

are most advanced in years are first in season. If two stags approach the same hind a combat must precede the enjoyment ; if their strength is nearly equal, they threaten, plough up the earth with their paws, make a terrible noise, and dart upon each other with the utmost fury, carry on their battles to such extremities that they often inflict mortal wounds with their horns ; nor is the combat ever concluded but by the defeat or flight of one of them. The conqueror loses not an instant to enjoy the fruits of his victory, unless another male happens to appear, when he is again obliged to quit his mate, and put him to flight as he had done the other. The oldest stags are sure to gain the battle, because they are more fierce and stronger than the young ones, who are obliged to wait patiently until their seniors are satisfied and quit the hind ; though sometimes indeed, they take the advantage while the two old ones are fighting, and then make a precipitate retreat. The hinds also prefer the old stags, not merely because they are the most valiant, but because they are more ardent. They are also the most inconstant, and commonly have several females at the same time ; and when they happen to have but one, they remain attached to her but a very few days,  
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