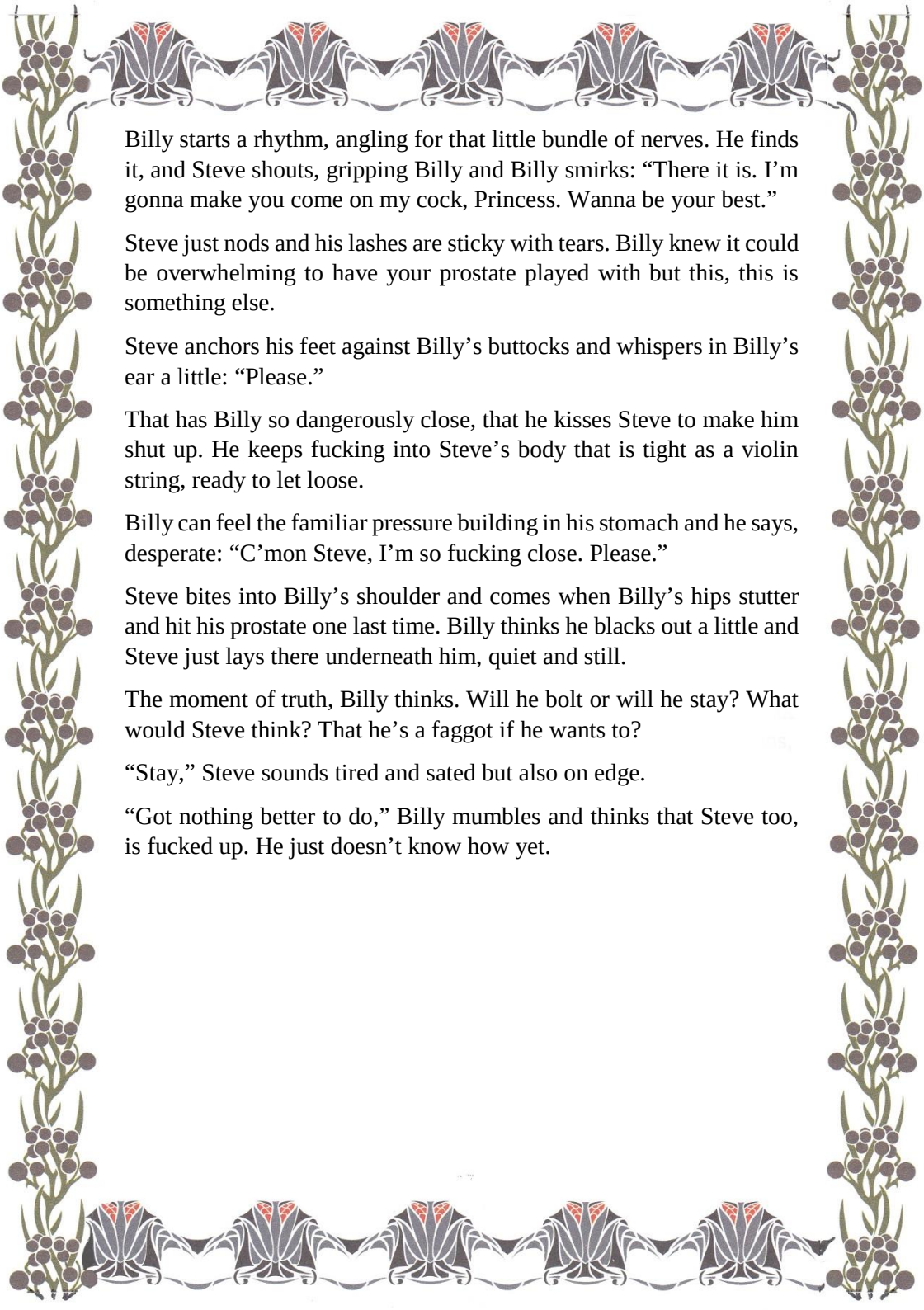
"Fuck you're hot," the little praise makes Billy go from fucking hard to weeping.

Billy cages Steve with his body and helps the other one spread his legs good and wide and tilt his hips. He has to grope himself to ensure that he is slick enough, and Steve wriggles impatiently.

"Say if it's uncomfortable," Billy says and nudges the opening with his cock. They go slow, inch by torturing inch, Billy kissing Steve and Steve panting raggedly.

When buried inside, Billy doesn't move, just stays there and kisses Steve, and Steve kisses back. They hold each other in a tight grip but before Billy can start to think about the implications of that Steve moves his hips and God if it isn't perfect.

Billy holds Steve's hips in a vice-like grip, wanting to bruise, to mark. He pulls back and slams back in and Steve, Steve just moans and scratches at Billy's back, scrambling for purchase.



Billy starts a rhythm, angling for that little bundle of nerves. He finds it, and Steve shouts, gripping Billy and Billy smirks: "There it is. I'm gonna make you come on my cock, Princess. Wanna be your best."

Steve just nods and his lashes are sticky with tears. Billy knew it could be overwhelming to have your prostate played with but this, this is something else.

Steve anchors his feet against Billy's buttocks and whispers in Billy's ear a little: "Please."

That has Billy so dangerously close, that he kisses Steve to make him shut up. He keeps fucking into Steve's body that is tight as a violin string, ready to let loose.

Billy can feel the familiar pressure building in his stomach and he says, desperate: "C'mon Steve, I'm so fucking close. Please."

Steve bites into Billy's shoulder and comes when Billy's hips stutter and hit his prostate one last time. Billy thinks he blacks out a little and Steve just lays there underneath him, quiet and still.

The moment of truth, Billy thinks. Will he bolt or will he stay? What would Steve think? That he's a faggot if he wants to?

"Stay," Steve sounds tired and sated but also on edge.

"Got nothing better to do," Billy mumbles and thinks that Steve too, is fucked up. He just doesn't know how yet.

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Winter 2025

