

House (NG style)

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Submitted: May 30, 2007

Updated: July 21, 2007

My flagship fan char gets involved in House.

This series will be more racy than my other stuff. If it's popular enough, I'll keep it going.

What to look for: mild sexual themes, mild swearing.

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0 - Pilot

NOTE: I wrote this in April, so that will explain the "April Fools" references. Be warned, this is going to be less mild than my other fics. If you take offense to ANYTHING AT ALL, let me know, and I will delete the offensive part. Keep in mind, I'm trying to write a TV-14 rated fic, so there will be language and MILD sexual themes, nothing that should be offensive. But, like I said, if it is, let me know.

-NG

Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. Dr. Gregory House, Board-Certified Diagnostician, rolled over. He looked at the buzzing cell phone. Reaching for his Vicodin, he answered. "What?" The sweet of Doctor Allison Cameron greeted him. "House, age 20, male, exhibiting signs of dementia and displacement." "Probably drunk. He has some skanky blonde with him, right?" Silence. "...Yes, he has a BLONDE with him. What does that have to do with" "I'll be there. Have Chase keep an eye on him." House slapped the phone shut. He reached for his cane.

Doctor Lisa Cuddy, the Dean of Medicine at the hospital, greeted house as he walked through the door. It was brutally early, about 4:30 am or so. "Good morning sunshine." She said sarcastically at House's dreary look. "With you, it always is." House said sarcastically. "Funny. You've got a patient, and at 8:00, clinic duty." "Sorry, can't, hurt my leg. I have a note." Cuddy rolled her eyes. House limped to the elevator.

"Dementia isn't treatable. Something else is causing the symptoms." Dr. Eric Foreman pointed out. "It's treatable with exercise and a good diet." Responded Dr. Robert Chase. Foreman was an African-American, in his late twenties or early thirties. His specialty was neurology. Chase was a younger Australian, who was a practiced Intensivist. "I don't think it's the dementia, if he even has it. Probably just drank too much." Dr. Cameron answered. House burst into the room, swiping the white-board marker from Foreman's hand. "House, you look awful! Didn't you sleep?" Cameron asked. Despite House's anti-social tendencies, Cameron was nice to him. "You know me, Booze and Broads. Now, what are the symptoms?"

"You'll be okay." Amber assured "Wild" Bill Johnson. "I know. Sorry about the party." "Don't worry about it, you just make sure you get well." The two began to kiss, avoiding the IV. House walked in. He rapped his cane on the end of the bed. The girl jumped off in shock. "Who the hell are you?" "I'm the doctor who's gonna save your @\$@ so you and your little "Friend", wink wink, can get back to procreating." House took another Vicodin. "You're a Doctor?" The girl asked in a questioning tone. "No, I'm just here to make sure the patients don't make out in a sterile environment."

"He doesn't have dementia." House announced to his team. "What? How can you tell?" Questioned Foreman. "He remembered last night." "So?" Chase inquired. "Dementia goes hand-in-hand with displacement. He shouldn't be able to find his @\$@ with his hand." Cameron shook her head while Chase and Foreman exchanged exasperated glances. Their pagers suddenly buzzed.

The patient was jolting violently in the bed. Dr. James Wilson was yelling for "10cc's of Nitrosoureas,

STAT!" "What happened here?" Cameron sputtered as she helped the nurses restrain him. "Check his X-rays. Have House order a Lumbar puncture and a Liver Biopsy."

Another patient was waiting for House in an exam room. He was eighteen years old, maybe 5'8 height, and thin. He seemed nervous. House walked in. "What's wrong?" House said flatly. "Anxiety. My old medication isn't working, I've taken it as prescribed, and now as a side-effect I'm having chest pains." He said. House tapped his clipboard. "Hmm, you've done your homework. Alright, give me your arm and put your thumb up your" "HOUSE!" Cuddy yelled. "Ruh-roh..." House said in a Scooby-Doo impression. "Go help your other patient, I've brought Cameron in to handle this." "Aw, I was just having fun. You know, kind of like when you wear your tennis outfit." Cuddy pointed to the door. "I'm sorry sweetheart, this must be scary for you. How old are you?" "Eighteen." The patient said. "I know you don't believe me, it's okay. Here's my ID" He handed her a college ID. "I'm sorry. Are you okay with having a female doctor check you out..." The kid opened his mouth, then shook his head. "I'm sorry, I was going to crack a joke, but you probably get enough of that with him." He nodded toward the door. "You are so right." "He's smart, though." Cuddy nodded. "Well, I'll have Cameron come in then."

The kid sat back, nodding. He took a pill. "Prescription, helps me calm down." He said, by way of explanation. "Paxil?" Cuddy asked. "Clonopin." Cameron walked in. "Hi, I'm Dr. Cameron. I- are you okay?" "Sorry, I always get nervous like this. I, um, don't like to take my shirt off, that's part of it." "Well, this won't take long. Why don't you tell me what's wrong, and we'll go from there." "I have Anxiety disorder. My medication doesn't work and...Oh hell, I stopped taking it. I'm having chest pains, and occasionally, shortness of breath." Cameron jotted it all down. "Alright, let me run a couple tests. Would you lie down on your stomach? It helps calm your nerves. I don't know if the sight of blood bothers you, but I need a sample."

"The seizure was from too much alcohol. Where do you go college?" "Southern California. What does that have anything to do with it?" "I'm just wondering where you got super-babe here." The girl gave him a look. "What? It's a compliment." "House, will you knock it off? Look, when was the last time you slept?" Cuddy exclaimed.

Cameron reached over him to get the vial. The door opened, catching her foot. She fell on top of him in a way that looked wrong. "Hi, I'm Dr. Chase, I'm here to- what the hell?" Cameron got up. "I thought we- I come in here, and your getting your rock's off on THIS guy?" "Chase, I told you, uncomplicated sex between you and me. No one else. The door knocked me into him." Cameron dropped the vial. "Damn it! I'm sorry about this." "No worries." She bent over, accidentally displaying her chest. He had been facing away, but had turned his head, then looked away quickly, embarrassed. Chase was looking daggers at the kid. "Got it. What?" The kid was doing his best not to look surprised. "Now you're showing him your boobs? What are you doing? Robbing the cradle?" Chase shouted. "This kid is jail-bait!" "It was an accident! I didn't kn" "He's eighteen, you wise-@\$\$! It was an accident!" "Accident my @\$\$." Chase mumbled. "Speaking of asses, get yours out of here!" "No, I'm making sure nothing else happens. This little pervert here..." "Damn it Chase, I told you..." Cameron decided to piss Chase off a little bit. But she needed that kid's permission first... "Well, I'm going to have you admitted, just for a day or so. You just need an EKG, but I want to monitor those chest...pains." She stretched out the word "chest" to make Chase jealous.

"Okay, here's the deal. You had a seizure because you drank too much and haven't slept. Take some

of these happy pills, and get some sleep.” “Thanks. What are these?” “Candy, called Ambien cr.” Suddenly, Foreman raced in. “House, keep him here. Wilson’s found something.”

“So you’ll help me out?” Cameron asked. “Sure. It’s a little...akward...I’ve never...done anything like that before.” “You’re in college, and you’re nice looking, it’ll happen.” She said with a laugh. “Here he comes.” Cameron pushed her lab jacket off, and pulled one sleeve of her shirt down so it was off her shoulder. She sat on the patient’s lap. As Chase walked in, she was kissing him, pulling his shirt off, while he had his hand on her chest. She stroked his back, forcing his head closer. “DAMN IT! I DON’T BELIEVE THIS!” Cameron got off the kid suddenly, who looked dazed. “Chase, I’m sorry. But he’s soooo incredible! I never knew sex could feel like that! He may be small, but he packs a wallop!” On her cue, he put a hand on her butt. She laughed and ran a hand down his chest. “You want to hang around with pre-pubescent teenagers, you do that.” Chase stormed out into the hallway, glaring at the two of them. Cameron turned around, laughing. “Thanks for helping me.” “Gladly. Are you sure it was okay to do that?” “What, are you gonna tell on me? Besides, we didn’t actually do any of that stuff, which I’ll describe to Chase in detail.” She paused, smiling mischievously. Then she narrowed her eyes, keeping the smile in place. “You know, you really are as innocent as you seem, aren’t you. Was that seriously your first kiss...and touch?” The kid nodded. “The girls were never my type at school, and college girls are a little...” “Hormone-y.” Cameron finished. “Yeah.”

Wilson was studying the Xrays. “Look right there House.” Wilson pointed. “Either you spilled coffee on the Xray, or that’s a tumor. Benign?” Wilson shook his head. “I don’t know. Lumbar Puncture will tell us.”

“I don’t believe it! She was in his room, making out with him!” Chase fumed. Foreman and Cuddy were in on the joke. “Well, sorry man. Cameron’s a cute girl, and she has a thing for the underdogs.” House barged in before Chase could give a retort. “Chase, I heard a patient nailed your girl.” Chase stared, open-mouthed. Cameron twirled her hair, nearly cracking her ribs holding in her laughter. “Anyway, I need Foreman to do a Lumbar puncture, Chase, you check the blood samples, Cameron, you tend to your patient. Cuddy, you tend to me.” Cuddy gave House a look. “House, As far as I am concerned, your job is to work with medicine, not make crude jokes to me.” House made a face. “Sorry, it’s just that lab coat is such a turn-on.” “You’re a bastard House.” She said. “Bastards need love too.” He said dryly.

“Okay, you ready?” Cameron asked the kid. “Are you sure about this?” he asked. “Positive. Okay, slide over, quick.” She tossed her lab coat and shirt on the floor and rolled on top of the kid. “Put your arms around me.” She whispered. He did, nearly flinching at her almost bare back. “Okay, sit up.” He did. She ran a hand down his chest, pretending to kiss it. She laid on top of him, burying her face in his neck. “Put your head in my chest.” She said. “WHAT?” “Trust me, not for real!” He did as he was told. Chase walked in with a stack of papers. He dropped them. “WHAT THE HELL! KNOCK IT OFF!” Chase yelled. Cameron finally burst out laughing. She got off the stunned college boy, and pulled her shirt back on. “Chase, you need to know something.” She said. “Yeah, like what is so damn funny? And, why shouldn’t I kick his @\$?” “This was a joke. I put him up to it. We never did anything. April Fools Chase!” Chase put a hand to his head. “Doctor, I’m sorry about that. But I couldn’t say no. She was really helpful.” “In what way?” Chase asked, eyebrows raised. “Well, I was a virgin, and wow, I never thought losing something could be so fun!” He cracked up along with Cameron. “Seriously, now. The EKG showed nothing. He’s got anxiety. Chase, you’re the neurologist, can you handle this?” Cameron asked. “I don’t know if I’ll be as entertaining.” Chase said, finally admitting the joke was funny. “The

anxiety will probably go away on it's own. Try Zoloft in the mean time, I'll write a prescription. But before I do, be honest with me: Did you two..." "No. She told me about you, and I respect all of you. She asked me to go along with it as a joke on you. She didn't even kiss me for real." Chase shook his head. "I owe her one. Alright, here you go." He said, handing him a prescription. "Thanks. Oh, by the way, I'm working here as a security guard. If I were you, I'd keep an eye on Cameron." He said with a wink. Chase gave him a look that said plainly "Don't try anything."

"Good news, bad news time. Bad news: You have cancer. Good news: It's treatable. In other good news, may I congratulate Cameron on an excellent prank." Cameron looked at him. "Who told you about that?" "No one." "Are you watching me?" "You have such a nice @\$\$, that's why I hired you. Any moron can go to med school, but most of them aren't hot." Cameron left in exasperation. "We'll start you on the chemo tomorrow. You'll be good as new in a week."

House was limping out to his motorcycle. "Dr. House! Hold on a second!" A security guard ran up. "Thanks for your help last year. Diagnosing the anxiety." "Yeah, great." "Well, this is for you. Custom made. It took a year to get here." The college kid that Cameron had used as "bait" handed House a package. "Goodnight House. Drive safe." House tucked the package into a nook on his motorcycle.

Cuddy marched over to the security guard. "Is he watching?" "Yup." She motioned Cameron over. The both hugged him. Chase and House both raced up, looking to kill him. "Relax! You two are suckers!" Cuddy said. "April Fools." "Damn it, they did it again!" Chase exclaimed, still grinning. The college kid gave them a look. "How do you think I feel? I've never been kissed before, and no girl will touch me because of anxiety, and that damn conscience of mine..." Cameron ran back. "Thanks for the help." She kissed him on the cheek. Cuddy walked up. "Here's your prescription. Oh, and, great job. When do you graduate med school?" "In a few months Ma'am." "Well, you'll have a position here, pediatric medicine. Dr. Schultz is retiring, and he recommended you." "Schultz? No kidding? Tell the Professor I said hi." "Will do." She kissed him on the cheek. Chase and House exchanged glances. "You're gonna be a doctor? Why didn't you say anything?" Chase asked. "Too much fun watching you sweat it out. Seriously, you two are lucky." He reached down to take a pill, then realized there was liquid in it. "What the hell?" Chase and House hi-fived. "April fools. Would you bring that up to Dr Midereator? You know, the old-person doctor? He'd like Gladys' urine sample back."

1 - Baptism by Fire

NOTE: EKYT IS GOING TO ASSUME THE NAME "DR. DANIEL HOLMES" for the series when talking with people.

The college kid hit a snag in his life. He asked for an appointment with Dr. Lisa Cuddy, the head of the hospital.

Dressed in a black suit, with coat and a red tie over a white shirt, the college kid (Now EKYT!) knocked on Dr. Cuddy door. "Come in." She sounded hassled.

"House, for the last time. Yes, you have to do clinic duty. No, you can't perform the MRI on the person with the metal plate in her neck." "You're cute when you're angry." House said, making a puppy-dog face. "Out, House. I've got a meeting with a patient and a staff member." Ekyt strode into the room. "Dr. House." "You're the practical-joke happy kid. Better watch your back Cuddy." Lisa pointed at the door. "Out." House limped out.

Cuddy shook her head. "Ekyt, I'm surprised you needed to see me. What can I do for you?" She could see the young man was troubled. "I can't handle any more school right now. I need to change my major anyway. But that's the problem. I want to help. I'm a security guard, but I want to be more than that. I know you can't take me if I'm not a doctor, but." "Slow down." Cuddy smiled at him. "You're a great kid, and I have no doubt you'll go far in whatever field you choose." **This is where I get fired...** Ekyt thought. "That's why I want you here." Cuddy finished with a smile. Ekyt looked up at her. "I CAN help you, if you're willing to do me a favor." "Of course, name it." Ekyt responded. "Give a speech on anxiety disorder to this grade school." Ekyt didn't really see how that would help, but he agreed. "Come see me when you're done."

Dr. Robert Chase, an Australian fellow with wavy blonde hair and a boyish look, stared at his laptop. "You're kidding." He muttered in his thick accent. "What?" asked Dr. Allison Cameron. "This new patient...54 years old...acute obsessive compulsive disorder...he's coming in with a leg that's hurting for no apparent reason." "So?" Cameron asked, taking a sip from the mug of coffee in her hand. "He's being transferred to us in a sedated state because he can't accept new environments...he lives at home with his 80 year old mother, never held a job..." Cameron felt her heart kind of thud. "Poor guy..." "Since we're short a neurologist, I'll handle this. Can you write up a report for House?" "Yeah..." Cameron answered, distracted.

Cuddy bustled into the room. "Cameron, do you remember the college student you used for that April Fools joke on Chase?" Cameron laughed at the memory (See the pilot episode). "Yeah, why?" "He was just in my office, nearly in tears. Things aren't working out for him. So I need to ask..."

House limped down to the cafeteria to meet Doctor James Wilson, an oncologist, and House's only friend. They moved through the line, piling the crappy food on their trays. "Cuddy's on my case again. Something about "Doing my job right." Wilson coolly informed House that "You haven't filled out a clinical report in two years, and you treat the patients like crap." House retorted by saying "That wasn't

in the job description. This job, much like your marital problems, can get tiring.” Wilson shook his head in exasperation. “House, you butt into my personal life, and then complain about it? My last wife bought so much Pravda, I was nearly broke.” “You wouldn’t know a Pravda shoe if it kicked you in the scrotum.” House spat.

The students clapped at the end of the speech. Ekyt gave them a small smile. Afterward, he was pulled aside by the principal. “If you wouldn’t mind, could you give me the address of the hospital you work at?” Ekyt did. “Maybe you could run a “Coping with Anxiety” group.” Ekyt thanked him for the praise and headed back to the hospital.

“Chase, do you have a moment?” Cuddy asked. “Sure, what’s the problem?” “I need to ask you something about the college kid that Cameron used to play that joke on you.” Chase rolled his eyes. “Just answer honestly. And DON’T tell House.”

Chase helped the 54 year old man, “Bob”, and his mother in. Bob was shaking and repeating that he “Couldn’t do it. It’s wrong.” “It’s okay, we’re going to help Bob. Just take it easy.” Chase wheeled his wheelchair to the elevator, while Bob kept yelling he couldn’t do it and that “The whole place is dirty! Help me mom!”

Ekyt returned to Cuddy’s office. He didn’t know what to expect. “Come in.” He stepped inside. Cuddy got up from behind the desk. “These are for you. But there’s more.” They were letters of recommendation from Dr. Robert Chase and Dr. Allison Cameron, for a position in their diagnostics department. The confusion was plainly written on Ekyt’s face. Cuddy smiled broadly and handed him an official-looking paper. “Congratulations...Doctor.” Ekyt stared at his honorary doctorate for his speech about living with anxiety. “You start tomorrow, and report to Doctor House. Any que-..” Her beeper went off. “You start now, by helping Chase restrain a patient. Welcome to your baptism by fire Ekyt. Glad to have you.” “Thank you.” Cuddy handed him a pager and a long white lab coat. “Third floor, sterile rooms.”

House felt his pager go off. “Gotta go. The kids need me.” He said sarcastically. He left and limped away at top speed, leaving a flustered Dr. Wilson to take care of the check.

Chase was wrestling a bucking patient into his bed. “I need that Epidural!” Chase barked. Ekyt raced in and managed to grab one of the patients flailing arms as the needle was put in. The patient kept flailing. “It’s subconscious! He’s having a seizure! Pad his tongue! Get me the Trileptal!” Chase yelled to the nurses. Cameron raced in next. The sedatives were taking hold, and the Trileptal. “Concussion from the fall.” Chase confirmed as Cameron checked the man’s eye lids for a difference in pupil size.

House barged into Cuddy’s office. “I’m not taking him.” House said flatly. “Yes, you are. He’s gotten letters of recommendation from myself, Chase, and Cameron. You’re out a neurologist, and you have no bedside manner.” “He’s not a neurologist! He’s a psych case himself!” “Then he knows how to deal with it better than anyone! House, for once, trust me. If nothing else, give him the crap work you used to heap on Foreman.”

(Doctor Eric Foreman, neurologist, left for another job.)

Chase and Ekyt, sweaty from the effort of restraining the patient, both their ties loose, pushed into

House's office. "Fifty-Four years old, Acute OCD, unexplained leg pain, and seizures." Chase informed House and Cameron. House wrote the symptoms on his white board. "You." He pointed at Ekyt. "You've got clinic duty." Ekyt nodded and left the room. "Okay, for you remaining doctors. What would account for all of these symptoms?" "The OCD is self-explanatory, maybe the seizures were a reaction from the violent environment change, or a reaction to the combined medication." Chase offered. "That doesn't explain the leg pain." protested Cameron. "Are you mocking me?" House asked sternly, holding up his cane. Cameron, taken aback, "No, I was just..." "Kidding. I was kidding. Chase, you break into the house and check for toxins. Cameron, you get a medical history. I've got nude pictures to organize."

Ekyt walked out into the clinic. Cuddy looked surprised to see him. "House gave you clinic duty. And, wonder of wonders, these are his hours." She let out an exasperated sigh. "Well, there shouldn't be anything that doesn't take common sense. I'll leave you to it. If there's a problem, page me." "Gotcha."

Ekyt had exam room three. A mother walked in with her young son. "He keeps coughing, and won't stop. Sneezing, and a fever." Ekyt looked at the kid. "Okay, raise your shirt, let me hear your heart." Ekyt listened with a stethoscope. Nothing out of the ordinary. The kid coughed again. "Have you given him any medication?" Ekyt asked. The mother seemed surprised. "No, I never thought of it." Ekyt began to realize why House hated clinic duty. "Try Robitussin. It's over the counter at any drugstore." He wrote down the name. "Thank you."

House barged into Bob's room. Bob pulled the covers over his face. "I'm Dr. House, I'm in charge of your case." House held out his hand. Bob couldn't take his hand, which House knew ahead of time. "We're going to schedule you for an Angiogram." Bob shook, and smoothed the covers on his bed. "What's an Angiogram?" "It's where he stick a tube in your leg and see what's hurting you." House said, sarcastically. "No! No! I can't do it!" "I figured this would happen." House pulled out a syringe and jabbed into the man. "WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO TO HIM?" his mother yelled. "I tranquilized him."

Another patient walked into exam room three. "Hi, um, I have this rash..." "Okay, where, and how long have you had it?" "It's on my...you know...I've had it for a week or so..." The man dropped his pants. Ekyt squeezed his eyes shut, REALLY hating this. "Hmm. Okay, have you scratched at it?" "Yes." "When did this appear." "I'm not sure when exactly, but after my friends and I went skinny-dipping." "Where did you go?" "It's a hidden swamp." "What you have there is a mosquito bite. Try some Caladryl (sp).

Ekyt was ready for his next patient when Cuddy came in. "You're needed in diagnostics after lunch. I'll handle the rest of clinic duty. Why don't you take a lunch break? I've arranged for Dr. Wilson to show you around."

Dr. James Wilson is an oncologist for the hospital. "You must be Ekyt. You're working with House and you haven't quit yet?" "He's smart. I could learn a lot. But I can see why'd you say that." "Yeah. So, what's your title?" "Good question. I work in diagnostics, but I'm not a doctor, save for an honorary doctorate. I guess I'm supposed to be the bedside manner." Wilson considered this. "What area are you interested in?" "Neurology...that, and pediatrics." "Hmm...Oh, I've got to congratulate you for that awesome practical joke on Chase! It had all of us in tears." "It was all Dr. Cameron, I was just the bait."

He laughed. "Tell me though...what do you think of Cameron?" Ekyt didn't hesitate to say, "She's beautiful, intelligent, and taken." Wilson laughed again as they both dove in to their sandwiches. "She thinks a lot of you...Chase too. I can see why. Wait...that twitch...you have anxiety problems, don't you?" Ekyt nodded in the affirmative. They finished their crappy hospital food. "If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask me." "Thanks..." "Call me Wilson. We all go by last names here. I already heard from Cuddy that you go by "Ekyt," which we've already picked up isn't your real name. Welcome to the team."

"Concussion, OCD, not related to the seizure and the hurt leg. What caused a seizure and a hurt leg?" House asked his team. Ekyt and Wilson rejoined them. "Cancer?" Wilson offered. "Came back negative." Chase answered. "Blood clot?" House offered, looking at Cameron. "Aniogram was negative." Ekyt looked at House. "Boy wonder has a guess?" House asked in mock amazement. "Well...what if this wasn't his first seizure...He could have had one he wasn't aware of, and banged his leg up. Since the guy has been from hospital to hospital in that cast, it's likely his muscles atrophied." Cameron, Chase, and Wilson looked amazed. "Good guess...and not entirely wrong...he had a seizure he didn't know about. His mother saw it happen in his sleep. He banged his leg, but it had healed. The muscles atrophied, but that doesn't account for the pain." Ekyt and Wilson sat down, staring at the white board. "A small break that the MRI missed?" Ekyt suggested. "No, the MRI would've gotten that. It's more likely diabetes. He doesn't eat right or exercise." Chase argued. House suddenly rapped his cane on the table. "The OCD won't allow him to change his routine...he probably eats the same thing at the same time every night. Let's see...new guy, go break into his house." Cameron objected. "House, he's never done that before!" "Fine, you go with him. Chase, you try to get more information out of the Monk wannabe. I'm going to tell his mother that the diabetes is going to kill her son's leg if he doesn't start eating right. Wilson...how about getting me a sandwich?" Wilson rolled his eyes, but walked out.

"We'll take my car." Cameron said to Ekyt. "Good. I don't drive." He returned, looking rueful. "The anxiety?" "Yeah. If I have a muscle spasm while I'm driving, I might hurt someone...or worse." Cameron really gave the kid credit for trying to live a normal life. As if he sensed it, Ekyt apologized. "I'm sorry, I don't want to complain. I'm one of the lucky ones." "You're entitled to complain, it's not an easy thing to deal with." "That means a lot..." "Call me Cameron." "It means a lot Cameron. People either don't believe me, don't want to help me, or don't know how to help me. This is the place." Ekyt pointed at a brown house. "Do you have a credit card?" He asked Cameron.

Bob's mother, Grace, was sitting at his bedside. "Good news, bad news time. Good news: We know what's wrong. Bad news: He's out a leg. More bad news: You have to change his diet, or risk death." "He won't change his diet. And there's nothing wrong with it besides. Now, what do you plan to do with his leg?" "Well, I'm going to have it cut off." "You can't!" the woman exclaimed, hysterical. "That or he dies, your choice. I'd say "I'll wait" but by then the disease will have made the decision. I can give you two hours."

Ekyt borrowed a credit card from Cameron. After a minute of poking at it, he jimmied the lock open. "You take the kitchen, I'll take the bedrooms." Cameron dictated. "Okay."

The house was immaculate. That was a sign of OCD for sure. Cameron browsed the bedroom, finding nothing out of the ordinary. "These people live in a sterile environment." Cameron commented. "That rules out infection." "I'm going to take a water sample, and...Cameron, check this out!" Ekyt had opened a cupboard. Bags and bags of chocolate had fallen out. "Diabetes?" he asked. "Unless the

water is bad. Let's get this stuff back to House."

Ekyt and Cameron returned. Chase looked frustrated. "He wouldn't talk to me at all. I kind of lost my temper at the end." Ekyt handed over the chocolate and water sample. "The amount of chocolate and its sugar content would indicate diabetes. The water looks clean, but I think it's best to run a tox screen." House gimped his way in. "Well, anything little gerbils?" "Chocolate. Tons of it." Cameron handed him the back. "This is so sudden. Wait, you were hitting on me, right? You naughty little thing!" "And here's a sample of the tap water, we're going to screen it for toxins." "Good, do that. Chocolate indicates diabetes. If that's the case, he loses his leg in less than two hours." House pointed his cane at Ekyt. "You go talk to the guy. You're the "bedside manner" here. Cuddy's pet." House muttered. As Ekyt left, Cameron shot a look at House. "What?" House asked. "How about giving him a little respect? He's working hard." House pointed at his file cabinet. "See all those?" "Yeah." "This is my "respectful" drawer. I'm sure I put his name in there..." "House, don't be an @\$\$!" "Sorry, born this way." House took a couple more Vicodin. Cameron shook her head, but went back to work.

Ekyt met Wilson outside. "He's always a wiseass isn't he?" Ekyt asked. "Oh boy. What'd he do?" "Apparently, I'm "Cuddy's pet." Wilson laughed. "He says that about everyone who tries to do their job the right way, by the book. Let me guess: He gave you his clinic hours." "Yeah. He had Cameron and I break into a house, and now I've got to talk to this guy." Wilson laughed. "I'm sorry, that just is House, dead-on." Wilson walked with Ekyt to the room. "Well, good luck." "Um, I'm supposed to use a different name...you were right about Ekyt not being my real name. I'm supposed to call myself "Dan Holmes." (NOTE- NOT MY REAL NAME, LOL) Ekyt's pager went off. He looked at the text, his face falling. "Damn." "What?" "I've got to tell him that if we don't cut his leg off, he's dying." "Isn't that House's job? Never mind. Do you want any help?" Wilson asked. "Would you mind just observing, and let me know how I did? House says you tell people they're dying all the time and they actually thank you. In more ways than one?" Ekyt raised a questioning eyebrow. "House...is just as God made him. A bastard." Ekyt laughed slightly, then knocked on the door.

"Come in." A woman's voice rang out, with a morbid tone. Ekyt, er "Dr. Holmes", walked in. "You're Mrs. Lowell?" "Yes." "I'm Dr. Dan Holmes. I need to speak with you and Bob." "Of course. You seem to be a damn sight better than that "House" person." Wilson had to look away, coughing suspiciously. "I'm sorry. The diabetes test came back positive. We have to amputate his leg." "NO!" "I understand why you're upset. But, please, if he doesn't lose his leg, he'll lose his life." Ekyt made firm eye contact with her. The woman was crying. "I know this is hard, but we need your consent."

(IF YOU WATCH HOUSE, YOU KNOW THAT THEY ALWAYS PLAY MUSIC AT THE END DURING THE FINAL SCENES. SO I'LL HAVE A TRACK PICKED OUT AND IT'S BEGINNING AND END POINT.)

(Start track: Teardrop by Massive Attack)

House watched as they wheeled Bob into surgery. Dr. Cameron, Dr. Chase, and Dr. Wilson would be performing it. He spun his cane around, twirling it between his fingers. He watched them administer the anesthesia. House heard footsteps. His new intern, he guessed, Ekyt, walked down the hallway, watching the surgery. "Morbid situations turn you on?" House asked. "Dr. Holmes" shook his head. "No. I just came to congratulate you on being right." "I know. Why don't you do your job, and go comfort the grieving mother." House said, still watching the surgery. Dr. Holmes nodded. "I'll do that.

Here. As a thanks for putting up with me.”

House opened the package. It contained a collapsible cane. It was obviously expensive. House took a couple exploratory laps with it. His journey led him to where Dr. Holmes was comforting the mother. He watched as the new “doctor” held her hand as they started to saw at the bone. House grimaced inwardly, but limped away.

(End track)

2 - Smoking Joker

Holmes (Ekylt) put a pot of coffee on. He took a long gulp from the cup of strong regular coffee he already had. The diagnostics office was empty, save for the light from his desk lamp and monitor screen. It wasn't strange since it was 2:00 am. Dan didn't want House to resent his presence. So he had pulled an all-nighter learning neurology. It was some deal Dr. Cuddy had cut with the University of Rochester, which was the most prestigious school nearby. But he would have done it anyway. About four hours later, Dr. Cameron walked in.

Cameron: Good morning

Holmes: Good morning Dr. Cameron

Cameron: How long have you been here?

Holmes: (Counts cups of coffee) I'd say, judging by how much coffee I drank...all night.

Cameron: House's busy work?

Holmes: No, working on my degree. Dr. Cuddy worked out a deal with a college that if I intern here, I'll get my degree in Neurology and Pediatrics. Maybe Psychology.

Cameron: You pulled an all-nighter studying? (impressed)

Holmes: Yeah. I really want to be good at this. I know House doesn't trust me...

Cameron: He doesn't trust *anyone*

Holmes: Yeah, but I don't want to give him any more reason not to

Cameron: ...

Holmes: I'm sorry, would you like some? (Holds up coffee pot)

Cameron: Sure, thanks. So, what are you looking up?

Holmes: Studying previous cases that diagnostics has handled. I've got a lot to live up to.

Cameron: You'll do fine. You're smart, and you've got a great attitude.

Holmes: Thanks. Without you and Chase recommending me, I wouldn't be anywhere. It meant a lot.

Cameron: I meant every word.

Holmes: (Smiles, straightens tie and pulls sleeves down, and brushes his hand through his hair. He's had a long night of studying). Thank you.

In a convenience store...

"Hands up chump!" A man in all black yelled. The pimple-faced clerk raised his hands. "Hand me all the cigarettes you have!" "C-Ci-g..." The kid gurgled. "You heard me!" The kid collapsed, coughing. "Good choice chump." The man in black grabbed the cash register drawer and as many cartons of cigarettes as he could carry.

A few minutes later, a middle-aged African-American woman walked in. She screamed. "Oh my God!" She called 911 on her cell phone.

Back at the hospital...

Holmes yawned, downing another cup of coffee. Chase walked in next. "Morning Chase." "Hey Holmes." "Coffee?" "Sure, hit me." Chase mumbled as he looked at the schedule. "Damn, I forgot! I've got that seminar today! In Hackensack!" Chase turned to Holmes. "You and Cameron gonna be alright today?" Holmes nodded. "No problem. No House today?" "His day off." Chase explained. Holmes shrugged. "I'll just catch up on paperwork then, since Cameron's got clinic duty." Chase gave him a look. "I'm sorry. Cameron seems to like you." He observed, somewhat questioning. "There's nothing between us Chase. We're co-workers." Chase nodded. "Sorry. I get a little defensive." "I understand." Chase looked around. Somehow, Dan Holmes seemed like someone he could talk to. "Her and were together briefly...one night. I just get a little worried that she might end up...you know... "with" someone, on the rebound. I just don't want her hurt." Holmes nodded. "Chase, I meant to thank you for the letter of recommendation." Chase grinned. "No problem. This way I can keep an eye on you." He joked. "I'm tricky, better watch out..." Holmes warned, grinned back.

Cameron looked at the 12 year old boy with his mother in the waiting room. "Well, hi! What seems to be the matter?" she asked, friendly. "He's "massaging" himself constantly, and is starting to" "Whoa, your boobs are huge!" (NOTE: IF THIS IS OFFENSIVE, PLEASE LET ME KNOW, I WILL REMOVE IT! IT'S FOR STORYLINE PURPOSED ONLY, NOT MEANT TO BE PERVERTED!) Cameron's smile wavered a little. "Thank you. Now" "Are they real?" "Jesse!" His mother exclaimed. "I think I can tell what's wrong, and it's perfectly normal." Cameron assured her. "Puberty." The mother's face dropped. "Oh...oh...that DOES make sense...Thank you." Cameron forced herself to smile.

Wilson came in to diagnostics. "How's it going "Holmes?" Holmes leaned back. "I pulled an all-nighter studying, and more paperwork today. But I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy it somewhat." "Did you check the time? Lunch Time." Holmes looked at his watch. "Geez, you're right." "Want to go grab something? I normally eat with House, when he's not making me pay for it." Holmes laughed. "Sure. Let me just ask Cameron if she wants anything." Wilson smiled at that. "What?" Holmes asked, surprised. "Seems you like her, that's all." Wilson put his hands up in mock fear. "I do. She's great at her job, friendly, and she recommended me." "That's not what I meant." Wilson said, still smiling. "What DO you mean?" Holmes asked, seemingly puzzled. "I think you know." Pause "See you in the cafeteria."

Holmes went to find Cameron. He found her sitting in the employee lounge. "Cameron? I'm going to lunch. Do you want something?" Cameron pushed her hair out of her eyes. "Sure. What are they serving today?" "Something they're calling steak. What it really is, I'm not sure." "That sounds good." "All right, I'll bring up. I'm not hungry today; I'm just going to keep Wilson company for a few minutes. Then I'll have your food up."

"What's good today?" Holmes asked Wilson. "McDonald's" Wilson grumbled, looking disdainfully at his processed meat. "I think I'll skip lunch today." "Me too, actually. I'm just going to bring this up to Cameron." Wilson smiled, but said nothing of it. Instead he said, "Well, if you two need help today, let me know." "Will do. Thanks."

Cameron was sitting in the diagnostics office. She was wearing reading glasses. Holmes couldn't help but notice that, with that frown of concentration, her features were even more pretty. Cameron glanced up. "Oh, sorry, I was reading this report. Thanks for getting the food for me. Let me pay you then." "No, that's okay." Holmes responded quickly. "Are you sure? I mean..." "No, I feel I should thank you." "Well, that's nice of you, I" Their pagers suddenly buzzed angrily.

Dr. Cuddy was standing over the bed in the emergency room. "Male, 17 years old. He passed out during a robbery at the convenience store he works at." Cameron took note of his cough. "Cameron, you get the patients history. Holmes, you keep an eye on him. I'm going to call his family." "Does House know?" "Not yet. If we need him, we'll page him. Oh, that's right. Holmes, Wilson is going to supervise you."

Holmes stood across the room, next to Wilson. "That cough is disturbing." It was constant, too. Hack hack hack. Then it stopped. Holmes rushed over. "NURSE!" Wilson raced over. "No pulse." Holmes informed him. "I'll operate the paddles. Try CPR until the nurse gets here!" Breath, 1-2-3-4-5 chest compressions, breath. Holmes pushed on the chest and forced air into his lungs, trying to get the heart restarted. "rate falling!" Wilson indicated on the monitor. The nurse rushed in the paddles. "Charging...clear!" Wilson put the paddles to the kid's chest. Zap! "Raising volts...charging...clear!" Zap! "Charging...clear!" Zap! Holmes looked at the monitor, which stopped beeping. "Heart rates rising...pulse is back." Wilson handed the paddles to a nurse.

Gregory House was playing his piano, expertly, when his pager buzzed. He ignored it for the first four buzzes as he finished the piece he was playing. He hobbled across the room to check it.

"Here's that report Dr. Cuddy." Lisa Cuddy looked up to find her new neurologist-in-training looking hassled. "What happened to you?" "All-night studying session, and then a heart failure on that case you gave us. Wilson got his heart going again. Chase is back, monitoring him and running a few tests. And Cameron paged House, so he should be here any time." Cuddy rubbed her temples. "Thank you. And, please, call me "Lisa" or "Cuddy."" "Gotcha." Holmes answered. "Well, head back to diagnostics for now. I'm sure House will give you some crap work." She smiled at his professional attitude as his lab coat swished out the door.

House was writing on his white board when Holmes came back in. "Glad you could join us." House had written "Cough, Heart failure, blackout" under a heading that said "symptoms." House continued. "Go play with the kids in pediatrics. Let the grown-ups handle this." Holmes paused for a second, but left

with a small nod.

House turned back to the board. "What causes a cough, heart failure, and blackouts?" "Auto-Immune?" suggested Chase. "You go get a blood sample, and run the test." House ordered. "What if the three aren't related? A cough indicates a cold or flu, which causes fatigue. Maybe the kid worked too hard?" "Doesn't explain the heart problem. Kids don't have heart attacks for fun like adults do."

Derek Michaels was sitting up, coughing, and cursing when he did because it hurt the burn marks on his chest. A blonde doctor walked in. "Derek, right?" he asked, in a thick Australian accent. "Yeah." Derek coughed. "That's a nasty cough. How long have you had it?" "Bout a week." Chase wrote that down. "Okay, let me see your arm. I just need a blood sample." Derek obediently raised his arm. House put the needle in. "That hurt?" Chase asked. "When are you gonna put the needle in?" Derek was looking the other way. Chase, looking slightly alarmed, poked his arm with the needle again. No reaction. "Derek, the needle was in you. You didn't feel it?" "No. *cough* Is that bad." Chase hesitated. "Could I get a phone number for your parents, or guardian?"

Cameron browsed through the possible diseases, infections, and viruses it could be. "AIDS is most likely." She concluded, snapping the book shut. House was tossing his tennis ball to himself. "Hmm." "House?" "Oh, sorry, I was just thinking about you nak- I mean" "Christ, give it a rest, will you?! This boy could be *dying!*" "We don't know that until the tests come back. Speaking of that, where is the Australian chap?" Chase made his appearance, bursting into the room. "He didn't notice when I stuck the needle into his arm." "Which means..." House prompted. "Bad circulation? That could be a collapsed vein, or a blocked artery." House wrote those on his white board. "Congratulations Cameron! You get the gold star for today!" Cameron couldn't help but smile at that. "Why don't you go see what our junior lackey is up to?"

"Alright, great job! Look at my finger." Holmes moved his finger back and forth, watching the child's eye movement. "Okay. No hernias, heart is normal, eye look good. I think you're set. Here, this is for the road." Holmes handed the little boy a lollipop. The boy licked happily as Holmes cleaned up. "Thank you Dr. Holmes." "It was no problem Mrs. Weinstein. You've got a really well-behaved son." "Thank you!" "Have a good day." Dan told her. "You too."

Holmes walked out, almost bumping into Cameron. "I'm sorry!" He told her. "No problem. House sent me to check up on you." "I'm not surprised. Did I pass inspection?" "You're great with kids." Cameron told him honestly. "I used to coach and referee hockey, and I helped teach martial arts. Probably where I get it from." Cameron considered that for a moment. "Hmm...do you have a guess on this case?" Cameron explained the symptoms. "Well... I don't have a guess. Does he have a history of heart problems? Or does he smoke?" Cameron shook her head. "No one's asked him, he's been in and out of consciousness all day. And his parents don't know, but of course they believe he's an angel, or course." Holmes laughed at that. "Hmm, he's close to my age. Most of the guys my age are anything BUT angels." Cameron decided to bring him to House.

"He could get answers we can't! They're close to the same age. There's the built-in teenage rebellion, too." House rested his chin on his cane. "If you think Yoda there has the force with him, go ahead." Dan Holmes made no indication that he even heard the sarcasm. "I'll have a report for you in a few minutes."

Derek was talking with his mother when Dr. Holmes knocked on the door. "Derek, right?" Derek nodded. "I'm Dr. Holmes, you can call me Dan." Turning to Derek's mother, he said "Could I talk to him alone for a few minutes?" "Anything you can say to him you can say to me." His mother was a heavysset woman, in her late thirties. Her muumuu did nothing to make her look thinner, and she looked incredibly stern. "It's very important to your son's health. I just need a couple minutes with him." "Listen here, young man" "Mom! It's okay. (cough)." She gave Holmes a hard look, but stepped out.

House was sitting in Wilson's office, eating his lunch. Wilson came in. "House, how did you get in here?" "Key." House held up a key. Wilson widened his eyes and shook his head. "And I'm just...going to go out on a limb and assume that's MY lunch you're eating." House looked at. "This could be anyone's peanut butter." Wilson sat down. "I assume you're here for a reason." "I think my new case has cancer." "That would explain the cough and the blackout, IF the cancer is in his lungs. But what about the heart problem?"

Holmes pulled up a rolling stool. "Be honest. I'm not going to tell your mother. And I'll be honest in return: If you lie, your life is at risk." Derek gulped hard. "What do you need to know?"

House was pointing at his whiteboard when Holmes walked back in. He handed house a stack of notes. "He's a smoker, has been since fourteen. The males in his family have had heart problems, going back several generations." "Schedule him for a tox screen and a lumbar puncture. I'm going to enjoy the remaining two hours of my day off." House limped off. "What he didn't mention is that it's the neurologist that does the lumbar puncture..." Chase muttered. "Wilson could do it. Chase, can you handle the tox screen?" Cameron asked. "Sure." Chase asked. Turning to Holmes, she said "Thank you for the help. Would you assist Wilson?" "I'll give it a try." Cameron stopped him. "Hold on...what does that mean?" "I admit I'm...anxious over it." Cameron smiled, somehow relieved. "You learn to get used to it. You've had so much heaped on you in the first two days." "I'm fine, really." She noticed a small twitch in his hand. She held the hand that was shaking. (Holmes' neck turns red). "The first time a girl held your hand, right?" Holmes nodded, his mouth dry. Cameron let go, realizing she held on longer than she meant to.

Wilson and Holmes were ready. "Okay, I'm going to have you numb the area." Holmes did. "We inject in" "between L3/L4 and L4/L5." Holmes finished. "Right. And the patient is in..." "A...fetal position?" Asked the neurology intern. "You got it." Let's go ahead and do the procedure. You monitor his vitals and talk to him, while I insert the needle.

"We know he has cancer. But that doesn't account for everything...The history of heart problems...what disease was it?" "It was hypertension." Holmes responded. "That doesn't explain everything either. Now, my little ducklings, what goes with hypertension?" "Stress?" Chase offered. "Kids are always stressed, they just don't have heart attacks because of it. We're missing something..." Cameron put her head in her chin, thinking. House Suddenly figured out. "Hypertension. In conjunction with the cancer. He didn't pass out at the gas station, he had a heart attack. One so mild we didn't notice it. The heart attack was caused by the hypertension, and Thromboangiitis Obliterans, or Buerger's disease. Common among smoking jokers. They get their tobacee fix, but they pay for it...usually with a leg, but in this case, an arm. Wilson?" Wilson checked the test results. "I think we've caught the cancer early enough. Six monthes of chemo. The Buerger's, though, unless he quits smoking cold-turkey..." "What about steroids?" Cameron asked. "They haven't been proven effective." "But it's worth a shot." They

both looked toward House. House raised his eyebrows. "I'm flattered you want my opinion. Do both."

(Start track: Hotel California by The Eagles)

Holmes, Cameron, and Chase watch as Wilson begins the first chemotherapy treatment. Holmes went over to talk to Mrs. Michaels. Her expression softened, finally showing tears.

Cameron watched Holmes comfort her, telling her he would be fine. Chase grinned mildly. "Another job well done." He said in a joking manner. "Yeah..." Cameron looked over at Holmes once more as he walked away, Mrs. Michaels finally calming.

House was in his office, twirling his cane, thinking about God knows what. Holmes came in. "You needed to see me?" House stopped twirling his cane. Without a word, he handed Holmes his new ID card. Dr. Daniel Holmes. Diagnostics.

Wilson watched Dan Holmes show his new badge to Cameron. He grinned and nodded as she shook his hand. He mentioned something about "Grabbing some food." Cameron agreed.

(End Track Hotel California)

3 - Dark as the Night Sky

Cameron and Holmes walked out to the parking lot. Holmes was wearing his shirt and tie. Cameron was dressed in a white blouse and black skirt. They were discussing the Michaels case, when discussion turned to how House treated Holmes. "He's like that to all of us, but he's treating you pretty rotten." Cameron told Holmes, who kind of shrugged. "He doesn't think I belong there. He's right. I'm not a full doctor yet." "YET." Cameron emphasized.

"House, I need that paper work." House was trying to get out of the hospital before Cuddy caught him. "Dr. Cuddy. Wow, I love the outfit!" Cuddy rolled her eyes. "It's summer House. Even deans of medicine are entitled to dress comfortably." "Yeah, but you don't normally get to see their fun bags." Cuddy put a clipboard in front of her chest, annoyed and flattered by the attention. "You have until the end of the week. If those papers aren't on my desk, you're doing double the clinic hours." House grimaced.

Holmes and Cameron were enjoying the food. The restaurant was a popular place, a mildly-priced chain that Cameron liked. Holmes had a shake in his leg that he was hiding from Cameron. He wasn't sure if this counted as a date. If it did, this was his first one. And Chase would kill him. The check came and Holmes snapped it up before Cameron even moved, and paid for it.

Cameron: You didn't have to do that!

Holmes: I asked YOU, therefore I should pay.

Cameron: Well, thank you. (Surprised.)

Holmes: Besides you drove.

Cameron: (smiling) You still didn't have to do this.

Holmes: I wouldn't have this job without you recommending me.

Cameron: Chase did too! When are you taking him out (Jokingly)

Holmes: (Grinning slightly, jokingly) Two good-looking guys going out?

Cameron: I see your point. (laughs)

Cameron leaned across the table to kiss him. Holmes wasn't sure what THAT meant, but when whatever it was that was about to happen was put on hold when they heard a THUD! Behind them.

A thirteen-year-old boy, dressed in all black, mascara, and multiple piercings had just collapsed. Cameron sprang up and checked the boy's vitals, while Holmes yelled for someone to call an ambulance. He kept everyone away until the EMT's got the boy on a stretcher.

House ignored the growing pile of paperwork on his desk, watching his mini-tv. Chase set down a mug of coffee. "Thanks. You know, you'd make a great maid." Chase rolled his eyes before returning to his own cup.

Cameron and Holmes burst in. House looked up. "Where have you two been?! Chase has been worried sick! (mockingly serious) Cameron, did you steal his innocence?" Cameron responded with "Thirteen year old male, gothic-looking, collapsed at the restaurant we were at." Chase narrowed his eyes. "A date?" he asked, accusingly. Holmes piped up. "No Chase. I thanked her for the letter of recommendation, that's it. I would have invited you, but two good looking guys at table might come off a little wrong..." Chase had to chuckle at that. "Kids, kids! Don't make me give you all time-outs! Back to the case." Holmes pointed at Holmes. "Except you...I've got a ton of paperwork on my desk, why don't you use your magic and make it disappear?" Holmes nodded tersely, shedding his lab coat, rolling up his sleeves, and loosening his tie. Cameron gave House a disgusted look. "Hey, what are lackeys for?" House said innocently.

"My name is Damien." The goth-looking kid said stiffly. Chase and Cameron nodded, almost robotically. "Damien, we just need to know, did you feel anything before you fell over?" Damien shook his head. "No. I had gotten my forehead pierced earlier. But it's not my first piercing, so I don't know how it would be different." "Mind if I take a look?" Chase asked. Damien pushed his bangs out of the way. "No skin irritation...Okay, that's good. Does it hurt when I touch it?" Chase put a finger lightly to the piercing. "No." Damien answered. "Interesting tattoo. Is it new?" Damien nodded, then he pushed Chase's hand out of the way. He dove over the side of his bed and vomited multiple times.

"Our symptoms are vomiting and collapsing. Interesting mix." House wrote the symptoms on the white board. "What do we know about him?" "He's got multiple piercings, tons of tattoos." Chase supplied. "No skin irritation around the latest piercing, which he had gotten earlier in the day." Cameron added. House wrote that down. "You two put some thought into this. It's Monday. My extra-long lunch break day. Want anything?" "Coffee." Chase piped up. "Help yourself." House gestured grandly.

Holmes was about halfway through the stack of paperwork when Chase showed up. He dropped a mug of coffee at Holmes right side. "Thanks Chase." Chase started to leave, but stopped with his hand on the door. "I'm sorry about jumping to conclusions earlier. Cameron and I aren't together...I just get a little defensive." Holmes waved it aside. "I understand Chase. Can't say I blame you." Chase nodded and left Holmes to the paperwork. He decided to give Cuddy what he had done so far.

Wilson took a bite of his Reuben sandwich, chewing thoughtfully. House was drinking some coffee, watching tv. "You know House...that kid is interning with you. Have you actually taught him anything?" "Office politics. Got to learn that." House answered. Wilson decided to drop the subject, instead asking "How's that goth-kid doing?" House shrugged. "I don't know...I'll be back on the case after my third lunch...oh, say, three o'clock?"

Damien was quiet as Chase asked for a urine sample. "Sure." He went into the bathroom, but called for Chase quickly. The cup had blood in it. Damien vomited again.

Holmes knocked on Cuddy's door. "Come in." she answered. Holmes strode in, emptying his soft-sided briefcase on her desk. "What's all this?" She asked. "Some of the paperwork you needed."

Cuddy rifled through them. "House didn't do these...they're done the right way...no, they're actually done at all!" Cuddy looked up accusingly. "You did these, didn't you?" Holmes looked back, finally nodding. Cuddy shook her head, smiling despite her exasperation. "House dumped this on you?" "Pretty much. I don't mind, he's got that case on his mind." Holmes returned. Cuddy looked at the stack of papers again. "If this is what House has you doing...why don't you go ahead and skip Clinic hours?" "That's alright, I can handle it. I have an all-nighter in front on me anyway." Holmes explained.

Chase marched back into the diagnostics office. "Blood in his urine." He said, holding up the cup as proof. "Sounds like a bad eighties band." House quipped. "But it's significant. What do all these symptoms point to?" "Liver failure." Chase and Cameron said as one. "Run the tests, and get back to me. I've got some work to do. All that porn won't download itself." House commented dryly.

Holmes called out "Charles Dalton," a young boy who came into the exam room with his mother. He was clinging to his mother's hand, not making eye contact with Holmes. "He's been like this for a while. We thought he was just shy, but he'll start to shake, and hyperventilate, and have mood swings." The mother was almost in tears. Dan Holmes new all to well what was wrong. "Well Mrs. Dalton" "Call me Anne." "Anne, your son has a panic disorder." "How do- do you know without running any tests?" Holmes pointing to his leg, which was shaking. "I have it myself. It's a semi-common condition, but..." Holmes looked down at the boy. "Nurse! Can you watch him for a minute?" Nurse Gerry nodded, understanding. "C'mon, let's go play."

Holmes turned back to Anne. "It's going to be rough. And it's going to take time to get over it. If it ever goes away." "What can I do?" Anne asked. "Be patient with him, ease him into uncomfortable situations, and find a good school." "It's my fault, isn't it? I used to smoke and" "No. It's not your fault." Holmes told her firmly. He ran a hand through his hair. "I'm not going to promise you that it will ever go away completely. I've had it bad for thirteen years. But you learn to live with it. Just give him a lot of support. I'm going to prescribe Zoloft..." "Oh, he can't swallow pills." Holmes gave a bitter smile. "Neither can I. Zoloft comes in a liquid. Put it in some lemonade and it won't taste so bad. If you have any problems, the hospital has a group for support. And, if needed, you can call for me here, they'll get in touch with me." Anne thanked him breathlessly. Holmes watched, stiffening his face. The poor boy was going to be in for a rough life. Holmes had been there. Still was. He wondered, not for the first time, if it would ever go away...

"His liver is failing." Chase confirmed. House twirled his cane, deep in thought. "But the "why?" is the problem. Drinker? Smoker?" Cameron shook her head. "Neither." "Drugs, then. Every kid like that has a vice." "Just because he's goth doesn't mean he's bad!" Cameron argued. "Just cause Chase is rich, doesn't mean he spends money." That earned him a look from both Chase and Cameron. "So, the liver thing...what could cause that?" "Auto-immune. The body would start to attack itself." "Too sudden. The body shuts down gradually, not all in two days." Cameron argued. "Any toxins in his body?" House asked. "Run an tox-screen. If that's negative, it's time to break out the big needles."

Holmes typed up the last paper just as Wilson walked in. "For a minute, I thought you were House...well, until I saw you working." He commented to Holmes. Grinning ruefully, Dan answered with "He's probably right. I'm not ready to handle a case like that." "You only learn by doing." Wilson answered. "How much paperwork do you have there." Holmes glared at the stack. He was finally done. "Two years worth. In one day. I don't think it's supposed to work that way." Wilson widened his eyes. "Geez...um, congratulations." "Thanks. Cuddy can deal with them from here." Holmes answered with a

sigh.

“So far, so good.” Chase commented. Cameron watched intently. “Nothing. There’s nothing here.” House limped over to the screen. “Clean...and that means...” “It’s not in the liver.” Chase answered. “Or it’s something the Tox screen missed...I’m going to have a little chat with our little ball of hatred.”

“Here you are Lisa.” Holmes dumped the papers on her desk. They flowed out, seemingly endless. It was now ten o’clock. Twelve hours ago, he had started. “I can’t believe you did two years of paperwork in half a day!” Dan gave her a tired smile. “Yeah. I had some motivation, actually.” Cuddy looked up, a frown grazing her face. “What was that?” Holmes sighed deeply and began to explain. “One of the kids earlier...he has anxiety...bad...just like mine...he’s going to have a rough life...and there’s not a thing anyone can do.” Cuddy put a supportive hand on his shoulder. “Then he’s lucky to have you as a doctor. You’ve been there. No better was to help than to guide, having been there.” “I’m still there. I just wonder...is it ever going to go away? But it’s selfish to think that way, especially after seeing all the people with cancer or the like around.” Cuddy appreciated the point of view. “I know. I wish I could say something better...Why don’t you head back to diagnostics and check in with House? Then, go home and get some rest. You’re no good to us if you’re nodding off.” She said, eyeing the dark circles under his eyes.

“The tox screen was negative...cancer is negative...so what aren’t you telling us?” House jabbed his cane at Damien. “I’m not hiding anything. I had a piercing done this morning. The guy didn’t want to do it, my tattoo was kind of runny. But I’ve done it before and...” House got up abruptly, heading for Cuddy’s office.

House flung the door open, knocking Holmes out of the way. “House, what the he” “Damien Riley, he needs a liver transplant.” “What?” “The ink from his tattoos ran into his new piercings. The ink accumulated, poisoning his liver.” “How long does he have?” “Two days tops.” Cuddy chewed on a nail. “I think we can do it. Great job House.” House limped back out. Then he came back in, swing his cane toward Holmes. “That paperwork isn’t going to do itself.” “It’s already done House. I’ve ordered him to go home and get some sleep. He’s done enough of your crap work for one day. You’re lucky, he hasn’t complained once.” Cuddy nodded to Holmes. “Goodnight Lisa. Goodnight House.” Holmes dragged himself out of the room.

Start Track: Human Touch by Rick Springfield

House, Chase and Cameron watched the liver transplant start. Cameron looked out the window, spying Holmes walking home. It was snowing, but he didn’t seem to notice, other than tucking his hands into the pockets of his trench coat-like overcoat. Cameron nodded to Chase and sprinted to the elevator.

Dan didn’t really care about the cold. His mind was on that poor kid with anxiety. It had taken years, but he had learned to live a more or less normal life with it. He knew just how rough it was. He heard rushed footsteps behind him, partially padded by the snow. Holmes turned to find Cameron jogging to catch up.

He stopped, cocking his head to the side. “Holmes...I just wanted to finish what I started earlier. She kissed him on the cheek briskly, then turned his collar up against the snow. “Need a ride?” she asked. “I don’t live far, but thanks for the offer.” “Well, then I’ll walk you home.”

Chase looked out the window at this. His first thought was anger. But that was replaced quickly by a feeling of understanding. He nodded, as if understanding something inside his head. He pulled his coat and cabbie-like hat over his plaid vest. "Night House." House didn't respond; he was watching the transplant. Chase left.

House went back to his office. He took a couple Vicodin, then headed downstairs to his motorcycle. Tucking his cane into the saddlebag, he sped for home.

The snow was still falling outside as Holmes invited Cameron in to warm up. He handed her a mug of perfectly warm coffee. She drained it, and walked out onto the stoop. He followed her out. "Thanks again Cameron...I guess that one counted." (referring to the kiss.) Cameron smiled and told him to get some rest. She could have sworn she saw House's motorcycle speed by.

End Track: Human Touch by Rick Springfield

4 - Dose of your Own Medicine

“Okay, Candy, wonderful! Beautiful, beautiful! Turn this way! Perfect! Pucker those lips! Now, show your attitude! That’s my girl!” Tommy George smiled at his newest “model,” a hot-looking brunette, about twenty years old. He roped in the stupid, hormone-filled girls to model his sleazy bikinis and lingerie. (IF THIS COMES ACROSS AS PERVERTED, LET ME KNOW, AND I WILL REMOVE IT –NG) “Tammy! You’re up!” Tammy, blond twenty-one year old, with fair skin and blue eyes, and a knockout figure, climbed up onto the stage and struck her first pose in front of the beach background. But she wavered immediately. “What the hell’s wrong with you?! You stupid bimbo!” He yelled. Tammy fell down. “Oh Christ! Candy, call an ambulance!” “What’s the number?” she asked, confused. Tommy lowered his head, smacking his greasy hair. “9-1-1. Can you remember that, floozy?”

Holmes was attempting to talk to House when he was grabbed roughly from behind by Chase. “What the” “We need to talk. NOW!” Holmes looked confused, but followed Chase out to the empty waiting room. “I saw her kiss you! You thieving bastard!” Holmes bit his tongue, big time. “Chase, she kissed me. Do I look like I get that a lot? Or that I had any clue she was going to?” “Don’t give me the innocent act! She went home with you, didn’t she?” “Not in the way you’re thinking Chase. Nothing happened. She kissed me on the cheek, walked me home, had a cup of coffee, and left!” Holmes was getting angrier, as was Chase. Cameron chose that moment to walk in. “Oh, good morning you two. Sleep well.” “You slut!” Chase yelled at her. (IF THIS IS FOUND OFFENSIVE, LET ME KNOW, AND I WILL CORRECT IT!) “What?” Cameron narrowed her eyes like she hadn’t heard her. Holmes’ right hand tagged Chase under his left eye. Cuddy and a number of nurses came running to separate the two. House watched quietly. “Nice right cross.” He mentioned to a disheveled Holmes.

Cuddy had Chase and Holmes in her office, with Cameron next to her and a number of nurses between them. “I want to hear what happened. Chase, you first.” Cuddy said solemnly. “She slept with him! THAT’S what happened!” Cuddy looked over at Holmes, indicating him to present his side. “No, she didn’t. Nothing happened. She walked me home. She drank a cup of coffee, and left.” Cuddy cocked her head. Cameron finally lost her temper. “SLEPT WITH HIM? WHERE THE HELL DID YOU GET THAT? WHAT KIND OF GIRL DO YOU THINK I AM?” “ONE WHO ISN’T FUSSY WHO SHE BUNKS WITH, APPARENTLY!” Chase yelled back. “KNOCK IT OFF!” Cuddy yelled. Holmes finally said, quietly “Chase, she didn’t sleep with me. I wouldn’t do that to your relationship. It’s obvious you two have something between you. I’m here to save lives, not further my own.” Holmes extended his hand. Chase glared at it, before storming away.

Cuddy asked Holmes and Cameron to stay. “I believe you, you know.” She began. “However, I can’t have disarray in the diagnostics department. I need one of you to step up and take the fall.” Cameron opened her mouth, but Holmes stepped forward. “It’s my fault. I was just being friendly, but the fact is I hit him. No matter what he said, that wasn’t professional. Just let me know what my punishment is.” Cuddy looked at Cameron. “Cameron, you head back to diagnostics. Let me speak with Holmes.”

Cameron looked meaningfully at Cuddy, before turning to Holmes. “It was sweet of you to defend me. Thank you.” Cameron left. Holmes nodded weakly.

Cuddy asked him to sit. "I know why you did that Dan. I don't blame you, and if I were your girlfriend, I would be honored. But the fact is, I'm running the hospital, and I can't have my doctors fighting." "If you tell me what started the fight, there won't be any punishment for you. Holmes made eye contact with her. "I'm not ratting out anyone. I'm sorry Lisa. I'll take the fall." Cuddy looked back, a strange expression on her face, before sighing. "I'm going to have to dock your pay for two weeks, and remove you from diagnostics until further notice." Holmes had expected worse, but he wasn't relieved. Then she dropped the bomb. "And I'm going to have to suspend you from the hospital until further notice." Holmes stood up sharply, seemingly about to argue that point. Instead, he snapped up his lab coat and suit jacket, tossing them over his shoulder. "I'm really sorry Dan." Cuddy said, apologetically. "You're doing what you have to do. I did what I had to do. So there shouldn't be any hard feelings." Cuddy, however, had a feeling there was, because he hadn't turned around when he said that, instead opening the door and striding outside.

Chase was in the hallway waiting. "I" "Save it. I took the fall Chase. Now you don't have to worry about "anything" happening." Holmes pushed past a stunned Chase, walking out the front doors of the hospital.

A patient was rushed past him on a stretcher. Holmes almost went back in, but stopped, continuing his solo walk home.

House eyed the patient in the bed. "Twenty-one year old female, underwear model, collapsed on the scene of a "photo shoot." Chase, what's her bra size?" Chase ignored the crack. "Could've been the lights, she passed out from too much heat." Cameron ventured. "Infection weakened her maybe? Her boss said that she had just stepped up onto the stage when she collapsed." Cameron placed a hand on her. "She has a fever. That could mean infection." "Start her on Inteferon, and check hourly." House ordered.

Tammy moaned just as Chase was walking in to check on her. "Wh-where am I?" she coughed out. "You're in the hospital. I'm Dr. Chase. How are you feeling?" "Every muscle I have aches. And I fell drugged..." "Well, you are drugged. We're pretty sure you have a minor infection. And-what the hell?" Chase was watching as Tammy's bed sheets suddenly turned yellow. It stopped spreading. "I still feel like I haven't peed in days..."

"She wet the bed. Big girl. Okay, what does that suggest?" "Chlamydia? She said she felt like she hadn't peed in days." Chase supplied. "Chlamydia is an STD, She would have had to have been sexually active recently." Cameron pointed out. "Look at her, she's obviously been around a few times." Chase replied. "Do you think that about every decent-looking woman?" Cameron retorted, a angry frown crossing her smooth features. "Children, children! Please! Chlamydia seems likely, but it doesn't explain the fever. Keep her on the Interferon, and start her on Azithromycin."

Tammy asked Chase what he was doing. "It's a new medication, it'll help you get better quickly." He had been cautioned not to ask her about sexual activity, or what the drug was for. "Thank you doctor." She smiled at him.

The next hour, Cameron went in. "Hi, I'm Dr. Cameron. How are you feeling?" Tammy started to speak, but couldn't look at Cameron. She was shaking. "I'm just a little anxious...and..." Tammy vomited violently. "Nurse!" Cameron called. Tammy vomited again.

“It’s either a side effect of the Azithromycin, or it’s her liver.” House told his two interns. “It’s more likely to be her liver, she looks like she could knock back some brews. Besides, the Azithromycin affects only one in twenty people.” Chase mentioned. “The nervousness could be a side effect of the Azithromycin. That’s more likely.” Cameron argued. “Hmm, Chase’s suggestion is more dynamic. Check her liver.”

Cuddy called Holmes at home. “Holmes.” He answered, keeping his voice friendly. “Dan, it’s Lisa Cuddy. I know you probably hate my guts, but I want to offer a deal.” “What kind of deal?” Holmes asked. He stretched out on the deck chair, looking out across the city. “Just tell me what led up to the fight, then you’re welcome back.” It was tempting, but Holmes said “No. Cuddy, I’m not going to be a snitch. I understand where you’re coming from, though, and I hope you can understand where I’m coming from.” He heard Cuddy sigh. “I do Dan. I’m sorry. I hate to ask. And I’m sorry, but your suspension is still in effect.”

“AST shows an abnormality in her liver. What, though, I’m not sure.” Chase was leaning back in his chair, arms behind his head. “Azithromycin can cause that too.” Cameron argued. “Well, we have two choices: We can ask her who’s knocker her up lately, or we can stop both medications and re-introduce them one at a time. She’ll either get better, or she’ll get worse. We’ll get an answer either way. So, who wants to poke into her sex life? Anyone, anyone? No? Okay, take her off the Azithromycin first.”

House sat in his office, tossing his giant tennis ball to himself. Wilson let himself in, plopping a tray in front of House. “So, what happened with Holmes?” Wilson asked. “He clocked Chase after Chase said something. My money was on the Australian @\$\$-kicker, but the skinny white boy got the better of him.” House popped two Vicodin as Wilson gave him a look of annoyance. “Cuddy brought the hammer down on him hard. He’s taking the fall. I don’t suppose you went to bat for him?” “Chase is the better doctor. Or, more likely, luckier.” “That doesn’t mean he deserved” “Are you gonna finish those?” Before Wilson could answer, House had taken his potato chips.

Tammy felt a little better. “I don’t know what you did, but it’s working!” She gushed to Chase. Chase was trying to hide his dislike for her. “Well, it’s been six weeks, and you still have that infection. You’re not better yet.” Tammy stretched, and that’s when Chase saw a red mark under her arm. “Hold that position...How long have you had this?” Chase asked her, pointing at the rash. Tammy shrugged. “I don’t know, I didn’t realize I had it. Is that bad?” Chase busied himself with looking for a syringe so she didn’t see him roll his eyes. “I’m really tired...” Tammy yawned. Chase saw something inside her mouth. “Open your mouth again, please.” He ran a cotton swab across his new find.

“She got all this after we re-introduced the Interferon. That’s got to be it.” Cameron said confidently. “Why didn’t she react the first time then?” House asked. “Her body is as stupid as she is.” Chase answered. “Will you stop being a bastard? People react differently! We should take her off the Interferon.” “Then make it so, number one.” House quipped, limping down the hallway to the elevator. “If you need me, feel free to call.” He opened the doors to the elevator before it began its descent. “One more thing- Don’t need me.”

Holmes was getting more agitated by the day. Cuddy had called several times, even offering a lesser job to him, but he wouldn’t do it. It was a matter of principal. He heard a knock on his door. Surprised, he strode across the room to open it. He was even more surprised at who was on the other side.

“House?” House pushed his way in, sitting down on Holmes’ couch, stretching out. “How are things doc? Enjoying the vacation?” he asked. Holmes sat down in a big leather arm chair across from House. “No. I’d rather be doing your paperwork.” Holmes said with a snort. “Coffee?” he asked. “Yeah.” House answered. Holmes started to make the coffee. “You know, I heard everything.” House told Holmes. “You heard what he said to Cameron?” Holmes asked mildly. “Yeah. Not an accurate description, at least not to my knowledge.” He tapped his chin. “Then again, if she’ll sleep with Chase, she’ll sleep with anyone.” House took a long gulp from the mug Holmes had set down in front of him. “You didn’t tell Cuddy. You took the fall for Chase. I’m curious as to why you would want to do that.” House questioned. “He’s a doctor, and better at what he does than me. Besides, I don’t make it a habit to rat people out. That punch got my point across.” Holmes answered, troubled despite his confident tone. “So honorable...stupid, but honorable...” House muttered, draining the mug. “Cuddy is a woman. Therefore, she is stubborn. (I DON’T MEAN THIS! DON’T SHOOT LADIES!) You are man, therefore, you are...stupid. Interesting dilemma.” House got up and limped over to the door. “Be back at work tomorrow. You’ll be getting a visit from Cameron and Chase, and a phone call from Cuddy.”

Tammy had gotten worse. The doctors gathered in her room. “Night Sweats, Swollen Lymph nodes, and a fever of 103 degrees. All for more than a week. What does this tell us?” House asked his interns. “That she’s dying from something.” “Could be cancer? Hodgkins?” Cameron answered. “Go one better.” House said. Chase and Cameron exchanged glances. House limped over to Tammy. He rapped his cane on the bedside table sharply. “Hmm?” “Oh, good, you’re awake. Tell us, you had sex in college didn’t you?” House asked. “Oh, sure, doesn’t everyone?” Tammy replied brightly. “The lucky ones. Tell me, did the guy do drugs?” “Sure! He lent me his needle once or twice! What a nice guy!” Tammy smiled at the memory. Chase and Cameron suddenly got it.

“She’s got HIV?!” Cameron exclaimed. “Whoa, why didn’t I think of that? Actually, try AIDS.” House asked/stated mockingly, slapping himself in the forehead. “The last straw- the Lymphoma.” “Everything fits. We didn’t see it because her symptoms matched up with the side-effects of the Interferon and the Azithromycin. The fever, the urine, the rash, nervousness, fatigue...” Chase rattled off the symptoms. “We’ll tell her tomorrow. Let her enjoy one more night medication-free.” House told his group.

“Come in.” Cuddy called. Dr. Chase walked in. “Cuddy, Holmes doesn’t deserve what he got.” Cuddy lowered her glasses. “What are you talking about? He hit you.” “I called Cameron a slut. He was just defending her. I shouldn’t have said that.” To his surprise, Cuddy smiled. “I was wondering when you were going to tell me. House told me everything at lunch time. I think you should know that Holmes refused to say what happened. He took the fall. He said you were a great doctor.” Chase looked surprised. “He doesn’t hate me?” “Apparently not. I’m going to give him a call. Why don’t you and Cameron go convince him to come back to work?”

Dan Holmes swept the rest of his clothes into the suitcase. He put a black cap (Like a mason’s hat) on his head and got ready to brave the harsh winter. He heard a knock on the door. “Come in.” he said flatly, taking a last look around his apartment. Chase walked in, followed by Cameron. Holmes dropped his suitcase, readying himself for a fight. Chase made no move to fight. “We want you back.” Chase told him. Holmes looked confused. “No. I’m going to leave. I don’t want to cause a rift.” Holmes started unplugging things from the kitchen, taking what belonged to him. Cameron followed him in, motioning for Chase to stay still. “Dan, we need you.” Without turning around, Holmes replied. “You saved lives without me. It’s more important that your team stays together.” Cameron looked at Chase, who nodded.

She stepped in front of Holmes. She didn't say anything. Instead, she kissed him full on the lips- an actual, real kiss, much to the surprise of the recipient. She kept her hands on his head, stroking his hair. She relinquished the kiss. "Stay. Chase and I talked. There's not going to be anymore problems."

Start Track: Wheel in the Sky by: Journey

House led his delegation: Cuddy, Chase, Cameron, and Holmes. They were all outfitted with hazard suits. "You just had a six week vacation, you get to tell her. The rest of us drew straws, and it was supposed to be Cuddy..." Cuddy shot House a disapproving glare. "Alright." Holmes answered.

The rest watched from a distance as the young (almost) doctor sat down at Tammy's bedside. They could tell when he broke the news: Tammy started to cry, but calmly. Holmes held her hand for a moment, while Tammy composed herself. She nodded and said "Thank you." Holmes got up and rejoined the group.

He had a small smile on his face. "What did she say?" Chase asked. "She lived fast, lived hard, and now she'll die young. She knew." Holmes told the group. Everyone, save for House, showed their astonishment.

"So, you're willing to stay?" Cameron asked Holmes. "Yeah. I just let the depression get the better of me." He had to ask; the question was bothering him. "Chase didn't mind you...you know...kissing me?" Cameron smiled. "No, that was his idea. I guess a way to tell you that there's no hard feelings between Chase and you...and myself, for that matter." She smiled again and tossed her hair out of her eyes. Holmes wasn't sure what she meant. "Well, you'd better go unpack." She reminded him. "Yeah. Thank Chase for me, would you?" "Sure. Good to have you back. I wanted to say that no guy has ever stood up for me like that." Holmes shrugged. "I never liked guys treating their girlfriends like that. It's not the first time I've gotten in trouble for that. I knew it was coming." "Some girl will be lucky someday..." Cameron looked over her shoulder at him as she walked away, leaving Holmes to wonder what exactly she was talking about.

House, who had heard the whole thing, gave a very small smile. He knew something his kid's didn't. He gunned his bike, riding off into the night.

BONUS

---ORIGINAL CHAPTER ENDING---

"So, you're willing to stay?" Cameron asked Holmes. "Yeah. I just let the depression get the better of me." He had to ask; the question was bothering him. "Chase didn't mind you...you know...kissing me?" Cameron smiled. "No, that was his idea. I guess a way to tell you that there's nothing between Chase and I." She smiled again and tossed her hair out of her eyes. Holmes wasn't sure what she meant. "Well, you'd better go unpack." She reminded him. "Yeah. Thank Chase for me, would you?" "Sure. Who knows, maybe sometime I'll help you unpack something else..." Cameron gave a joking mischievous grin. "Don't joke about that- I might get my hopes up." Holmes returned, blushing furiously, while grinning back. "Look at you! Relax! It was a joke!"

5 - Death, Taxes, and Love

“Hey...Dan?” Holmes, who had been organizing medical reference books for House as some mindless busy-work, turned around, a thick volume in his hand. “Sorry Cameron, I was just kind of absorbed. What’s up?” He asked, getting down off the precarious-looking rolling chair. “I’ve been thinking a lot about you and Chase and...I know this is really sudden...but I’ve got to pick one of you...I’m so confused.” Holmes put a comforting hand on her shoulder. “Whatever you decide, I’ll be fine with it.” He assured her. She smiled at him, glowing. “Thanks.”

A tall man, with a black trench coat and fedora, marched into the hospital. “I need to see doctor House.” He said to the receptionist pleasantly. The receptionist, maybe nineteen, smiled nervously. “Certainly sir...”

“So then she said” Holmes was cut off in mid sentence because House came bustling in. “You’re with me.” He pointed at Holmes and Wilson. The two exchanged glances, but followed House down to the lobby.

“You paged me? Oh, you’re new here...You didn’t know...Don’t page me between the hours of twelve and...twelve.” He gave the girl a meaningful look. “I’m sorry Doctor. But this man was insistent.” House and his delegation of Holmes and Wilson made their way across the waiting room. “Yes?” House tapped the man roughly on the shoulder with his cane.

“You remember me? You gave my wife a hard time, and all she wanted was help. I’m sure I’m not the first person to hate you, but I’m sure I’m the first person to do this!” He whipped a knife out from under his trench coat. Holmes, the closest, grabbed the man’s wrist. “You don’t want to do this!” The man, his eyes bulging with rage, tagged Holmes with his left hand before plunging down at House with the knife. Holmes pushed House back toward Wilson. The knife pierced his shoulder. “Ahh! Damn!” he swore, forgetting his martial arts. That was all good if you could prevent being stabbed. This was the first time he had been stabbed, and he forgot the cardinal rule of never taking your eyes off the weapon. The butt end of the knife gave him a sharp rap on the forehead, knocking him over the small leather couch and onto the glass coffee table. It groaned under his weight, but didn’t break.

The man suddenly started sputtering, dropping the knife. It clattered to the floor as Wilson checked on Holmes while House called for security. The man was cradling his left arm when he collapsed. Holmes struggled to his feet, his arm bleeding through his white dress shirt...

Cameron, Chase, House, and Wilson opened the doors to the emergency room. A surly looking Holmes was bandaging his own arm, clumsily. “They’re too busy for a stab wound...” he was muttering. “Oh my God! What the hell happened?” “Someone tried to stab House. Dan wound up taking the knife.” Wilson informed them. “Oh damn! That’s not a good one!” “No kidding!” Cameron said to Chase. Chase took a closer look at Holmes’ arm. “You’ll be okay, but you’ll need pain killers. One of us can prescribe them.” “No, that’s okay, I don’t like drugs.” Holmes hopped off the stainless-steel table he had been sitting on. “I’ll go home and get changed and” “Stay there, I hope.” Cameron interjected. “I just had six miserable weeks off. I don’t want to stay home, I’d rather be here.” Cameron was impressed.

House handed Holmes a prescription. "Go get this filled, and you can stay." Holmes gave him a look before seeing what he had written. "Vicodin?" he asked, questioningly. "Hey, don't knock it dude!" House told him in a hippie-like voice, as he popped two himself. Holmes took it and turned to leave, but stopped. He handed Chase a file. "Forty-Nine year old male, heart attack. Signs of trauma, stress, and extreme anger." Holmes supplied. "When did you get this?" Chase asked, surprised. "Shortly after he stabbed me." Holmes answered miserably.

As luck would have it, Cuddy was overseeing the pharmacy today. "Holmes? What the hell happened?" Dan recounted the whole thing, before handing her the prescription. "Vicodin? And it's prescribed by House? These ARE for you, right? This isn't some errand for House?" Holmes assured her that it was indeed for him. "And why aren't you home recovering?" "I just had six weeks off. It's just a little pin-prick, I'm fine." Holmes argued. Cuddy gave him a worried look. "If you say so. But if you feel any pain, go home and rest."

"What causes a heart attack? Yes, you, the blonde boy in the back?" House pointed at Chase with his cane. "Stress, Anger...from what I hear, he wanted to kill you out of anger, which put stress on his system." "But there would have to be some underlying medical condition." Cameron added. "Give him an Echo and an ECG. See what nasty little secrets his heart's hiding..."

"I don't want your damn help." Charles Phaelyn argued with Chase, but didn't struggle as Chase put the electrodes on his chest, arms, and legs. The test began, with Cameron and Chase monitoring it. "It looks like the heart muscle has thickened." Cameron pointed out. "Yeah. We already know he's had a prior heart attack." "Let's do the Echo."

House was eating with Wilson when his team, plus the returning Holmes, walked up to his table in mid-bite. "Echo shows no sign of stress. But his heart muscle has thickened." "Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy." House said around a bite of sandwich. "Hey, that's mine!" Wilson protested as House continued to eat.

"So I've got this Hyper-something cardio-whatsis?" Charles was originally a steel worker from Philadelphia. He had a big mustache, almost no neck, and big muscles. "Right. So we're going to start you on..." "Chase!" Cameron pointed to the heart monitor at Charles' bedside. It showed a huge spike in his blood pressure. "What?" Chase put a stethoscope to the man's chest, checking his heartbeat. "That's not normal...too quick..." "Help-me. Foof-foof-foof-Can't-breathe!" "Nurse!" Chase yelled.

"Diastolic Dysfunction." Cameron started. "It all fits. The flash pulmonary edema, the shortness of breath, the Ischemia..." Chase nodded his agreement. "Then we know the next step. Dilated cardiomyopathy. So the stage is set, and we're following the script. Start him on the beta blockers. If he improves, he goes home, takes some medication and changes his life style, and finishes out his happy life." "Ah damn!" Holmes hissed, putting a hand to his arm. "Are you okay?" Cameron asked him. "Yeah. The Vicodin should kick in pretty quickly. I'll be fine." Cameron narrowed her eyes slightly, but said nothing. "Since you're fine, you'll have no trouble going in and asking old man no-neck about his drinking habits."

Charles was laying back in bed, watching TV. He was pretty weak, but felt better. "Charles, right?" "That's me." He answered, surprisingly friendly. His face dropped slightly when he saw who was

talking. "Oh...it's you...You're just a kid!" Holmes rolled his eyes.

"I get that a lot. Now, Charles, if you don't mind telling me, do you drink?" "Drink?" "I mean heavily." "Not since my liver kid. I'll have a beer or two with the boys once a month, but that's it." "And when did you have the liver problems?" Holmes asked. "Twenty years ago tomorrow." Holmes nodded and scribbled all that down. "Alright, I'll leave you to recover then." Holmes gritted his teeth as a fresh wave of pain surged through his arm. "You okay kid?" "Yeah, I'm fine. Do me a favor, and don't mention that, okay?" Dan asked him. "No problem...listen doc, I'm sorry about stabbing you. I was just so pissed off that he would insult my wife, calling her a whale...Now that I think of it, I don't even want to stab him. And...like I said, my knife wasn't meant for you..." "It's fine Charles. Now you get some rest..."

Chase confronted Cameron. "It's Tuesday...I just wanted to remind you that I love you." Chase told her, smiling. "That's sweet Chase and I..." Cameron's heart leapt up into her throat. "I think I love you too." Chase looked surprised. "But...you and Holmes..." "Chase, nothing happened. He's just a nice kid. Really." Chase looked reassured. "Cameron, would you like too...I don't know..." "I would love to." Cameron finished for him.

It was about 6:00 when Chase and Cameron left. House had slipped out earlier. "Have a good night." Holmes told them. "Another all-nighter Dan?" Cameron asked, shaking her head. "You're making us look bad!" Chase protested. Holmes gave a wise-@\$\$ grin. "Well, You two are doctors, I'm not. I figure I'll quit working when I get my MD."

Cameron stopped, motioning for Chase to go ahead. "Do-Do you remember what I said earlier?" she questioned. Holmes nodded, gritting his teeth. "I picked Chase." Holmes nodded. "I had a feeling...there was something there...congratulations." He said, sincerity in his voice. "Thank you...for understanding...It wasn't an easy choice..." "I understand, it's alright, really. Have a good night." He said, a smile crossing his face.

Holmes sat in the narrow pool of light at the table, thinking that this case was familiar. Somehow, somewhere, something like this had happened...then it hit him! He knocked on Cuddy's door. At her "come in," he pushed inside. "Lisa, Charles Phaelyn, I've seen this case before, I'm sure of it..." Cuddy threw her hands up. "I'm sorry Holmes. He's been cleared for release." "When did he leave?" Holmes asked desperately. "Just a minute ago." Holmes ran out of the office, sprinting down the hallway.

Charles was walking along, just fine. "Damn, my chest hurts...Must be all those tests..." He blacked out and hit the floor. Holmes ran up just in time to see him hit the floor. He checked the man's pulse, and was relieved to find one. "I must have been wrong..." he breathed a sigh of relief. Reaching for his cell phone, he dialed House, Cameron, and Chase's pagers, with "Emergency" being the message.

"Heart Arrhythmia." Holmes told them. Cameron and Chase exchanged glances. "His first diagnoses! Someone get the album!" House called. One echo later, and his diagnoses was confirmed

"How did you know?" Cameron asked. She was worried that he might have some ill feelings toward her, but apparently not. "A friend of mine, his wife just collapsed. She had a lot of the same symptoms, and was physically fit." "Is she okay?" "She was dead before she hit the ground." Holmes told her. "My God...I'm sorry..." Holmes gave a sad grin. "I felt bad for her husband and kids. I didn't know her

personally. I guess it's just a testament to all of us to make the most of our time here." Holmes squeezed his eyes shut suddenly. "Your arm is killing you, isn't it?" Holmes stiffened his face, but his pain was still evident. "I'd better get back at it. An orange medication bottle fell out of his pocket. It was still full. "Don't tell House or Cuddy." He asked Cameron, scooping the pills back up. "I don't like drugs. I guess I'd rather have the pain..." he told her. Cameron gave him a sad look before walking into the stairwell with Chase.

At six the next morning, Holmes got up to check on Charles. He found the man looking out the window. "Kid, you ever get the feeling that you're never totally free? That you can't control anything?" Charles asked. "No such this as fate." Holmes told him pleasantly. Charles pulled out his knife. He had wiped it clean. "There's only one thing I can control now...I don't want to live my life on medications and paying doctor's fees." He held the knife away, looking at it. Holmes' eyes grew wide. "Charles, don't do it." He inched closer. "Think of your family." Charles looked over at the young (almost) doctor. "My wife died. We never had children. My father never liked me, always my brother. He's a big shot fat-cat on Wall Street." Holmes moved closer. "If you put that knife in yourself, you're hurting everyone around you. People care. Would I be in here trying to talk you down if I didn't care?" Charles gave him a thin smile. "Thanks kid...you know, you're a good kid. You're here, talking to me, actually giving a damn, even after I stabbed you. I know your arm hurts you. I've seen you hide your pain. I did the same thing. But I can't hide it anymore..." Charles drew the knife across his thick neck as Holmes lunged for the knife. "Nurse!" he yelled. She sprinted in, screamed, and fainted.

House's phone rang. It was 7:00 am. He was just getting ready for work. "House." He said crisply. "Time of Death 6:58." Holmes' wavering voice greeted him.

Cameron walked in, tickling Chase under the chin when she spied Holmes, blood still on his lab coat, sitting with his head in his hands. "What happened? Did he stab you?" She asked, concerned. Holmes didn't answer right away. "Time of death is 6:58." He told her. "What? He died? How?" Holmes took a deep, chattering breath, as a tear left his right eye and made it's way down his cheek. "He killed himself...I couldn't talk him down...the thing I was hired for..." Cameron sat down next to him, feeling guilty for choosing Chase, as if that had killed Charles. "It's not your fault." Holmes nodded vaguely and got up, stepping out through the glass doors.

Click-clack-click. Click-click-click. Holmes tapped away on his laptop. "Memoirs?" House asked, hanging his cane on a chair and erasing his white board. "No. Nothing like that. My letter of resignation." Holmes printed two copies, handing one to House. Silently, he made his way down the hallway. He saw, out of the corner of his eye, Chase and Cameron kissing. For some reason, it depressed him even more to see two people enjoying life...

"Come in." Lisa Cuddy's voice rang out. Dan Holmes walked in, a folded up piece of paper in his hand. "Thanks for everything Lisa." As he reached out to shake her hand, his pill bottle fell out again. It rolled right to House's feet. He picked it up and saw that it was still full. Holmes ignored it and turned back to Cuddy. "I refuse to accept your resignation Holmes." She said firmly. "I can't do what you hired me for. I'm detrimental..." "Our resident teasing little tramp picked Chase over him." House supplied. "That has nothing to do with it House! A man killed himself in front of me! I couldn't help him! I couldn't talk him down! It's my own damn fault!" House strode over to him and smashed his cane into Holmes' hurt arm. When Holmes opened his mouth to say something, House shoved two Vicodin down his throat. As Holmes gagged, Cuddy yelled at House. "You can't drug him without his consent!" House looked at

Holmes, now on all fours, choking. He gave the young man a smart crack on the back. GULP!

Start Track: I Just Died in Your Arms Tonight By Cutting Crew

"I'll see you here tomorrow." House told Holmes firmly. "You're very good for someone so new Holmes. You've got to give yourself time. That man was suicidal, and that's not your fault." "I-I-Just can't believe he's dead. Right in front of me...I should have grabbed the knife..." House slapped him, with Cuddy looking on in horror. "I'll see you here tomorrow." House told him firmly, tearing both copies of the letter of resignation up."

House and Cuddy watched as the young man left the office. "I hope he'll be okay." Cuddy said nervously. House said nothing, but watched the young man, who was shaking his head in disbelief. "He's not taking this well..." Cuddy muttered.

Holmes walked out into the parking garage and down the ramp, into the brutal New Jersey winter. He hated the city right now. He stopped outside, looking up into the third story window. A drop of blood rolled off the window sill and fell at Holmes' feet.

Chase and Cameron were cuddled up in a corner café'." They watched as Holmes staggered by, the pain throwing him off for a moment. He didn't notice them, or acted like he didn't. "I feel bad...I dump him, and he gets his first death...and that way too..." Chase put a comforting arm around her. "He'll cope. He's a tough kid Cameron...He'll handle it..." Cameron cast a worried glance at Holmes, who had stopped to check his bandage at a drugstore across the street.

Holmes opened the door to his apartment, putting down his briefcase and taking off his tie. He knew he'd be back at the hospital tomorrow. But without Cameron's support, he wasn't sure how he was going to handle the day. He looked out onto the snow-covered street. A motorcycle sped by, a familiar driver controlling it. He hit a patch of ice and the bike fishtailed, tossing the man off. Holmes darted outside. "Oh damn!" Dr. House was laying on the pavement, a nasty lump on his head...

6 - My Own Advice

Holmes cursed again, feeling the sting of the cold, and of a kind of unrequited love. **Sort out your feelings later! You've got to House inside before he freezes!** That was easier said than done with one arm. His other arm, the one that had taken the knife for House, was still killing him. His bottle of nearly untouched Vicodin was still sitting on the table next to his bed. The only two pills that had gotten into him were the ones House had shoved down his throat. "Damn it!" Holmes muttered as he caught his hurt arm on the doorframe. It started bleed again. With one hand, cringing with pain, he dialed the hospital, calling for an ambulance. With a grimace of effort, he got House up on his couch. He laid a thin washcloth on House's head, placing an ice pack on that. Then he trudged upstairs. It was time to get ready for work. He didn't think he was going to sleep much...not with that death in his head...the one that was his fault...

Black dress shirt, silver tie, black dress pants, shoes shined, and finally the black suit jacket. He yanked his tie straight and ran a comb through his hair attempting to get it to lie flat. He tossed the comb down suddenly, as he had used hurt arm to style his hair out of habit.

Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. "Damn it! If House is just calling me for the hell of it again, he WILL be dying!" Declared Nurse Gerry to her friend, a secretary named Rebecca Runnels. "Good luck with that Ger." She said flatly. House wasn't her favorite person in the world.

House kept hitting the "call" button, and banging his spoon loudly against his empty plate. "I'm all out of ice cream!" He complained to the nurse. "Right away Greg." She said with a false smile. "Bastard..." she muttered. House leaned back and smiled, using his cane to reach his cell phone.

Ring. Ring. Holmes, who had been in trance, thinking of what had happened, was awakened suddenly. It was four in the morning. "Diagnostic medicine, Holmes speaking." He said in a wear voice. "Where the hell are Chase and Cameron?" the voice on the other end questioned roughly. "House, it's four AM. They're probably sleeping, like normal people." Holmes answered. He felt a radical depression. House was in the room next door to where Charles had killed himself the day before. House's voice again snapped the young "doctor" out of a trance. "Then, since you're here, I've got a case for you hotshot."

House was sitting in bed when Holmes appeared at his door. House threw a folder at him. "Twenty-Eight year old male. Night terrors, violent shaking, and difficulty breathing." Holmes was going to protest, but said nothing. "Alright. I'll write up a report for you when the case is done. For now, here's your prescription." Holmes handed house a yellow sheet. "You're prescribing me Vicodin?" House asked incredulously. "I've worked with you long enough to know it's hell on earth if you don't have your candies." Holmes said flatly. He tossed a small orange bottle to House.

"Night terrors are more common in young children, because they can't express their fear." Holmes recited to himself. "The shaking and breathing...sounds like anxiety...the night terrors could tie in with that...but it would have to be something big. Holmes grabbed his arm as pain jolted through him. "You can't handle this little bit of pain? That man killed himself...all because you couldn't do your job..."

Holmes berated himself. "I might as well have put that dagger across his throat, for all the good I did him..." Holmes left leg twitched, and his heart started to race, but he pushed it aside. "No...If I can't figure out this case, then I'll quit. I'll turn in my lab coat, and quit."

Chase woke up first, looking at the sleeping angel next to him. A memorable night for sure. "Cameron...come on, time for work." Cameron rubbed her eye sleepily. "Already? Time flies when you're having fun." She said, smiling at him. Chase grinned back at her and got up, fixing his hair while she headed for the bathroom.

Holmes had draped his lab coat over the back of his chair, the narrow pool of light offering no distractions. "Anxiety...what causes that?" He thought back. **I have no idea what caused mine...it just kind of showed up...It's hard to believe just a year ago I couldn't sleep at night, couldn't eat...and now I'm working in a hospital...where I killed my first patient...If I had just been a little quicker...** Holmes shook his head, almost violently, shaking the thought aside. He needed to figure out this case. He didn't want to quit, but he would. But another image of Charles drawing the blade across his neck shook him to the core. He let his head drop into his hands, feeling defeated.

Chase and Cameron walked in, smiling and laughing. Chase turned the light on. "House must not be here yet..." Chase spied Holmes reading a book in the corner, a case file opened next to him. "Couldn't wait for us?" Chase joked. "Oh, sorry. House wants to see you both. He's in room 238." Holmes supplied, trying to keep his voice chipper. He knew he was failing miserably. "As a patient?" Chase asked incredulously. "Yeah." "My God, what happened?" Cameron exclaimed. "Hit a patch of ice in front of place last night. He's got a concussion, a small one, but he admitted himself." Chase and Cameron exchanged glances. "You know he's more miserable as a patient than as a boss, right?" Chase asked, eyes narrowed. "Hey, I don't have a helluva lot aside from work, and I've had worse bosses than him. At least he's good at what he does." Holmes retorted with a derisive snort and a wise-acre grin. Chase shrugged as if giving Holmes permission to believe whatever he wanted. Cameron tapped him on the shoulder and pointed at Holmes, who whole body below his neck was shaking.

"You wanted to see us?" Chase asked the bedridden House. "Are you okay?" Cameron asked. "Peachy. That new guy is totally cool! He gave me more happy pills!" House shook the bottle, looking satisfied. "That's not a good th" "What did you need?" Chase cut Cameron off, with a look that plainly said "He needs those things, for our sake!" "I need you two to do clinic duty. Don't help the new guy with that case. Just tell him this: If he doesn't figure that case out, or he gets help, he's fired." Cameron immediately protested. She might have picked Chase, but she still had a thing for the underdog. "House, that's mean! Give the guy a break!" Holmes used his cane to hook his phone again. "Yeah, you're needed here." House barked into the phone. "I'm going to tell him, since I can't trust you two soft-touches to give him the business."

Holmes entered the room, staring at the three doctors, all of whom seemed imposing. "Let's skip the "how are you" stage. I'm telling you this, so there's no excuse if you screw up: Figure this case out on your own, or you're fired." Chase and Cameron looked over at Holmes, curious as to what his reaction would be. It wasn't what they expected. "That works for me. Except, if I can't figure it out, I'll quit. I shouldn't be here, and I know it." Holmes had spat the last part, not even looking around the room before storming out.

House shrugged. "Interesting attitude. If I had threatened Chase with that, he would've crapped his silk britches." Chase looked away, rolling his eyes. "So, clinic duty, my little cherubs! Off you go! Big brother needs his rest."

Cameron had the first patient. It was a thirteen-year-old girl, who had been dragged in by her mother. "She's been coughing and sneezing, and she's just burning up!" the mother exclaimed. "Mom! It's a cold! Get over it!" Cameron could appreciate the girls' attitude; that was about how she felt. "Let's just be sure." The girl coughed. "How long has this been going on?" "Since yesterday! You know, I couldn't even get in yesterday! I don't know how this hospital runs, but..." Cameron tuned her out, writing out "Tylenol" on a sheet. "Here you are. Have a good day." Cameron forced a smile across her smooth features. "You're asking me to drug my child?! How dare you?!" Cameron put a hand on her forehead, irritably pushing her bangs out of the way.

Chase's luck was about the same. "So you were explaining gun safety to your eight year old, when you shot yourself with a BB gun?" Chase's exasperation was obvious. "Well, you know, boy's never too young to learn." Chase nodded, stifling a laugh. "Well, if you head down to surgery, they can remove the BB. Where, exactly did you shoot yourself?" "You don't want to know." The man chuckled. Chase agreed that he probably didn't.

Holmes meanwhile searched a thick book. "I'm sure it's anxiety...let me see...patient history...there is none...that figures. **Much like that Charles guy is now history...** A nasty part of Ekyt's mind told him.

Holmes knocked on the door. "Mister...Preston, right." "Y-yes, that's me." A nervous man with thin-framed glasses answered. "I'm Doctor Dan Holmes. I'm in charge of your case, and I just have a couple questions for you." "Su-sure. You look a little young..." "I get that all the time. Now, does your family have a history of anxiety problems? Or stress?" "N-No. That's h-hereditary, right?" "Not always. It can be triggered by a crucial event, or by nothing at all at any point in life." That seemed to make Mr. Preston more nervous. "Yo-you seem nervous..." he pointed out, a shaking figure aimed at Holmes. "I am. I've had it for thirteen years." Looking serious, Holmes asked him "Has anything happened lately, something that might give you a reason to be anxious?" "N-no! Why?" "Well, you're showing symptoms of Post-Traumatic stress disorder." Holmes admitted. "Is that- ba-bad?" Holmes nodded. "It could be." **Okay, what do I do next before this guy winds up like Charles? Um...I'm missing a symptom...shaking, shortness of breath...What is it? The Night Terrors! I hope there's a good story for that. Otherwise, I can kiss my job goodbye. And why shouldn't I? It's my fault that guy died...I shouldn't be here, risking other lives...** "Tell me about your night terrors. Do they have any theme to them? Some recurring incident?"

Mr. Preston thought for a moment. "Th-they always end with a bloody car crash..." he stammered, grasping his bed spread, holding so tight his knuckles turned white. Holmes nodded understandingly. "Did you know someone who died in a car crash?" Holmes asked him. "W-Well, my m-mother." He choked out between tears. "I was driving the car! A truck without it's light on hit the passenger's side. Mom died...and it's all my fault! I should have died! Me! I'm going to hell, aren't I?" Holmes couldn't answer for a moment. **He sounds like me...but it wasn't his fault...** For the first time, Holmes felt a realization of the truth. People died. There wasn't always someone at fault. You couldn't feel guilty for being alive while someone else was dead. If you made your best effort to keep them alive, didn't that make you a good-enough person?

“Mr. Preston.” “Please, call me Rod.” “Rod, you’ve got post-traumatic stress disorder. That’s causing your depression, and the night terrors. And, you’ve got anxiety. I know you’re not going to like what I’m going to tell you, but you deserve to know the truth. Something they didn’t tell me when I was diagnosed. It’s not life threatening, and can be controlled with the right medication. What you have to do is take the medication I’m going to prescribe, and you’re going to have to confront what happened. Understand, it’s not your fault.”

Cameron and Chase were listening as per House’s orders. Cameron looked at Chase as they watched Holmes talk to the man. His manner, which had been so shaky, seemed to have redeemed itself. He was talking clearly, making sense, and telling the truth. “If you need any help, feel free to call the hospital, they’ll direct you to me, or to a psychologist.” “But, how do I come to terms with this? I mean, I did my best” “You’ve just started Rod. You just said it wasn’t your fault. It wasn’t.” Holmes wrote out a prescription for Clonopin, and handed it to the man.

“Here you are House.” Holmes tossed the folder onto House’s lap. “Chase tells me you were a different person telling the man what happened. Did you finally decide to join the grown-ups?” “No. I needed to follow my own advice. And I did.” Holmes gave House a small nod and grin, and left him. House read the report, something he didn’t do often. Cuddy came to visit him. “I heard what you did House.” She told him, shaking her head despite her smile. “As rough as it was, you made the right move with him.”

Holmes looked out the window from the diagnostics office, watching the snow fall. “Follow my own advice, huh? I don’t now where that came from, but it’s not a bad idea.” He said to himself, closing his eyes against the white backdrop. He heard a set of footsteps. He tried to gauge them. It wasn’t House, and the person moved lightly. Female, most likely. Cuddy would have said something by now, so he guessed it was Cameron. It seemed like just as Holmes was getting a shot of confidence, SHE had to come along. Without his guilt, he could focus freely on how Chase and Cameron were together. Judging by the footsteps, Cameron hadn’t noticed him yet. Holmes silently slung his briefcase over his shoulder, and ducked out the door.

Lisa Cuddy looked at the clock. 5:30. About time to quit. So Holmes should be... “Come in.” Cuddy said at the knock. Holmes entered, placing a folder on her desk. “Poor guy.” He commented. “Have a good night Lisa, if I don’t see you?” “Where are you headed? Not pulling another all-nighter?” Holmes smiled tiredly. “I’ll be in early. Right now, I’ve got to follow some of my own advice.”

Start Track: Closing Time by Greenday

Cameron watched, not really surprised, as Holmes left the room. Cameron understood she had caused him some pain. “Holmes...you can always trust me. I hope you know that.” She whispered.

House got up out of bed, limping over to the mirror. He checked his eyes. Close enough. He put on his normal clothes and limped to the elevator. As he waited for it to come, he rested his chin on his hands. When the doors opened, he hopped inside and hit the button with his cane. He had done the right thing with the young intern. House pushed that out of his mind as he downed the two Vicodin he had in his hand.

“We have gathered today under God’s eye, to celebrate the life of Charles Phaelyn.” A priest began.

The church was empty, save for a handful of people. Holmes stood by the door, his head bowed in prayer. He took one last look at Charles peaceful body, nodding to himself, understanding something for the first time. He slipped out the back of the church, out into the snowy day. He jammed his fedora on his head, stopping under a street post. He wasn't sure how long he stood there, but it had gotten dark. He looked up at the light. "Time to go home."

7 - The Truth Hurts

Holmes hung up his silver tie. He had decided to get in early and study. Dr. Cameron's face flashed across his subconscious and he stopped what he was doing, his tie falling to the floor. Without that death on his mind, she had come front and center. "Why can't anything be easy?" he whispered to himself.

Cameron woke up next to Chase, smiling. Another fun night. It was only four o'clock. Chase grunted in his sleep, returning to snoring a moment later. Cameron wondered about Holmes. She had heard he had turned in a letter of resignation, but House had torn it up. Then he hot-dropped him into a new case, one that he wasn't ready to solve. He had pulled it off, though, saving his job. Life was unfair to all of them, to him especially. Cameron felt like she was part of it...

Holmes turned on the lights in the diagnostics office, picking up a thick volume he planned to study from. He started to sit at his normal spot, but stopped...He picked up the book and walked down the hall into an employee lounge and took the book back up. He immediately looked up to see House, sleeping in front of the big-screen TV. Holmes shook his head, wondering if House had consciously decided to stay, or had just passed out from mixing Vicodin and gin. He took up the book, studying it's contents. It was about 6:00, so the others should get there in about an hour. Holmes was suddenly restless. He wandered down to see Wilson.

House sat up as soon as Holmes had left, smirking. "Avoidance. It's a beautiful thing. Good choice."

"I've never seen anything like that Wilson. I was too damn shocked, or scared, or whatever, to grab the knife sooner." Wilson shook his head, sipping his coffee. The chilling story of the suicide had woken him up. "If you had, he would have cut his throat quicker, maybe yours too." Holmes conceded that he had a point. Apparently, he was fidgeting, since Wilson suddenly said "Cameron picked Chase, huh? Don't take it to heart. It wasn't an easy decision for her." "I'm not supposed to take that to heart? Wait, I'm not even sure I liked her...Damn, you're good Wilson. How do you get people to spill their guts like that?" Holmes asked. "It's a gift." Wilson answered mysteriously, giving a salute to his comrade with his coffee mug.

"Okay Dave, line 'em up!" called his buddy Garrett. "Right-O G-man!" Dave started to do just that, lining up some tin cans across a fence for his crack-shot buddy to aim at. He suddenly doubled over, clutching his stomach. "Dave? You okay?" "I- don't know...it feels like I'm giving birth! Call an ambulance G-Blearch!" Dave threw up. "Oh damn, oh damn, hang on man!" Garrett urged him, helping his friend lie down.

Chase and Cameron walked in, expecting to find Holmes. He had been here, the coffee was done and their mugs were near the coffee maker. But he wasn't around. "He probably just had to pee, or went to see Cuddy." Chase assured her, pouring them both some of the rich, black coffee. "Needs sugar." Chase said with a grimace, helping himself.

Holmes had wandered down to the emergency room to talk with Gerry, the pediatrics nurse that had

stopped by to make sure he was alright. It was more of a grandmotherly concern, since Gerry was roughly sixty. Holmes appreciated the gesture. They were just exchanging “Good Mornings” when a man was wheeled in, covered in his own vomit. “You’re in diagnostics, right?” one of the EMT’s barked at him. “Yes.” Dan answered. “This guy’s one of yours then. Good luck!”

“House...House...HOUSE!” Cuddy gave him a rap on top of the head. A sleeping House woke up, startled. “What? Cuddy...Just like in my dreams...” “Save it House. You’ve got a patient.” “Oh, right, right...(winks) I get you...Time for your physical, right?” Cuddy rolled her eyes while shaking her head. “You’re lucky you’re brilliant or I’d” “How could you know I’m brilliant, we haven’t done it yet...or did you mean brain-wise?”

House and Holmes met in the hallway. “I see Lisa gave you a wake-up call.” Holmes said brightly. “Don’t make me give you a time-out...” “29 year old male, intense abdominal pain, vomiting, and newly-developed jaundice.” Holmes said in a terse, but respectful, reply. “Let’s go see what the other children are up to.”

Chase and Cameron were kissing over their coffee when Holmes and House walked in. Holmes kept a stoic look. House, however, banged his cane on the table. “You can get rooms for that. Right now, it’s time to do what you’re paid for...” House laid the case out, writing the symptoms on his white board. “So what could all these mean?” “Kidney Stones.” Surprisingly, Holmes had called out his answer first. “Wouldn’t explain the jaundice.” Chase answered. “It could be unrelated.” Holmes returned, shrugging. “Frisky today...But wrong. Not kidney stones. What else...let me see...Cameron, we haven’t heard from you yet...” “I think he’s drunk. That would explain the yellowness on his skin, the vomiting, and the abominable pain.” She finished. “Let’s go with that. It’s easier.” “There’s nothing we can do for a hangover.” Chase protested. “Is that a problem? You’re such a slacker-wannabe Chase.” House limped off to his office. Holmes immediately exited, heading to pediatrics.

“I think he’s avoiding me.” Cameron told Chase, surprised. “Nah, he’s just a workhorse. He hasn’t taken a break yet! He thinks he’s got something to prove.” “I guess...that does make sense.” “Stop worrying; he’s a good kid. That suicide is probably still rattling around in his head.”

Pediatrics wasn’t overly busy today, just one kid in for a checkup. “He’s got this bulge on his arm, I think it’s cancer!” little Corey’s mother fretted. Holmes knelt down, feeling the child’s arm. He noticed that they matched. “You’re nine, right Corey?” Corey nodded and smiled, showing off some missing teeth. “Do you play a lot of sports?” “I play hockey and football and baseball, and I bowl!” he said proudly. “Excuse me, what does that have to do with it? I will take my child to a competent doctor if you’re just a babysitter!” Corey’s mom snarled. Holmes smiled. “Corey’s only problem I that’s he’s not getting any time to be a kid. That lump you’re feeling is muscle. It’s not unheard of.”

“Nurse! Nurse!” Dave yelled. “My head...it’s killing me! It feels like it’s in a vice! Do something! Hurry!” “Okay, hold on.” “Dammit, you worthless dog!” Dave grabbed the pills out of her hand and tossed them down his throat.

Holmes was studying an X-ray with Wilson when House, Chase, and Cameron entered. “Good, both of you are here. Wilson, we think this guy has cancer. Holmes, my file cabinet needs some serious surgery, if you get my drift. So, let’s hop to it! Can I get a “Whoa, team?” No one paid any attention to House, instead going about the procedures. Holmes was sure he let a small surge of anger past his

stony face, but he hoped he didn't. The last thing he needed was to have to deal with a pissed-off House.

"The guy's a drunk! His hangover got worse, and he's a mean drunk." Cameron explained. "But a mood swing? There's probably drugs involved." "It could be cancer. All the symptoms are there." Wilson stated, mentally going through his checklist.

"Do the liver biopsy. Let's see if that annoying old organ is hiding something." House ordered. All three left to run the test.

Holmes angrily trashed some old papers. He wasn't sure what he was angry about, just that he was furious about something. He just wanted today to be over with. It was already four o'clock, meaning he had been here for ten hours straight. Then it hit him. He was bitter over losing to Chase. That snobby import had all the advantages. "That's not right." Holmes shook his head. "Chase was the better man. I'm going to accept it." "Bravo." House limped over to Holmes. "Explain something to me: You've done all this crap work without complaining, you're nice to everyone, make good money...but you're miserable?" Holmes didn't argue. "I am House. I have been for some time. It's not work related. Just a bunch of little frustrations eating at me. I'll be fine." House gave him a hard look, like he could see into Dan's soul. "If you need to talk, you know where to find Wilson." House said, fully serious.

"Biopsy came back negative." Wilson informed House. "Any hangover he would have had would have been gone by now." "It could be kidney stones after all..." "Doesn't explain the mood swings. And the tox screen was negative for any drugs."

The file cabinet was finally clean. Holmes checked the clock. Six pm. House would be heading home, unless that patient was really in trouble. It looked like another long night. Whatever. Holmes had nowhere to be, so he could have cared less. Until Cameron walked in, Chase right behind her. Holmes turned back to the cabinet, sticking a pair of head phones in his ears and humming mindlessly to some tune his laptop was currently emitting.

Cameron, kindly get his attention. Holmes was trying so hard to look distracted, he actually was. Cameron put a gentle hand on his shoulder. CLANG! Holmes' elbow bounced off the metal cabinet. "Sorry about that." Cameron said with a laugh. "My fault for being distracted." Holmes murmured, not making eye contact, but keeping his voice pleasant. "Well, does our new 'boy wonder' have a guess?" House demanded. "What does this guy do anyway?" Holmes asked. "Just got out of the marines. Now he's a hunter and fisherman." Chase supplied. "I assume you're going somewhere with this." House said. Holmes looked over at House, guessing that House **wanted** him to figure this out. "Let me talk to him. Give me fifteen minutes."

"It's...Dave, right?" The man in the bed nodded weakly. "What the hell do you want, yuppie?" he coughed out weekly. Holmes ignored that, and asked him "Just tell me what you've done the past week. I know you hunt and fish, but anything else?" "Not that it's any of your business, but I painted my Grandmother's house. Her paint was from, like, the seventies. Then I moved some old toys up there, real heavy, lead toys, and I" Dave started shaking. "Dave? Dave?" Dave was flailing around now, knocking over the bedside lamp, which flew near Holmes, who ducked. "Nurse! I need Clonazepam! Hang on Dave!" Holmes got out of the way while the nurses injected the drug into him.

“The genius returns. What do you have to say? We’re all ears.” House told Holmes, who gulped nervously. “I think he has lead poisoning.” No one said anything for a moment. House limped over to the white board. “Jaundice...vomiting...abdominal pain...all signs of cancer...add to that a seizure, irritability, and muscle weakness...” “It could still be cancer. I mean, the tox screen was negative.” Chase argued. “We only looked for drugs...we wouldn’t have noticed...the tox screen might not have even registered that...” Cameron said in wonder. “Ring a ding-ding, give the kid a cee-gar! Lead poisoning it is! Start him on the Chelation Therapy, and give him a list of instructions. Vitamin A, D, and iron.”

“So you got it right?” Wilson asked Holmes. “He said ‘lead,’ and between that and the marines, hunting, fishing, and painting...he deserves credit, not me.” Holmes answered miserably. “Not too many 18 year old interns could have pulled that out of their @\$\$.” House limped in to join them. “It was a good guess...lucky, but good.” House said, sitting down and propping his feet up. “Thanks House. That means a lot from you.” Holmes answered. House looked over at him. “I’m right all the time. I figure it was someone else’s turn. Now I’m going to be right again: Grow a set and quit avoiding Cameron. So she chose Chase. Life goes on...you could always shack up with Cuddy. I’m sure she’d provide a ‘service’ to her golden boy.” Holmes and Wilson exchanged glances.

Start track: Paint it Black by the Rolling Stones

Holmes was sitting in diagnostics, still reading the book he had started yesterday. He snapped it shut, leaning backward and closing his eyes. “Good book?” Cameron asked. Holmes opened his eyes slowly. “If you like medical jargon.” He answered, slightly more coldly than he meant to. “I’m sorry if” “It’s okay. Really. It’s not you Cameron. I’ve just got some other things on my mind.” “Is that what you’re REALLY feeling, or is there something else. You can be honest with me Dan. I’m sorry if I hurt you; I picked Chase because” “Because Chase was the right person to pick.” Holmes told her, forcing a smile. “I admit Cameron, I cared for you, but you would be better off with Chase. I’m the anti-social loner that’s gotten lucky with a couple cases.” “I didn’t say that!” Cameron protested. “No, I know you didn’t. I did. And that’s the truth.” Cameron didn’t understand that one.

House watched all this happen. “You’re just going to leave?” Wilson questioned him. “Some lessons are better learned without help.” “You mean it’s easier for you to leave the kid to drown!” House said nothing, walking away instead. Wilson felt that Holmes was growing on House. But his worry was that House was growing on Holmes...

But he didn’t have to worry about that. Holmes looked in his paycheck and found a bonus. Walking back to Cuddy’s office, he handed her a thick wad of cash. “Put this somewhere the hospital needs it. I don’t deserve it.” “What are you talking about? I mean, if you’re sure...” “House knew the answer to that case. It was great of him to let me get an ego boost by solving it. And I do mean it. Keep the money.” He left without a backward glance.

8 - Identity Crisis

Wilson found Holmes working, just as he had expected. "Holmes, I have a question for you." Dan looked up from his laptop. "YOU have a question for ME? (laughs) Shoot." "Why are you working so hard?" Wilson asked, smiling as he played his ace. "Pardon me?" Holmes said, narrowing his eyes. "Nobody works this hard on such a consistent basis. Ever since that suicide, you've been different..." "That would change anyone Wilson." "No, not psychologically, not totally anyway...your mannerisms are different. I mean, you used to let your shoulders slump a little, but now you've got them military-straight, and I keep expecting you to salute me. You're throwing yourself into your work for some reason." Holmes ran a hand through his hair. "I just" Holmes pager buzzed angrily at the same time as Wilson's. Exchanging glances, they hurried out of the glass and steel diagnostics office to Cuddy's office.

Cuddy was waiting for them. "Holmes, how's your arm?" "It's getting better." He said. A blatant lie, because at that moment a surge of pain struck it. "Really, I'm fine." "Good to hear...even if it is a lie." She said, exchanging glances with Wilson. "You know, you can relax...and it's okay to go home and sleep (Right Alchemest?!)." She looked at Holmes' rigid posture. "I'll be fine." Holmes said quietly. "Alright, I paged you because you have a case, and you're the only one here. Wilson, I paged you for..." her voice trailed off. "Could I have a minute with him Dan?" "Oh, certainly, I'm sorry Lisa. I'll get right on that case."

Holmes opened the manila folder, studying it's contents. "Seizure is the only symptom so far...no history of epilepsy...in good shape, average weight for his height...alcohol problem...recently rehabbed..."

Since the suicide (Or Cameron's rejection), Holmes was indeed different. He was becoming increasingly intolerant of his own shortcomings. The way he dressed and carried himself was more like an executive than a doctor. He didn't roll up his sleeves when reading anymore, didn't loosen his tie. Shirt tucked in, shoes shined, hair perfectly combed. And work-wise, no lunch (without studying), no breaks.

He read through the case file again, almost hitting Chase and Cameron. "Sorry about that." He muttered distractedly, heading to the patients room. "What the hell is up with him?" Chase muttered, wiping some lipstick off his collar. "I'm not sure...he took the rejection pretty well...the suicide?" she asked. He shrugged. "Your guess is as good as mine." They continued the walk to diagnostics, forgetting Holmes for the moment.

"Mr. Carmichael?" Holmes asked. "That's me." The African-American man answered. "I'm Dr. Holmes, I'll be working with you." "You aimin' for the military son?" Mr. Carmichael asked. "No, just trying to stay professional. Now, if you don't mind, would you tell me when you had the seizure?" "Bout a half hour ago. I was walkin' outta my AA meeting, when I collapsed." Holmes wrote that down. "Okay. Any history of liver problems, head trauma?" "No sir Admiral." The man joked. Holmes dropped his rigid manner briefly. "I'm sorry about that. You can call me Dan." "Mos' people know me as Marshall." The man in the bed offered. "Alright Marshall. Let me take your answers back to the lab and I'll have some answers for you. A nurse will be in momentarily to run a couple of tests." Holmes gave him a small grin before leaving.

As soon as he was out the door, his posture snapped back to rigid, eyes straight ahead. He opened the door to diagnostics and yanked a book off the shelf, opened his laptop, and said a hollow "Good Morning" before handing the case file to House. "60 year old male, African-American, seizure, history of alcoholism, sobered up for ten years, drank yesterday." Holmes said in rapid-fire succession. House yawned. "You on fast-forward? Take it easy general. Sounds like an alcohol withdrawal to me." "It didn't come across that way." Holmes argued. "He wasn't depressed, talked clearly," "We've got nothing else to go on. So, we do what we're paid to do: nothing." House leaned back. Chase and Cameron looked over at Holmes. He stood up and walked toward the door. "I've got clinic duty." "No you don't." Chase said. "I'm covering for Dr. Bosco." Holmes said crisply.

"What is up with him?" Cameron asked. "Well, a man kills himself in front of him, you pick the Euro-trip reject (nods at Chase) instead of him, and he's in pain. So he's perfectly normal." "Why is it you can't accept he might need us?" Cameron asked tersely. "Why can't you accept that there's nothing wrong with him. He's not your charity case Cameron, that would be Chase."

Ann and Charles Dalton were waiting to see Holmes. "We requested you personally Dr. Holmes. Charles is having" "Trouble eating." Holmes said with a sad smile. "Yeah. How did you..." "I've been there. Charles, buddy, what's your favorite food?" "Chocolate!" the boy exclaimed. "Good taste! But what's your other favorite food?" "I like burgers!" he said, happy to be helping. Holmes took a candy bar out of his pocket. "Is this okay with you Ann?" He said, aiming to give the kid some candy. "Oh, of course. You can take it honey." She told Charles. "Here buddy, eat up." Holmes said. Just as he expected, Charles' muscles spasmed, and he began to breathe heavily. "If you need to spit it out, go ahead." Holmes said kindly. Charles did just that. "What do I do?" "He'll be okay. Make sure he drinks a lot, I'd suggest Ovaltine. The food thing...it's going to take a while. I know you don't want to hear that, but you should know the truth." Holmes said. "Thank you Dr." "It was my pleasure. Just so you know, the next symptom for me was withdrawal from peers, and then trouble in gym class. Come see me if that happens."

"This is weird..." Chase muttered. "What's that?" Cameron looked over onto his computer screen. "Didn't he have a fever of 101 just a couple hours ago?" "Yeah...We'd better tell House."

"His fever disappeared? What does that tell us." Holmes and Chase spoke up at the same time: "The body fought off the infection." They looked at each other, surprised. "Any other symptoms?" House asked, readying his marker and white board. "Sleepiness, and confusion. I get the impression he lost his short-term memory." Chase suggested. "Could be the early stages of Alzheimers." "Or it could be more physical. Maybe a tumor." Holmes replied, going back to his crisp tone. "No tests just yet...Holmes, you go monitor him." Holmes left, while House turned to his team. "While WE monitor HIM."

"Okay Marshall. Let me just check your eyes..." "Damn, son, put the spotlight away!" Marshall grumbled. Holmes wrote down "Sensitivity to light" in his notebook. "Do you feel anything right now?" "I've got a headache goin' pretty good. Damned chorus of jackhammers goin' off." He said.

"Sensitivity to light...headache...what does that mean? Let me see...we haven't heard from Cameron yet today. Cameron shrugged. "I think it's a tumor." House looked around the room. "Cancer is the popular answer...so we'll test it. Have Wilson do a brain scan. Holmes, you monitor the test and assist

Wilson.”

“Okay, everything’s ready. Holmes, you all set?” “Go for it Wilson.” Wilson injected a small amount of radioactive material into Marshall. “I’m not seeing anything unusual.” Holmes stated rigidly. “Me neither.”

“Brain scan is clear. No tumors.” Wilson announced. “Wilson...did Holmes mention anything to you about his new attitude?” “I brought it up. He just said he was trying to be professional. Frankly, he is. But I think something is eating at him, no matter what he says. It could just be his arm, but I think there’s something there...Something he’s not telling us...”

“How are you feeling Marshall?” Holmes asked the next morning. “How good can I be If I’m lyin’ here?” “Point taken.” Holmes returned. “Damn, it’s cold in here!” Holmes checked the temperature in the room. It was 75 degrees. “That’s a little better.” Marshall said. Holmes hadn’t touched anything. Then Marshall turned and vomited over the side of the bed.

“He had chills, but they went away. That indicates infection.” Holmes stated solidly. “Infections...but what if Mr. infection met Mrs. Infection, they bred and had kids... Them the kids went off to college and the parents died... He has an Abscess of the Brain. So, that means...drugs! Happy time!” House said, pumping a fist. “Start him on the Metronidazole, and we’ll see where he goes. In the likely even I’m right, we can send his now-cured @\$\$ out-of-here!” Holmes pager buzzed. “If you’ll pardon me...”

“Come in.” Cuddy said at the knock. “Holmes, glad you’re hear. We need to have a little chat.” “We?” House took a seat too. “I’m in trouble for something?” Holmes guessed. “No. You’re being a stiff, hard-working @\$\$.” House said. “That’s kind of you to say. But I don’t see the issue.” Holmes said, spreading his hands. “Well, you see Dan, the issue is that you’re working hard, and very well, but” “But you’re an asshole otherwise, and that’s not why we hired you. You’re supposed to be the bedside manner. So shape up!” House exclaimed. “I think what Dr. House is saying is that it pains us all to see that something is bothering you, and that we want to offer our support.” “Is THAT what I said? That’s not what I mean! What I meant was.” “Stuff it House!” Cuddy warned. “Thank you Lisa, House. I assure you, there’s no problem. ”

“It’s not an abscess of the brain.” Cameron told the team. “He’s getting worse. His fever is back, and he’s not eating right. He threw his steak at the nurse, telling her to get him real food.” Holmes buried himself in a book. “That’s all parallel with the abscess...but his tissue isn’t expanding...The sensitivity to light is different...” House was bored, spinning his cane around “Holmes...did he move much when you were in there?” “No, especially his head.” House rapped his cane on the desk. “We have it. We’ve been aiming too high. What’s lower than the head, but really important?” “Heart?” Holmes offered. “No. Spine. Do a Spinal Tap.”

Holmes went to visit Marshall. “I ain’t getting’ better, am I?” Marshall said, serenely looking out his window. “Yes and no.” Holmes said. “You’re hedging the question. You’ve got something on your mind too. If you’ll pardon me son, I’ve got to lay down. All this excitement got me tuckered out.”

Holmes looked at him sadly, guessing death was next. He was wrong.

“He’s in a coma.” Holmes told them. “Bacterial Meningitis.” House finished. “So we were right with the

infection all along.” Chase muttered. “Second-guessing yourself isn’t always smart. Sometimes it’s as dumb as Chase wearing spandex.”

Start Track: Breakfast at Tiffany’s by Deep Blue Something

Holmes was sitting Marshall’s bedside, shaking his head. His military manner was lost, replaced by one of despair. “I wish I had known...Thanks for something Marshall. Thanks for telling me what an @\$\$ I’ve been. If you ever wake up, I’ll tell you that then too.” He got up and left the room.

House watched Holmes leave, apparently dispassionately. He took two Vicodin and made his way toward the elevator.

Chase and Cameron were in the middle of a passionate kiss in front of the hospital in the New Jersey winter. The snowflakes decorated Cameron’s pretty face, making her even more radiant. Holmes tried not to notice that, instead talking to Wilson.

“So, what did Cuddy want?” Wilson blushed. “Oh...well...she’s looking for a sperm donor.” Neither said anymore. “I see you’re not the admiral anymore.” Wilson said, breaking the silence. “Nope. I guess it was an identity crisis. But now, it’s time to find out who I am...”

9 - A Defining Moment

Holmes looked at, seeing a young doctor trying to get his responsibilities straight. He couldn't help but feel that the death/coma/suicides were his fault. Wasn't he supposed to help people? He straightened his dark blue tie, which had yellow lines in it. He was wearing a white shirt with navy blue pants. It reminded him of when he was in grade school at that catholic school.

Dr. Cuddy was just arriving to work to see Holmes standing outside her office, engrossed in a thick novel with a black cover. "Holmes?" she said gently. "Oh, good morning Lisa." "What did you need?" she asked, somewhat nervous. "I just want to apologize for how I was acting the other day." Lisa smiled. "Dan, no one, except House and possible Chase, are going to beat you up for trying your hardest. I admire that. And...wait, why the hell are you here this early? You're not on until...tomorrow." "I thought I'd study some today."

As they were talking, a tall black man dressed sharply walked up to them. "Dr. Cuddy, it's been a while." Cuddy did a double-take. "Foreman?" "In the flesh." He smiled. She hugged him. "Good to see you. What brings you here?" Cuddy inquired. "Well, I want to see if you have a position in diagnostics...my last job didn't work. I'm so used to House's abuse that I wasn't on top of my game." Cuddy looked nervous. "I'm not sure. I mean, we hired someone else, but I think we can make room for you...Holmes? HOLMES!" Holmes jumped. "Sorry Lisa, I was just reading this" "Never mind. I'd like you to meet Dr. Eric Foreman, our neurologist." Holmes gave her a small questioning glance, but smiled and shook his hand. "Dan Holmes, nice to meet you..." "Call me Foreman." "Nice to meet you Foreman."

As Foreman left, Cuddy turned to Holmes. Before she could talk, he said "It's fine Lisa, I understand. Wherever you put me now is fine." Cuddy bit her lip, not believing she had just given a job to a colleague she hadn't seen in three months. Especially when that job belonged to someone else. "You're not mad?" "This is business, you go with whoever is better. And it's not me. I'm not mad." He assured her. "Okay. I'll let you know when your department switch is complete."

House, Cameron, and Chase were in diagnostics, already working on a case. "Glad you could join us." House said sarcastically to Holmes. "It's my day off. And besides, I guess I'm not part of Diagnostics anymore." "Whoa, what happened?" Cameron asked. "You'll see in about...ten minutes. For now, just...thanks for everything." Holmes shook hands with Chase. He went over to House and held out his hand. "Cuddy's pet is leaving. But whose going to do all the stuff I used to heap on Foreman?" Holmes put his hand down. "A REAL doctor." He snapped. He made his way over to Cameron, who hugged him, to Chase's chagrin. "Thank for everything."

Holmes walked down the hallway, meeting Wilson. "Holmes, I was just looking for you. I heard the news from Cuddy. I'm sorry about that." "Thanks Wilson. I'll be around, I guess. I'll probably be the new janitor." He said, only half joking.

"Okay, symptoms: What've we got...Chase, I think it's your turn." House pointed with his cane. "Pay attention class." "Dizziness, shortness of breath, and "heart pounding." Cameron seemed distracted,

but answered “anxiety.” Chase gave her a look. “You’re thinking about Holmes, aren’t you? Come on Cameron! Anxiety? I think it’s in this lady’s head! Except for the heart. Hyperkalemia? She’s been in the hospital long enough to have contracted that.” he offered. “Okay my pets, go! Test for disease and pestilence!” House said with a maniacal laugh.

Holmes wandered up to the roof of the hospital, looking down. The wind was blowing today, tossing his lab coat around majestically. “I’ll find something else.” He told himself. **I don’t believe a word my mind is telling me. So far I’ve ruined three people’s lives, pissed off one of my coworkers, and done crap work. I’m not even a doctor. But now that I’ve done it...what if I have to settle for something else?**

Cuddy rummaged through her files, not sure what to do with Holmes. He had common sense, work ethic, respect, diligence, and a great attitude. But House was the opposite and the best doctor she had. “What am I going to do with him?”

“You know, even though Holmes backed off, you’ve certainly taken an interest in him.” Chase said to Cameron. “Don’t be an @\$\$, I’m trying to be polite. With you and House there, I was the only one who was going to welcome him.” “I didn’t welcome him because he didn’t belong! He’s not a doctor!” “Then why is it he came closer to solving cases than you?” Cameron shot back angrily. “Are you saying I can’t do my job?” Chase returned. Cameron was spared answering by House walking in with Foreman.

“Foreman! Good to see you!” Cameron exclaimed. “Hey guys. Yeah, I thought I’d drop by and let you know...I’m back.” Everyone congratulated him. They were monitoring their subject, a 42 year old female that looked like she was thirty. Across the hall, Cameron spotted Holmes walking by himself. It was weird seeing him across a lab like that. He had his head buried in his book, so he didn’t notice the stare Cameron gave him. She didn’t mean to stare, it just happened. “Okay, get the EKG done. Cameron, you take the blood sample. Foreman, you go do what Holmes was doing.” “What’s that?” “Cleaning my office, duh. You knew that!”

“Blood work showed a high potassium level.” Cameron pointed out. “The EKG looked normal.” Chase finished. House tapped his chin. “Hmm...what’s for lunch today?” Chase and Cameron looked at him intolerantly. “What, I’m just asking! Geez, you’re as stuck up as Cuddy! Now, high potassium level...what could that mean?” “That she eats lots of bananas, or had a history of kidney stones.” Chase answered. “Okay, check her kidneys. Meanwhile, I’ll check the cafeteria.”

Holmes walked past a therapy group. “Coping with Anxiety, led by Dr. Michael Kurlan.” Holmes studied the sign for a minute before glancing inside. He saw it was an age 6-13 group. He knew Dr. Kurlan from his own treatment. Kurlan waved him in. “Everyone, this is Doctor Holmes.” “Hi Dr. Holmes!” Came their bright reply. Holmes immediately picked out Anne and Charles Dalton. Charles had severe anxiety, and his mother, Anne, trust Holmes enough to come to him for advice. Dr. Kurlan asked Holmes “Do you mind telling them about your...history.”

“Foreman, this is your area of expertise. Hyperkalemia or Anxiety?” Foreman laughed a little. “How did you put those two together? They’re different ends of the spectrum!” “Do you have an answer, bright boy? Or should I go get the little white kid?” Foreman shook his head. “Refreshing to know you haven’t changed. But to answer your question, I think the heart is the right place to look. Hyperkalemia is a

possibility, but the heart is the problem, so it could be any number of things.” “So go runs some tests already! Your job isn’t safe Foreman, you’ve got that skinny guy breathing down your neck.” House warned. Foreman couldn’t tell if he was serious or not.

Cameron walked by and spotted Holmes talking to a group of kids, a smile on his face. She stopped to listen.

“How many of you here are a little nervous to be meeting me?” Everyone raised their hands. “Don’t be! I’m just as scared of you as you are of me!” Scattered laughter from the parents. “Seriously though. I’ve lived with anxiety for thirteen years. It was misdiagnosed several times, and it was a rough road. I’m still not over it. This is why a group like this will be an incredible help. You are never alone. EVERYONE has some burden to bear, and this one’s yours. You can live with this, it can go away, and you’ll have a more or less normal life. And, if you ever need the help, your doctor, or this hospital, can help you find some. Don’t be shy to ask, that’s what doctors are for.”

Holmes waved at the kids and smiled. As soon as he was out in the hallway, his smile disappeared, replaced by a look of depression. He sighed deeply. “Holmes?” Dan whipped around. “Oh, Cameron, hi.” “Hi. Um, are you okay?” Holmes shrugged. “Yeah, why wouldn’t I be?” Cameron rolled her eyes. “You’re not happy about not being in diagnostics.” “Pretty much anything is a step down, yeah. But I shouldn’t have been there to begin with, so I’ve got no room to complain. I’m just upset...all those kids...and their poor parents...” he stifled a sigh. “So, how’s Foreman doing?” Cameron rolled her eyes. “Well, House gave him the crap work he would give you, and Foreman’s not pleased.” “I don’t doubt, who would be?” “Chase is mad at me because...well, let’s of things.” “I’m sorry to hear that.” There was an awkward silence, broken by Holmes’ pager buzzing. “Oops, pardon me. Lisa needs something...”

“Kidney’s are clear House.” House rolled his eyes. “Oh, for God’s sake! Let’s at least eliminate ONE possibility. He dialed Holmes’ pager number.

“So, Dan, how about taking the position as a radiation tech?” Cuddy asked kindly. “I’m sorry, I’m going to have to turn that down.” Cuddy nodded. “I know anything is a step down, and I apologize, but” “Don’t apologize for doing the right thing. I’ll think of something. I just need to clear my head and” Buzz. Buzz. “Pardon me Lisa, House wants something.”

House was pacing around his team when Holmes walked in. “Okay mister expert. Our big, bad neurologist can’t decide if this is anxiety or not. The symptoms are...” House wrote them on the white board. Holmes went up and crossed out “heart pounding.” The rest is anxiety. Most likely caused by the stress the heart is causing. Something’s wrong with her heart. The heart pounding frequency is too consistent to be anxiety.” House clapped mockingly. “Okay, so wonder bread there has made a point: Anxiety IS involved, but caused by something. And since we have no additional symptoms, what do we go on? Answer: Everything. Start her on Interferon, Clonopin, and...Celexa.” “House, you can’t just have her drugged!” Foreman argued. “Welcome back Foreman.”

“I feel bad for him.” Cameron said to Chase. “House called him in here just to humiliate him and Foreman.” Chase finally hit his breaking point. “Damn it, if you’re in love with the kid, go have “No strings attached” sex with him instead!” Chase shouted. “I’m in love with him? You’ve got better sources than me!” Cameron shouted. “I can’t believe you’re dogging over my concern for a colleague.” “When you two pulled that little joke on me, you looked pretty damn comfortable lying on top of him half

naked!" Chase shot back. "Will you let that go? It was a joke!" "The joke was on me! I can't take it! Cameron, I just can't put up with it." "And I'm tired of your insane jealousy! I can't make a passing comment about a good looking guy without you getting your panties in a wad!" Cameron yelled. "GUYS! SHUT UP!" Foreman finally shouted. "She's developed new symptoms. Flu symptoms." His cell phone rang suddenly. House's voice greeted him. "Time of death 1:58."

Start Track "The Memory Will Never Die"

"Fulminant Myocarditis." House explained. "Rare disease...cut her down..." Even Chase and Cameron, who were fighting, stopped their squabble, shocked. "There was nothing we could have done?" "Nope. Death is funny like that, you can't do a damn thing about it."

Holmes finally shook hands with his new supervisor. Dr. Wilson needed an assistant, mostly to handle paperwork, but someone to talk to the patients when he couldn't. Cuddy gave them both a smile, which wavered when Cameron showed up at the door. "Could I borrow you for a second Dan? She said, before walking out. Holmes looked at Wilson and Cuddy. "Go for it." They said in unison.

"Listen, I've been thinking a lot lately. I think...maybe...you and I...you know." She smiled and shrugged shyly. Holmes was taken aback. His stoic nature couldn't even hide his shock. "But...I thought..." She smiled even wider and took his hand. "This isn't a "rebound" thing Holmes. You've been on my mind, and I wonder if it's because you and I were meant to be..." Holmes nature totally defied him. "My God..." he muttered. "You know, I WAS trying to kiss you six months ago, at the restaurant. I want to finish what I started."

As she kissed him (eventually he kissed back), House and Foreman watched. "Good for him. He seems like a nice kid." Foreman said. Chase joined them. "I can't even blame him. He laid off Cameron. He was...he was the better man this time." "No duh." House said. "Christ, someone go break them apart, I don't think they're breathing!" House quipped. Chase smiled. "You know...it's nice to see the kid get a break."

Their kiss ended. "That was a long time coming Holmes." Holmes nodded stupidly. She straightened his tie. "Come on, walk me home." At Holmes shocked look, she laughed. "You're too innocent to corrupt, no "guilt-free" sex for you. Maybe when you're older."

Wilson watched all this too. "I think you're rubbing off on him Wilson. You sleep with your patients and colleagues all the time." House pointed out. Wilson rolled his eyes. "You can be a bastard House." "Born that way, sorry."