

Playing With Fire

by

A-Simple-Rainbow

Kurt/Blaine || AU || NC-17

Blaine's father is running for President of the USA. Kurt is a newly transferred student at Dalton Academy.

Kurt's father is also running for President. Blaine's choice of doing what he wants or what's right for his father's career has just gotten a tad more complicated. "It's their race, not ours. This shouldn't matter to us. I don't want it to."

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Author's Notes

(Small warnings first: 1) ok, in this universe Burt started his way into politics much, much earlier – having attended night classes for law school when Kurt was a practically a baby, and has been a senator since before Kurt was in high school. Kurt did, however, stay in lima, until now. Dalton is in Washington DC.

2) This is not particularly republican friendly, or at least not conservative-republican friendly. It's not just that I'm biased against it – which, I'll admit, I am – it's also that I feel like both Kurt and Blaine would be democrats, or independents at the very least.

3) I'm not American and I only know the basics of your election system, but I hope its enough, and whatever's 'wrong' maybe we could write off as artistic license.

4) I do know, however, that the timing of the elections in this fic would be wrong. But, for narrative purposes.... Bear with me?)

Chapter One

"Kurt..." Burt lays his fork down and dabs at his mouth with his napkin "There's something I need to talk to you about."

Kurt lowers his glass, licks the remaining drops of water from his lip and raises an eyebrow "Sounds important."

"It is." Burt nods.

Kurt looks at his father expectantly, and when Burt doesn't say anything for a while Kurt sighs "Am I supposed to guess?"

Burt cracks a weak smile before taking a deep breath "So." he begins "How would you feel about me..." he speaks slowly, every word punctuated "running... for President?"

"I... you... huh... what?"

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"Blaine, join us in your father's study for a second, please." His mother knocks gently on his door.

Blaine takes his eyes off his laptop, where he'd been typing out a slightly overdue essay "Hmm?"

"Your father and I need to talk to you for a minute, Blaine." She smiles in a warm, motherly way that has long since stopped feeling all that warm to Blaine. He saves his essay and moves to follow her.

His father is sitting at his desk and Cooper's voice is coming out of his phone. *Family conference*, Blaine thinks, *must be important*.

"Your brother's here, Coop." John Anderson says, and Cooper shuts up "Now, your mother and I have something we want to tell you both. We were going to do it over family dinner, but since Cooper says he can't make it for the next month..." he trails off for a moment before gathering himself again, straightens

his back again "I – *We* wanted you two to be the first to know that, for the next elections I am running for President."

Chapter 1

Kurt straightens his tie just as someone opens the doors. He hesitates only the smallest bit before entering the room. It's filled with politely smiling teenagers, like himself, dressed in navy blue uniform blazers and crisp white shirts. Everything looks so... self-important. He hopes this is just a wrong first impression, because Kurt had never thought he would meet someone *he'd* think should take a stick out of their asses, let alone a collective stick in a collective ass, but lo and behold.

Kurt used to think he was too formal, and many people often told them that they knew he was gay, not because he was *fabulous*, but because he seemed to enjoy the stick he had up his ass far too much. But here, he kind of feels like his stick is the smallest. At least figuratively speaking.

On the front of the room there's a table with three boys, gavel at its centre. Kurt nods shortly at them, smiling politely before saying "Hi. I'm Kurt Hummel, I'd like to audition."

The one in the middle looks at him with pleasant officiality "My name is Wes. It's a pleasure." He nods "We'd be very pleased and thrilled even to hear you, I'm sure, but you'll understand that only under very special circumstances would we let you perform with us right now, seeing as we're barely two weeks away from a competition date."

Kurt tries to look unaffected by this "Of course, I understand. But I would be willing to forego Sectionals. I understand there's not enough time to properly include a new voice to your arrangement. I'd still like to audition, though." Of course it'd be disappointing to sit sectionals out. "So long as I can still be part of the warblers and maybe sing with you afterwards, that would be great."

Wes raises his eyebrows and his smile never falters "Well, in that case, I don't see why you shouldn't audition right now."

Kurt had had a lot of time to think his song choice over – it'd been his entertainment on the way from Ohio to DC. He'd seen a few Warblers' performances online, so he knew their style. But he didn't exactly want to just start spewing off One Direction or anything top40-ish like that. He knew show tunes and big Diva ballads weren't exactly their thing, but this was an audition – it was supposed to be a solo, and it was

supposed to showcase *him*. And, anyway, what better way to show his talent than his ever-surprising and jaw dropping performance of Defying Gravity?

Warblers or not, it was his go-to. His signature. His identity. So in the end, he couldn't choose anything else.

He sings it as beautifully as ever, not a problem whatsoever. As he does it, he makes sure to survey his fellow students. The boys around the room seem terribly impressed, and Kurt's performance only gets better with his swelling pride. There is the chubby boy with tearing eyes, there is the blond, lanky boy continuously prodding the raven haired next to him, with wide eyes and disbelief.

And then there are big, bright, magnetic hazel eyes, admiringly smiling lips, and a strong chin resting on both hands, fingers curling softly against his cheeks.

He sits at the corner of the room, a book open, but now forgotten in front of him. Kurt isn't sure the boy even realizes he's leant that far forward into his table, or is staring so intently at Kurt, his smile growing into a grin every second that passes. More than the excited exchange of glances and the slack jaws, this quiet, unconscious and quite unabashed admiration from the boy in the corner is what makes Kurt blush violently as he draws to a close.

There is enthusiastic applause (well, as enthusiastic as it's going to get in a room full of private school preppy boys with the aforementioned collective stick up their collective ass). And Kurt chances just one glance at the corner boy (he's grinning, shaking his head a little, barely even clapping) before turning back to the council.

"Well, huh, thank you, Kurt, for that. That was quite great. If you'd wait until tomorrow."

Kurt returns his smile "Of course. I'll see you." He waves shortly and maybe a little awkwardly before grabbing his bag and leaving.

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Blaine can't help it. He'd promised himself he would stop doing it, once school started, but day after day he couldn't stop it. He chews on his lip as he googles Senator John Anderson. The hits are basically the same as the day before. There are some new posts on some forums, a new article where his dad is mentioned. But mostly it's the same. Of course he knows it hasn't been announced yet. Blaine's pretty sure his parents

will want him standing there, smiling in the background, as the grateful, dutiful and charming son that he is, when they finally do announce John's candidacy. But he still can't help it.

Maybe there are rumors and whispers, maybe someone leaked the information, somehow. Maybe, there are lists of possible candidates being made and his dad will be mentioned.

But today there is nothing. He sighs and clicks his laptop shut, moves to his bed.

You think Blaine's waiting for the announcement so he can feel proud to be Blaine Anderson, son of presidential candidate Sen John Anderson?

No. Blaine Anderson is dreading the announcement that will:

Make him Blaine Anderson, son of presidential candidate Senator John Anderson.

Make him Blaine Anderson, son of republican presidential candidate Senator John Anderson.

Make him Blaine Anderson, son of republican presidential candidate Senator John Anderson, advocate for traditional family values and... too many things Blaine disagrees with.

Make him Blaine Anderson, the boy who will have to ignore his own feelings, his own opinions, *himself*, because he's the son of republican presidential candidate Senator John Anderson, a man he believes would never be fit to be President of the United States.

It makes him feel lousy. Mainly because he's pretty sure he might be the worst son ever, but also because he knows there's a good chance his father will win. At least the primaries. Blaine's pretty sure his dad will have the primaries in the bag.

Just as sure as he is that he's gonna be creating a tumblr blog just so he can reblog every single quote of his dad attached to a "Are you fucking serious?" gif.

xXxXx

Kurt lays quietly on his bed, fiddling with his iPhone, when the picture of Burt Hummel and the customized ring tone (Pink Houses) rings.

"Hey!" he answers at once.

"Hey, bud. How's first day?"

"Ok, I guess. Everyone seems a little stiff..." he says "But maybe I'm just used to too much chaos."

"Yes, well, it's for the best, bud." Burt sounds a little tired.

"How's everything over there? The announcement coming up soon?" He asks in a half sigh.

"We're looking for the best time, but yes. It'll be soon."

"God, the suspense!" Kurt whines, mostly joking and he hears his father's chuckles. "I miss you dad."

"I miss you, too, kid. I'll be there soon."

After a moment of silence Kurt can't help it. The question has been bugging him for two months now.

"Dad..." he mutters, the atmosphere entirely different at once "do you think... do you think there's a good chance you'll win?"

He hears Burt's slow and tired intake of breath "I hope so, most of all."

"Yeah... but... hope aside. What are the chances?" he presses.

"I think... there's a chance."

"A good chance?"

"An ok chance."

Kurt lets out a long breath "I... I hope I can be a good First Son."

"You're my son, Kurt, and I love you and I'm proud of you. Being the President of the United States would never change that for me."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

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There's a hand on his shoulder and Blaine turns to find nervous blue eyes and a blush. He recognizes him at once, and grins.

"Hi, excuse me, can I ask you a question?" Kurt grimaces slightly "I'm new here..."

"Blaine." He offers his hand and Kurt takes it with a soft smile.

"Kurt."

"I know." Blaine nods "You auditioned for the warblers yesterday."

Kurt's eyebrows raise and his smile grows "You remember...!"

Blaine snorts. Boy, does he remember! That was something Blaine wasn't likely to forget anytime soon "Of course I do." He rolls his eyes, in good nature "I'm looking forward to rehearsal today..."

"Huh..." Kurt frowns. "Ok...?"

"O...k?" Why does Blaine suddenly feel like Kurt thinks he's being a jerk? It hits him "Oh, Wes hasn't talked to you, yet?"

"Huh, no."

"Oh!" Blaine gasps and then laughs "I'm sorry, I thought you knew! You're in!" He beams "You're in the Warblers."

"Oh..." Kurt doesn't seem all that excited "But... I'm still not supposed to go, right? Not until after sectionals."

"No!" He almost grabs the other boys arm caught up in his own enthusiasm "You're in, in! Like, in for sectionals, in."

Kurt stares at him, confused for a second, before his face splits in a grin and he gasps out "Really?"

"Really!" Blaine laughs "We were gonna play it a little safe, but not with you in the mix, we're not. Do you think two weeks is enough to prepare for a solo? Personally, I th- Oh! I'm sorry, you needed help...?"

"Oh..." Kurt waves his hand dismissively "I heard you say something about a solo there, so the fact that I needed to find the cafeteria is literally gone from my list of priorities. Poof. Gone. Vanished!" Kurt waved his hands for effect, before snapping back towards Blaine, with an eyebrow quirked "Now, you were saying?"

Blaine laughs, loud and clear "Come on, I was heading towards the cafeteria, too."

"Focus, - huh, Blaine, was it? – the solo. Talk to me about the solo." Kurt follows Blaine in a quick, excited step, and Blaine chuckles and has a fleeting feeling of familiarity and comfort – like he's known Kurt for... a lot more than five minutes.

"Alright..." he sighs with a smile "We were gonna do three songs, two solos and one duet. The two solos were mine, and the duet was between Nick and Dom, who, of course, you have no clue who they are..." he chuckles at Kurt's agreeing eye-roll "I suggested, you have my second solo."

Kurt's eyes are wide and his mouth opens in a little 'o' shape. It's adorable.

"Your solo. Like, an entire song? You'd just give that to me? Just like that...?!"

Blaine smiles "Just like that."

Kurt seems to preen at that. He's smiling, biting his lips in excitement and closing his eyes. Blaine struggles, trying not to think it's the single most cutest and yet gorgeous thing he's ever seen. Then Kurt lets out a long sigh and turns back to Blaine "Ok, alright... I can't believe I'm going to say this... but... That's not really fair."

"What?"

"I'm sure Nick and Dom were really excited to sing their duet, but how are they supposed to feel when the new kid comes along and kind of steals the show?" Kurt deflates "My old glee club was pure chaos and

madness. I was part of it since the beginning and I never once got a competition solo, not even a line. And it felt terrible!"

"You never got a solo?!" Blaine gasps "With your voice?!" Either that was one hell of a glee club with members like Barbra Streisand and Whitney Houston, or there really wasn't an excuse.

"I know right?" Kurt laughs, somewhere between bitter and genuinely amused "My point is, I remember how it felt, watching other people come along and take the solos, even if they were in the club for two weeks and me two years."

"Ok..." Blaine nods as they round the door to the cafeteria "I hear you." He gestures for Kurt go first as they stand in line "I understand that. But the reason it wasn't even up for debate that you'd get in the warblers was because your voice is the biggest asset this club could have right now. Hear me out. We have the toughest competition we've ever had this year. And it was between playing it safe or taking a risk and having it blow up in our faces. We were going to go with safe. But the-no, Kurt, don't eat that, that's never good – anyway, like I was saying, with you, we have the opportunity to take a risk and be sure it won't go bad." Blaine smiles enthusiastically "It wouldn't even be taking a risk. It'd just be wowing the judges. With a *countertenor*!"

Kurt smiles smugly again, like it's so obvious that his talent is that good and compliments are simply stated facts, but there is the soft hint of a blush creeping up his neck, and that alone melts Blaine's heart in three seconds.

"Well..." Kurt says, picking up his tray at the end of the food court, and waiting for Blaine to join him "I understand that. But surely, there's a lot of talent in your room you're ignoring."

Blaine shoots him a funny look "Do you *not* want the solo?"

"I do!" Kurt rolls his eyes "It's everything I've ever dreamed of, trust me, but..." he shrugs halfheartedly "I don't want to be the douche that sweeps in and steals everybody's spotlight on his first week. As much as I like it, I should probably share."

Blaine lays his tray down on a table near the windows "Ok... fine, I get that." He bites his lip "but it's not like that. This isn't me giving you my solo. This is the whole room yesterday in an uproar that you needed

to have a solo." He pauses to gather his words and thoughts when an idea struck him "Ok. How would you feel about a duet, then?"

Kurt eyes him, and chewed his food slowly, so Blaine continues.

"I'd have my solo, and then a duet with you, and then Thad could have a solo. And Dom would be ever so relieved that he wouldn't be featured." Kurt quirks an eyebrow and Blaine laughs "Dom's... a little nervous. Like all the time. He had a solo in the winter formal, last year, and it didn't go so well – he threw up halfway through it. But he's got a *terrific* voice. Mostly. During rehearsals. I guess."

"Oh...!"

"And the rest of the guys... they're good. But they're not... great. They're great for back up, and we're an a capella choir, so, lord knows we need good back up. Which they're all more than fine with doing."

"So, you're saying they would be ok with it...? Like, you're sure?"

"Come to rehearsal this afternoon, and we'll all discuss and vote on it."

"Vote on it?"

"We're very democratic!" Blaine smiles.

"I approve." Kurt nods "My old glee club wasn't all that democratic."

"I'm not sure if your old glee club was... well... any good, the way you talk about it."

"Hey!" Kurt flicks his (perfectly clean, thank you very much) napkin at Blaine "Only I get to talk dirt about the New Directions!"

"Ok...!" Blaine laughs "I'll be sure to keep that in mind." He lets his chuckles trail off before he turns back to look at Kurt, smiling "So, New Directions, then. Where's that?"

"Is that your very subtle way to talk about something else other than the warblers?" Kurt smirks.

"Well, I was going for subtlety..." Blaine shrugs "But, really, warblers aside. Where are you from?"

Kurt's smile seems smaller, and yet a lot more real when he answers "Ohio."

"Ohio? I lived there when I was kid..." Blaine comments lightly "For, like, three years."

"So you got out before it could scar you for life, huh?"

Blaine chuckles "I don't remember, is it that bad?" Kurt nods "That why you left?"

Kurt's smile falters only slightly "Partly. Dad works here in DC. I was going to finish high school back in Ohio, but..."

"Wait... dad... you're Kurt Hummel... Hummel. Why does... Your dad's Burt Hummel?"

"Huh... yeah..." he nods, suddenly blushing violently. Blaine gets himself in check. After all, how would he feel if someone were to just go up to him and start spewing off about his dad?

"Right, sorry. I'm easily excited." Blaine excuses himself "I've just... heard about him. A lot, lately." He says with a small smirk. There are rumors. They're still small, like his own father's, but there are rumors nonetheless.

Kurt lets his eyes fall to his food "Yeah, well..." he returns to look at Blaine, eyebrow quirked and playful smile back in place "Don't come asking for no favors. He's not that kind of politician!"

Blaine laughs "Wouldn't dream of it!" he refrains from saying he has his own father to ask favors from. "I've met him once or twice, anyway, and I do know he's very... honest." He pauses before turning the conversation back to where it was "So you were saying...?"

"I was saying...?"

"Why you moved from Ohio to DC two months into senior year."

"Oh, right!" Kurt gasps "well, hm, I just... had some troubles with a few people back in my old school, and the things keeping me there kind of stopped outweighing the things pulling me here. So... I just... moved."

Blaine feels the vagueness of the answer as an answer in itself. It's clear: 'it was hard, it was difficult, and I'm not ready to just talk about that with a stranger.'

"Anderson!" a voice bellows from behind him and Blaine turns to find Wes jogging up to him "Next time you want to leave your cell phone in the bedroom make sure either I'm not still sleeping or the alarm clock's off." He places Blaine's blackberry on the table "Jesus, it's bad enough having to listen to it when *you* wake up, I don't need to go on a scavenger's hunt first thing in the morning."

"Sorry Wes." Blaine smiles politely, just the smallest hint of amusement in his voice as he pockets the offending item.

Wes rolls his eyes before looking at Blaine's lunch company "Oh, hi there, Kurt!" he beams "I've been meaning to talk to you. You're in the warblers, practice today at five, ok?"

Kurt nods "Yeah, Blaine was telling me that."

"So that's where you both disappeared off into. Nick was wondering if you'd been kidnapped, Blaine." Wes rolls his eyes before turning on his heel and walking off.

"Oh, I didn't even think! I totally stole you!" Kurt gasps "I totally high jacked your lunch break!"

Blaine laughs "You totally did."

"I'm so sorry!"

"What are you even talking about, I'm kidding! You didn't steal or high jack anything. I came willingly." He assures Kurt, as he rests his fork "Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go talk to a friend before class. I'll see you at five?"

"Yeah, of course."

"Looking forward, see you then, Mr. Hummel." Blaine says with a wink, before turning on his heels, scrunching his face up and feeling the all consuming heat of shame and humiliation creep over his face.

He barely hears as Kurt calls back "Later, Anderson." He's too preoccupied with refraining from screaming at himself.

Relax Blaine, that was some lousy flirting, so maybe he didn't even notice at all!

xXxXx

Did he just wink? Was that a wink? Was he flirting? Is he even gay?

Kurt watches as Blaine walks away, wishing he would just turn around and tell him what exactly had just happened.

Dammit.

How is Kurt ever supposed to find someone if he can't even tell whether someone's flirting or not. But Kurt has always been a firm believer and supporter of 'Better safe than sorry'. As such, it is probably a lot safer to assume there had been nothing but friendly banter between the two of them. The cold humiliation of wrong assumptions is a feeling Kurt knows all too well, and can live without. Besides...

Blaine is.... so many adjectives that one could simply sum it up as 'too good to be true'.

It is, then, decided. Blaine Anderson has not just flirted with Kurt.

Blaine Anderson- wait.

Why did Blaine Anderson sound vaguely familiar?

Well, Blaine had apparently lived in Ohio, maybe they had acquaintances in common. Not that that was likely at all. Maybe it was just a common name.

He settled for typing Rachel a text 'Does the name Blaine Anderson mean anything to you?'

He picks up his tray and puts it away.

'No. Why?' came the reply.

'Just a new classmate. His name sounds familiar, is all. Can't place it, tho.'

'well, u're in dc. Maybe he's someone's son. Someone working w ur dad.'

'he did know who my dad was... anyway, not important. Just curious. How's everything back there?'

'not as much fun without you. Obviously.'

'I miss u, too! 3'

'how's the new school?'

'dalton is... different. Most people walk around like they got sticks up their asses. It's weird.'

'I thought you'd like that... :P'

'RACHEL!'

'sorry. Had to say it.'

His afternoon classes are surprisingly interesting. The teachers here are actually interested in teaching, and most of them even know how to do it. He makes sure to write down practically everything, and by the end of the day his hand is sore. He massages his knuckles and his palm as he heads towards the Warbler's practice room.

Once he arrives there are grins and good natured pats on the shoulder, welcomes and slightly awkward high fives. Wes strikes his gavel and everyone quiets down turning towards the three seniors that make up the council.

"Alright everyone. Let's first welcome our newest addition to the warblers – Kurt Hummel." There is a round of enthusiastic applause, and Kurt thinks the stick must've slipped out a little. "Now, on to more pressing matters. It was unanimous amongst the group that Kurt should be featured as soloist on our sectionals performance."

Kurt raises his hand "If I may?" Wes gestures that he has the floor "Blaine told me as much this afternoon. Honestly, I feel terribly uncomfortable about the whole deal. I mean, don't get me wrong, I will cherish any opportunity I have for a solo. But I know what it feels like to be neglected or forgotten, and I know most of you have probably been wishing for the opportunity to have a solo since you've been in the warblers. It just doesn't feel right to basically barge through that door and snatch your well deserved solos." He sighs "I just don't want to be the idiot who steals anyone's spotlight."

Wes chuckles and looks amused at Blaine before turning back to Kurt "It's not stealing if we give it to you." He says "Everyone in favor Kurt performing a duet with Blaine raise your hand."

The whole room has their hands raised.

"Alright, so that means either Nick or Dom would take over Blaine's second solo. As Dom has already made terribly clear several times, he's happy to just hand it over to Nick. All those in favor?"

Again the warblers raise their hand in perfect synchrony.

"The warblers are terribly democratic." Wes smiles "And you're still the least featured soloist, if it makes you any happy."

Kurt blushes and nods.

"On to song selection!" David, the ever-grinning, chocolate skinned senior next to Wes, perks up "For time economy reasons, Blaine's opening solo will stay the same, only we'll make it closing song instead. Nick, I've thought about it for a while now, and maybe you can handle Uptown Girl, right? No need to change that either...?"

Nick nods in earnest determination.

David scribbles something before looking around the room again and beaming brighter than ever before "As for the duet. Guys. I think it's time. I think this is our chance." Everyone's chuckling and exchanging amused glances "Mika!"

There are burst of laughter, there's even a whoop and a clap. Wes is laughing and slaps his the other councilman cheerfully "There, David, I know how happy you must be! I'm happy for you."

David nods excitedly and gasps out "You can't imagine how long it's been since I wanted to say that!"

"We do!" A few boys laugh out.

Kurt stands there smiling but still confused.

Finally a still chuckling Wes strikes his gavel for order and David speaks again. "Now that we've all celebrated the fulfillment of our life-long dream." A coughed out 'yours' interrupts him for just a second "I was thinking something cheerful. Now, Grace Kelly is a little 'been there, done that' – every show choir with a fairly good female singer has already attempted and debauched it. We Are Golden... it's not really our style, I don't think, and it would be a terribly obvious choice as far as acapella goes. So, I was thinking Touches You...?"

There's some debate, some excited ideas thrown here and there, but in the end it's voted and decided that Blaine and Kurt will duet with Touches You (*duet*, not *do it*, you perv!). Wes urges everyone to step up their game, and extraordinary practices are scheduled.

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The meeting is winding down when Blaine saunters over to Kurt.

"So..." he says quietly "a few of us were getting together at the common room next to the dorms for a movie..."

Kurt raises his eyes and Blaine wants to stare at those forever "Am I invited?"

Blaine smirks "No." he shakes his head, still smirking "I'm just letting you know."

"Oh..." Kurt blushes slightly and drops his eyes.

Blaine has to laugh then, because how is it that he would actually think Blaine was being serious? "I'm kidding!" he hastens to explain "I'm kidding!" he lays a hand on Kurt's shoulder "You are most definitely invited."

"Oh!" Kurt perks up at once, blushing even more, and it's adorable "Ok! What movie?"

"It's Thad's choice today, so I'll guess something historical."

Kurt hums and nods "Exciting."

"Also." Blaine follows Kurt as he hoists his bag over his shoulders and starts towards the door "We should – huh – we should practice."

"Now?" Kurt quirks an eyebrow.

"No!" Blaine gasps, realizing how dumb he must've sounded "Not now. I mean, just in general. We should practice. The duet. I mean. So... maybe, like, after school... everyday... if you can...?"

"Well, other than Friday, which is family dinner day and absolutely mandatory, I'd love to."

"Ok, ok!" Blaine beams "Cool! Great!" he swings his hands around, unsure what he should be doing with them. Unsure of what he should be doing with anything, really "So, I have to... do stuff. I'll see you in ten for that movie, then?"

"I guess."

"Cool!" Blaine smiles "I'll... stuff." He mumbles before turning on his heels, leaving a slightly confused Kurt behind.

He finds Wes at once – thank God – and falls into step right next to him "I'm in trouble. Like deep trouble."

"What?" Wes frowns, turning left.

"Boy trouble." Blaine whispers, checking that no one overhears.

"Kurt?" Wes smirks knowingly.

"He's so perfect!" Blaine sighs dejectedly. "He's just so cute, and adorable, and pretty, and... guh!"

Wes rolls his eyes "I think I saw him eyeing you up... I don't see the trouble."

"You know what's the trouble." Blaine says, suddenly a little more serious and a lot less 'schoolboy's got a crush and can't stop blushing'.

Wes sighs "I think you need to stand up for yourself, Blaine." He says "What's the worst thing that could happen? You cost him his career? Come on, you don't even believe in his career."

"That's n-" he sighs frustrated "I don't want my dad to lose his career because of me! I want him to lose his career because his ideas suck! And... I guess, it'd be nice if I didn't give him one more reason to hate me, you know?"

"Well, if he hates you because you're living your life he's not doing his job that well, is he?" Wes points out "At some point you just have to stop and think if it's the son who's disappointing the father, or the father who's disappointing the son."

Blaine gives him a weak smile.

xXxXx

"Movie!" David chants as he walks in, Blaine and Wes by his side.

Kurt's sitting at the edge of a couch. It's awkward.

His eyes catch Blaine's and the latter smiles at once. The word flirting has been at the back of Kurt's brain since lunch, and every once in a while it makes a solid appearance. But the truth is he's totally not sure if Blaine's gay or straight. Everyone he's talked to that mentioned Blaine never said anything, and there was that one person that mentioned a ex-girlfriend, but 1) Kurt, technically, had an ex-girlfriend too, so... and 2) he might have misunderstood whose ex it was.

Blaine's earlier guess was right as the DVD starts playing and it turns out to be Troy. Blaine somehow ends up sitting next to Kurt, and even though they're not even touching Kurt swears his skin is on fire. There are those times when Blaine leans over to comment or joke about something and nearly half of those time Kurt can't do anything except nod because Blaine's lips were so close to his ear that he felt his breath.

He turns to look at Blaine a few times, when he hears his easy chuckles and a couple of times their eyes meet and Kurt ends up blushing too much for his own sanity. By the end of the movie Kurt swears his can feel Blaine's hand right next to his leg, resting on the couch, dangerously close, and there's maybe a fraction of movement in the pinkie, the only finger that's actually touching Kurt – even if it's so light it's barely there – but Achilles is struck and Jeff, next to Blaine grunts and jumps in disappointment, jostles them and Blaine's hand goes up to rub his chin, and he's sighing.

Flirting is the word haunting Kurt right now.

The movie ends before Kurt can muster up the courage to make his hand rest where Blaine's was – between the two of them – or just move his leg so their knees would brush. But maybe that's a good thing because his face is already burning so much that if he actually had done any of those things it might've caught on fire.

There's a few minutes of stretching - some fell asleep – and chatting amicably about the movie. And then Thad stands "Oh!" he says "By the way, I just got back from the Principal's office, guys. The kissing booth is a go, again. Obviously."

"Kissing booth?" Kurt blanches slightly.

"It's for the fundraiser...?" Thad offers, but of course Kurt has no idea what's the fundraiser.

"We have a fundraiser every year so that the school can maintain a steady support of an educational program in southern Africa. It's like a huge preppy school version of a carnival" Blaine smiles "Every club has to come up with some sort of booth or diversion. And the Warblers usually get a Kissing booth."

"Oh."

"We usually raise a ton of money." Thad says proudly, and Jeff nods with a smirk.

"Oh..." Kurt attempts to smile.

"We might just make even more this year..." Blaine whispers nudging Kurt's knee with his own.

Flirting.

Chapter Two

"So, how's the new school?" his dad asks.

Kurt looks up from his plate and smiles "It's been great, actually." He answers truthfully "They were a bit stiff, at first. But maybe it's just on first impression."

"That's good."

"Yeah, and I'm not taking a slushy to the face every other day." He shrugs.

"Among other things..." Burt mumbles under his breath before sighing "But I don't want to talk about... that. I haven't seen my son in two weeks! Tell me about the parrots, or whatever."

"Warblers, dad." Kurt chuckles "Well, like I told you, they gave me a solo, but I kind of felt uncomfortable with an actual solo. I don't want everyone to hate me just yet. It's kind of nice having the chance to start over, and I'm trying to keep my clothes stain free. So... I declined the solo, but I'll be doing that duet I told you. It's a Mika song. You know Mika?"

Burt raises an eyebrow "He new?"

"For you?... fairly." He concedes with a smirk "Anyway, he's the one with song 'why don't you like me, why don't you like me...'"

"Oh, yeah, I heard that on the radio a couple of times."

"Right, but that's not the song I'm singing. The one I'm doing is called Tou-"

Kurt is interrupted by his father cell phone ringing. They know it's urgent because it's the campaign cell phone, and there's only a few people with that number. All of them would know better than to call him during family dinner if it wasn't actually important. Kurt smiles as if allowing his father to take the call.

"Yeah?... yeah... huh... ok... which channel?" he says as he gets up from the table, and starts walking towards the living room. He gestures for Kurt to follow "And you're sure?... right, right...." He mumbles as he flicks the TV on and starts looking for the right channel "Ok, got it. I'll call you. Bye."

He throws the phone on the couch as he sits down, finally putting the remote down. The news anchor is announcing something.

"What's up?" Kurt says, sitting next to Burt.

"They think Senator John Anderson's announcing his candidacy for President."

Kurt's eyebrows raise and he immediately turns to the TV screen, where a reporter is now standing in a conference room, a little stage set up behind him, and a sea of reporters between them. "Republican, right?" Kurt asks.

"Yeah."

"Big threat?"

Burt shrugs "Could be." He nods "Big deal with the Republicans."

Kurt hums in understanding but keeps his eyes on the screen. The reporter rushes to announce that the senator is about to talk. And after just a few moments Senator John Anderson enters the room, family in tow. *Family* in tow.

John Anderson. Claudia Anderson. Cooper Anderson and

Blaine

Anderson.

Of course.

"No!" Kurt gasped "No way!"

"What?"

"That's... that's Blaine!"

"Yeah" his father nods, indifferent "I met him a couple of times at functions. You would've too if you ever agreed to come. Good kid."

"Yeah... he's... huh... he goes to Dalton. He's in the warblers..."

"Oh!" Burt chuckles "Might get a little awkward soon, then."

"Oh, you can definitely say that..." Kurt mutters, just as the senator on screen clears his throat.

His speech is short but strong. Promises to prove himself the best man for the job. Promises to honor the best country in the world. Promises to uphold the finest and most traditional values. Kurt is torn between staring in disbelief at Blaine as he stands there beside his brother, and actually listening to the clichéd and frankly predictable and yawn inducing speech.

He hears his father sigh, he looks just as unimpressed as Kurt.

"What does this mean for you now?" Kurt asks.

"Means I should probably start thinking of announcing, too."

Kurt nods.

"You're still ok with it, right?"

Kurt rolls his eyes "As long as I get to be in charge of your clothes during the campaign, I told you, it'll be our best and biggest adventure."

"Alright, good. I'm glad."

Kurt lays awake most of that night. The picture of Blaine – ever dashing in his black suit and light green tie – carved into his brain. They were getting along so well. This would change everything, wouldn't it? Well, Blaine already knew his father would be running, and he knew whose son Kurt was, as well. And maybe he even suspected *Burt* would be running – there were rumors, after all. Maybe it'd be ok? It would suck if Blaine stopped talking to him because of this.

In the wee hours of the morning, when Kurt's brain isn't exactly on its best behavior and things become blurry with stupidity and wild ideas he even entertains the paranoid thought that Blaine knew everything all along and that's why he had been flirting with Kurt, because he was trying to get close to him and steal information. Merely seconds after that Kurt is laughing at himself and burying his face in his pillow, muffling out the sound.

xXxXx

Blaine wakes up late on Saturday. Not that he even slept. Much.

His chest still feels as heavy as it did the night before – as it started feeling when his father announced his candidacy.

Blaine feels selfish for not wanting his father to even win the primaries. He feels selfish because he'd rather a pink, anorexic and blind elephant won than his own father.

But he really doesn't want to have to deal with the consequences of being the President's son, and, most of all, he doesn't want to deal with being *that* President's son.

The President that would be the laughing stock of everyone with half a brain (ok, so maybe Blaine's being a little harsh, and his father wouldn't be *that* bad).

Several people had sent him texts in the meantime. Congratulations, cools, good lucks, how are yous (from people he hadn't spoken to in years).

He gained like.... hundreds of followers on twitter and everything, very stupidly, became ten thousand times more clear. Because with a simple tweet he could easily destroy his father's campaign. First thing that morning he types up a preemptive apologetic tweet "Guys, you do know I'm not the one running for President, right? ;)" – as if those words alone could justify any horrible thing he was bound to let slip.

He spends his day moping around, to be honest. Between listlessly watching TV and carelessly practicing the piano his most recurrent thought is how awkward school is gonna be like the next week. Even Warbler's practice is bound to be terrible.

His parents eye him with something akin to annoyance and curiosity mixed together during dinner. Cooper's as oblivious to his moping as ever, and his grandparents are too busy gushing over everything to notice.

He's so distracted by his own misery that the announcement almost flies by him.

His grandparents are moving in. Oh. Well. Fuck.

He gives his best fake smile and nods his excitement at the news.

By the time desert comes along eating it with as much passion as he can is all Blaine can do to keep the tears off his eyes.

Before you say anything about all of this, about Blaine being a big baby, about Blaine overreacting, about Blaine needing to grow up and man up, you should know what happened when he was fourteen.

When he was fourteen Blaine fell in love (well, he had a crush, but all things accounted for, it was as good as love at that age). He fell in love with another boy. It turned out that when he told said boy about said love he got a black eye. But that's not really what actually matters in this story. What matters is that when his parents asked what had happened Blaine hadn't been able to lie – he had never lied to his parents. He told them he was gay.

There had been no shouts, and to Blaine's enormous relief, no punches this time. There had been disappointment, of course. It was written on their faces, clear as day, that they would've rather he told them he was flunking, had gotten expelled or entered a street gang.

Afterwards, his father called him into his office and laid down the deal. Blaine would tell the boy that he'd been confused but not anymore, he would transfer schools to somewhere with a more... strict privacy policy, and he would tell no one else about it. In return his parents would pretend like everything was normal.

They almost did, too. Except that his father seemed to double his efforts at spending time with Blaine – they always found themselves putting together car parts, playing baseball, football, basketball, going for long hikes. But Blaine was gay which, however surprising it might be for Sen. Anderson, does not mean retarded, so he knew what was going on. When he was sixteen he entered his father's study, closed the door behind himself and, for the second time in his life, he was brutally honest with his father. John got the

message just loud enough and after that their relationship had resumed to 'good morning' and 'how's school?' every once in a while.

Blaine almost wished he'd said nothing at all.

Why is this story important now? Because Blaine is on the verge of tears, not due to the fact that he would never be sure again who was truly his friend or who was just using him, it wasn't that he would never be Blaine again, but would always be Blaine Anderson, John Anderson's son, it wasn't even that his family would probably become even more distant with all the pressure.

It was all of that, *and* the idea that he would never, ever get out of the prison that was his father. The campaign and the election would be another year of silence. If his father won, another four years. If he ran again, and he won again, *another* four years. And Blaine wasn't sure he could bring himself to live that life. To live that lie.

Not even for his own father.

So. My point is. Don't you dare judge Blaine if the first thing he does when he excuses himself from the table is lock himself up in his bedroom and cry into his pillow.

xXxXx

When Monday rolls around Kurt is kind of nervous. He knows he'll see Blaine today, he just doesn't know how to react, Should he congratulate him? Tease him? Pretend nothing ever happened?

He couldn't very well wish Blaine's father good luck, now, could he?

And every scenario that runs through his head just makes it so much clear how much more awkward everything is going to get once Burt announces his own candidacy.

The worst thing about everything is that Kurt actually thought he had something real good going on with Blaine. Even if it was just friendship. The previous week they had kept their agreement and practiced together for two hours and a half on Wednesday and Thursday. Only, they had only practiced in the actual sense of the word for half that time. Afterwards they just sat around, distracted, talking happily about too many things at once. Blaine had even invited him to a RENT production the next week, saying he had gotten a couple of free tickets from his brother's girlfriend who works as a stage producer.

He catches sight of Blaine's gel helmet at the end of the corridor. He's shaking a few hands and smiling politely. Kurt avoids Blaine's line of sight as he slips into the bathroom. He just wants to say Hi and Good morning like nothing's changed over the weekend. But that would be insane. And until Kurt's sure about what to say, it's probably best to stay away.

He's washing his hands when the door clicks open and he looks in the mirror to find Blaine standing there.

"Oh." He turns "Hi!"

Blaine smiles a little tightly "Hi."

"I... hum... saw you on TV on Friday." He says lamely. Closes his eyes and tries not to curse himself out loud.

"I... yeah." Blaine shrugs "Big adventure, I guess."

"I can't believe I didn't understand it earlier, though! I knew your name was familiar. Dad's mentioned you a few times."

Kurt sighs a little. Blaine doesn't seem happy at all and Kurt's not sure if he's mad at Kurt for not congratulating him or anything, or if he's just not happy at... whatever. But either way Kurt decides he needs to get a grip on himself. Humor. Jokes. Those always work. "Huh, you'll... you'll understand if I don't wish your dad good luck, right?" Kurt offers and quickly remembers that no, jokes don't always work, as Blaine only gives him a small smile "I'm afraid my allegiance will stay with the democrats." He explains lamely.

Blaine seems to scoff a little "I guess that's why they say this is a free country." He rolls his eyes "Relax, Kurt, I'm really not offended that you wouldn't vote for my father."

"Correction – won't vote for your father." Kurt says "I'll be of age during the elections."

"Right, yeah, me too. I forgot that." Blaine sighs.

"You don't seem very happy." Kurt notes.

"I'm... I guess I'm just tired. Big weekend, is all." Blaine smiles and this time it almost reaches his eyes.

"Oh, well, I hope it'll get easier, then..." Kurt offers, honest "I'll go now... I'll be late for class."

"Right. See you later."

Kurt nods softly before turning around, his hand is on the door when Blaine calls him.

"Hey Kurt...?"

"Yeah?"

"This won't... this won't have to change anything... right?"

"What do you mean?"

"We're still... f-friends, right?" There's an open and unguarded vulnerability in Blaine's eyes that overwhelms Kurt. He's sure it's not intentional, he's sure Blaine doesn't know he's showing it, but now Kurt sees that Blaine's not just tired, or even annoyed at everyone's sudden interest in him. He sees Blaine's hurting.

"O-of course!" Kurt rushes out at once "I don't care whose son you are, Blaine! All I care is that you have tickets for Rent this week!"

Blaine laughs, and it definitely reaches his eyes and Kurt feels his chest warm a little at that. He finds out he really likes making Blaine smile and laugh. Blaine's gorgeous right then.

Kurt catches himself before he thinks, does or says anything stupid "I'll see you for lunch, then?"

"Yeah, definitely!" Blaine beams a spark in his eye that Kurt can't ignore because he knows he was the one to put it there.

xXxXx

Lunch can't come soon enough. If Blaine has to politely accept another congratulatory hug or handshake he's going to sabotage the campaign right this very minute, and, on the other hand classes are too silent and full of stares. He nearly runs towards the cafeteria, only stopping himself as he remembers that Kurt's probably not there yet.

Kurt. Kurt is an angel, is what he is. Kurt and Wes are his angels. The guardians of his sanity. Blaine sees the line, and there's still no sign of Kurt. He sighs dejectedly before subjecting himself to the stares and whispers as he stands.

There's a tap on his shoulder and Blaine does his best to fake a smile before he turns around, only to find Kurt. He stops himself from gasping 'Oh, thank God!' and instead just smiles for real "Hey!"

"Hey" he returns Blaine's beam "How's your day so far? Lots of kissing up to you?" he whispers.

"You have no idea." Blaine shakes his head "I think it'd be better if my dad had announced he was a terrorist, or something. At least that way people would just leave me alone." He mumbles. He knows he's exaggerating, but he doesn't care.

Kurt smiles sympathetically "I'm sure it'll wind down in a little while. By next week everyone's forgotten about it."

Blaine laughs sarcastically "I've been approached by seven team captains to ask if I want to join – no try out necessary. It's like I'm the messiah or something!" He rolls his eyes "The football team...! Really, the football team? I love to watch a good game like every other guy, but come on, look at me and tell me I should be on a football team, I dare you."

Kurt's biting back his laughter, Blaine can tell "Well, if I've played football, I'm sure you can too."

"You've played football?!" That shouldn't be as hot as it is. Football players are as dumb as they are big. But Kurt in shoulder pads, and a navy blue jersey, and those white tight pants...

"Don't look so surprised, Anderson. I'm not a box, there are more than four sides to me. Or if I am, I'm a box of chocolates, cuz I'm just full of surprises."

Blaine giggles, and then tries not to face palm.

"Anyway, I was just kicker for one game. I did win the game for us, though." He shrugs nonchalant, but Blaine sees the small undertone of pride and smugness. It's adorable.

"I guess I could be kicker..." he says, as they finally reach the trays and picks two up, handing the second one to Kurt "I do play soccer pretty well, so I could probably kick that ball just right."

"You play soccer?" Kurt raises an eyebrow.

"Yeah, I'd be team captain this year, but between that, being the warbler's lead soloist and Student Body President... I'd fail ever subject. So, soloist and Student Body it is. I can barely manage those as it is."

Kurt gives him a small smile and seems to blush a little as he says "Well, let me know when you have a game. I'd love to go and cheer."

Blaine grins at once, and he blushes a little "That'd be great. I'm afraid an all-boys school lacks a little bit in the cheerleading department, actually."

"Oh, maybe I could change that, too." Kurt quips "I was a cheerleader! I liked that better than actually playing the game."

"Cheerleader?" Blaine gasps, barely registering the plate the lunch lady was handing him.

"Again with the tone of surprise!" Kurt's laughter is light and tinkling "I won us Nationals, too. A fourteen minute Celine Dion medley in French." There is definite smugness now, not even barely concealed.

Blaine's stuck thinking he would give anything to see that performance, or even just see Kurt in a cheerleading outfit. He thinks it would probably be really unfair because the girls would be wearing mini-skirts and the boys pants. That's definitely unfair. "I'd like to see that..." Blaine says, but he's not sure he put enough tease in his voice to not sound like a creep.

Kurt looks away, a soft blush settling on his cheeks and Blaine bites his tongue. They head over to a table in a semi-awkward silence. "H-how was your old school like?" Blaine finally breaks it.

Kurt seems a little surprised at the question at first but then he shrugs "It was a public school in Ohio, how do you think it was?" he chuckles, half bitter.

"How did that work, though? Your dad being a senator and all, how did that work?" He asks, honestly interested now "Didn't people just... bother you all the time?"

"I never really talked much about my dad at school, and even if I did, I'm not sure half of them would know what a senator is, let alone that my dad was one." He shrugs again "The people that did matter, though, they knew, but they learnt not to... say much about it."

"Why'd you leave now, then. Middle of the first term and all...?" he's asked this before, he knows, but maybe now Kurt will answer.

Kurt's expression falters "I just... some... stuff happened over there, and my dad's... he's work... huh... anyway, it just didn't make sense for me to stay there anymore." Blaine once again understands, and begins searching for new topics when a tray is dropped next to him.

"Hey, guys!" Wes beams "Mind if we join you?" he asks, just as David sits next to Kurt.

"Not at all!" Blaine smiles.

"You look happier." Wes raises an eyebrow "The advantages of possibly becoming the President's son finally caught up with you."

"Please!" Blaine rolls his eyes "Like there are any!"

"No one will ever say no to you again!" David points out.

Blaine refrains from throwing back 'My dad will always say no to me.' "Can we... not?" The three other boys nod, looking a little guilty and Blaine's chest tightens slightly "So, Dave, when's the first game?"

David jumps right into game dates and chances of winning and opposing teams and best players. Blaine knows this, knows that if David gets to talking about football he won't shut up, so today he's eager to rely on that. Blaine knows both Wes and Kurt know what he did, but he also knows they understand why. They're smiling, nodding and asking follow-up questions, after all.

Kurt's laughing when he receives a text. He reads it, his smile disappears for a moment before he looks up, sees that Blaine's watching and smiles again as he pockets the cell phone. It hits Blaine that that was probably rude. Sure, he didn't read the text, but he's pretty sure watching someone read it is almost as nosy.

Blaine blushes, clears his throat and looks away.

xXxXx

"That was amazing!" Kurt gushes as they step out onto the cool early winter wind.

Blaine beams "I'm glad you liked it. I've seen it before, a long time ago. But I think this was better."

Kurt tightens his coat around himself – it was colder than he thought it would be "Yes, well, I'm afraid there aren't many chances to watch a live stage production of Rent, back home."

"What, Ohio's not bursting with culture?" Blaine teases.

"Oh yes, Lima will be the cultural capital, this year."

"I will never get why you stayed there all that time if all you do is insult the place." Blaine chuckles. Kurt knows he's only half kidding. It's a recurrent topic for them – Kurt's old school, his old life in Lima.

Kurt's torn between not wanting to talk about it, to admit to being such a victim, and actually wanting to tell him everything. Kurt feels like Blaine would understand, would be sympathetic without feeling sorry for him. Would be respectful without treating it like it was the end of the world.

"I had really good friends." Kurt hugs himself, both because he's cold and because he feels like he could use one. He's been missing them, lately. Every time Rachel or Mercedes, or Tina or even Finn text him with something he misses them. Every time he's in warblers' practice (no matter how nice it actually is) he misses them. "New Directions, as unfair about solos distribution as it was... was like a home... a family. We were – are – pretty close. Some of my happiest memories... are of them."

"That's nice."

"Yeah." He smiled sadly "No matter how bad things got there, I... I'll always miss them, and it was... it was just... almost as hard walking away, as it would've been to stay."

"How hard?"

"Hm?" Kurt turned to look at Blaine who was looking at him with a frown and searching eyes.

"How hard would it have been to stay? How bad were things, Kurt?"

Maybe he should. Maybe someone should know it. Maybe it would make him feel better. "Well, I was... I was the only openly gay kid at school. So. that sucked." He resisted the urge to wrap his arms around

himself even tighter "Obviously I was bullied. The whole glee club was, but... I had it worse. I guess. You know, standard procedure, dumpster tossing, slushies to the face, locker shoving, you know..."

"Kurt..."

"And then... there was this... this Neanderthal." He continued as if he couldn't hear the strain in his own voice "He just... he made it his mission to make my life a living hell. It was ridiculous, how open he was with his hate. At some point last year there wasn't a day that went by that I wasn't shoved. I... I had to wear long sleeves every day so no one would see the bruises."

"Jesus...!"

"And then he just... he just." He swallowed and found Blaine's eyes, intense and so present "he just kissed me." He saw as Blaine's eyebrows shot up "On the first day of school, this year, to be exact. Well, it wasn't a kiss so much as him shoving his tongue down my throat until I managed to push him off me. He ran away and for a couple of days it almost looked like he was going to stop tormenting me, but then it started again and worse, and he just kept giving me these... weird, creepy looks. And one day I'm... minding my own business, he comes up, bangs a fist against my locker and asks if I told anyone. Of-of course I didn't, you know, I'm not crazy and I don't believe in that, anyway..." He glances at Blaine but can't bring himself to keep his eyes in place "And he just, just says he'll kill me if I do..."

"Oh."

"I know he didn't mean it... I don't think he did. I don't know. I just. I was so terrified, everyday, I was... I was at the end of my rope... So... I just. When the opportunity came. I just. I transferred."

"God, Kurt, that's... that's..."

"Not very brave, I know. But there's a fine line between bravery and stupidity, and I think I might've been walking it."

"Shh, no, that's not – that's not what I was going to say, Kurt. At all." Blaine put a steady hand on Kurt's shoulder "I was gonna say that that was heavy stuff. And that... huh... if you need to ever... talk about it. I'm here. And... I might not know exactly what to say to that, because.... I've never ... yeah. But. I'm glad you've transferred."

Kurt tried his best at a smile "Yeah?"

"Yeah, I got to meet you." He shrugged with a smile, and Kurt could've swooned, but instead he just shivered "You're freezing, aren't you?" He asked as he moves both his hands up and down Kurt's arms, as if the friction alone could take away the cold wind. It helps, though, a little.

"A little."

"Let's go, or we'll be late for curfew, anyway." Blaine checks his watch. They jog to Kurt's car.

For a while, they're just driving in comfortable silence, music streaming freely from the stereo. Kurt sees from the corner of his eyes Blaine's frequent glances his way, and maybe he should pretend like he doesn't notice, but it's stronger than him when he turns his head to meet his eyes. They smile briefly before Kurt turns back to the road.

He hears Blaine clear his throat after a while "I'm glad you told me that, Kurt."

Kurt glances sideways and finds Blaine smiling comfortably "Yeah..." he smiles back "I'm glad, too."

"It's been a while since I met someone I could... just be myself with, and you should know you can too." Blaine says then "I can be your friend, if you want to."

"I-I do..." Kurt says at once. It doesn't take more than a split second before the heaviest weight settles on his stomach, making it feel full and empty and nauseous all at the same time. It's been a while since his father told him he'd be running for President, but not once since then had Kurt actually wanted to tell someone this much. But he'd promised. He'd promised his dad he wouldn't. And he was pretty sure telling the opposing candidate's son was just about the worst way of breaking that promise.

"Good." He doesn't need to look to see Blaine is smiling, beaming maybe.

"Blaine..." he mutters as he pulls into Dalton's parking lot "I should... Listen. Tomorrow... You should. You should watch the news."

"Hmm, I always do. But. Ok."

"And hum..." he cuts the engine "something's gonna happen that... I... I really hope... I hope you'll still be my friend."

Blaine frowns, and Kurt looks away, takes his keys out of the ignition and clicks the door open "What's going to happen, Kurt?" he says, placing a hand on Kurt to keep him in place.

"I... I can't tell you. But. It's not. It's not hard to guess, Blaine."

"Well, maybe I'm dumb, then..."

"Just... watch the news. And. Keep it in mind that I couldn't tell you. Or I would."

"Kurt, you're kind of scaring me, right now." Blaine tries to sound half amused, but there's actually apprehension.

"Well... hopefully there's no reason for that." He smiles, and it's forced "I just. I really want us to be friends." He refrains from adding that he wants to be more than friends "Just remember that, ok?"

xXxXx

Blaine waits impatiently for the newscast. He barely registers as his father comes to sit next to him. "Here you are." He says.

Blaine glances but says nothing back.

"How was school this week. You didn't say anything at dinner."

"It was fine."

"Fine?"

"Yes, dad, it was fine."

"I was expecting you to be a little more excited." His dad attempts a joke, but even his chuckles are feeble.

"Dad, I'm not the one running for President and you'll excuse me if I don't feel excited about it." Blaine mutters.

"Blaine..." his father says warningly and picks up the remote, turns the TV on mute.

Blaine shoots him a look and mutters "I was watching that."

His father ignores it purposefully "Blaine, I know this isn't easy on any of you guys-"

"Oh, don't worry, I know my part and I will play it, dad. Just don't expect me to be happy about it." He says, finally meeting his father's eyes.

"We... should probably talk... about that. Blaine. About..." He trails off, clears his throat, straightens his back, and Blaine knows what's coming "I know we haven't discussed it in a long time, Blaine. But, huh, I need to know that you won't... that I won't have to worry about..."

"Me being gay?"

"Yes." Blaine sees his father harshness, it's like his eyes are saying 'If you're gonna be blunt about it, then so am I' "You can't tell anyone – *anyone*. And maybe you could even... find a nice girl."

"Dad." Blaine sighs "I won't tell anyone, you can relax. But I will not date a girl."

His father nods shortly "Ok. Just make sure-"

"I'm not a problem in your campaign, got it."

"Bla-" he's cut off by his cell ringing. He takes it "Hm, hm, right, hm, yeah, I'm watching it right now, ok, yes, sure. Bye."

"What's happening?" Blaine asks at once, as his father flick the sound back on.

Blaine knows it now. He's almost sure of it. He's suspected it since the night before, after he got to his dorm room and started thinking about it, running scenarios and possibilities in his head. Today, throughout classes and the fact that Kurt was absent from the afternoon classes was making Blaine more and more sure about everything. And there had been rumors, after all.

Now he only needed to see it before he was sure.

"Big announcement." Is all his father says "CLAUDIA!" He calls "Cooper! Dad! Mom!"

Everyone comes at once, Blaine's grandfather shooting him a look and Blaine stands to offer him his seat.

The news anchor announces the breaking news and the name Senator Burt Hummel is loud and clear in Blaine's head.

Suddenly the newsroom is replaced by a conference room, much like the one Blaine had been in exactly a week ago, and Burt's walking towards the microphone stand and Kurt's standing alone behind him, dressed in an impeccably tailored grey suit with a black vest under it and the smoothest looking turquoise tie that Blaine's sure up close would make his eyes pop. His hair his coiffed to perfection, and his posture his flawless as he stands with a polite smile and just the smallest hint of a blush.

There's a close-up of Kurt for a moment, while Burt's still shuffling towards the microphone, and the tie really does bring out Kurt's eyes.

"So that's the faggy son..." John Anderson Sr. says.

"Hum." He hears his father hum in agreement.

He had never disliked his grandfather more.

The close up ends and now it's just Burt up there, and Blaine is surprised to see him wearing one of the finest suits Blaine's ever seen – even better than his own father had been wearing – and a tie of the most beautiful blue.

"Good night, America." Burt says in his steady voice "Let us not beat around the bush. I'm here tonight to announce before you and the world my candidacy to the Presidency of the United States of America."

Oh wow. That was direct. Blaine's father had started with compliments to America, with how proud he was to be an American, to be a Senator, to be this and to be that. Blaine couldn't help but feel like this was Burt Hummel's first 'attack' on his father. One sucks up with pretty little compliments, the other lays it out like it is.

"My late wife and I welcomed our son almost eighteen years ago, and if there was one thing we were resolute about was that we would do anything in our power to make his life good, to make his world happy. A promise I know is at the heart and mouth of every parent in this country, in this world. The will to leave this world a better place for them – not just for Kurt, but for every other kid, for every other person who's been a kid, for every other person who will be a kid – is what drives me to enter this great adventure. My agenda is not secret, complicated or sneaky. My agenda is simple. Make this country an even better place. Make this country a place we can be more proud of. A place that offers our children, old or young, the chance of happiness, regardless of social standing, color of their skin, gender, sexual orientation or religion. A place where fairness, brotherhood, equality and love are the backbone of its government and institutions. A place where the government is *from* the people and *for* the people."

His speech continues as passionate as before as he addressed issues more specifically, making his intentions towards each of them crystal clear.

He isn't extensive but it is enough to catch his drift.

Every once in a while Blaine's father and grandfather exchange comments or little snide remarks. The word fag is thrown around a couple more times and Blaine wants to throw up each time. He sees his mother's blank stare at the TV and he wonders if she's grasping the full reality of Burt Hummel's speech.

The full grasp, Blaine thinks, is that Burt Hummel is about to run the exact opposite of a campaign as John Anderson. And he's gonna wear better suits while doing it.

By the end of his speech there's a swarm of questions from the reporters but Senator Hummel only answers half a dozen, before excusing himself, placing a hand on Kurt's back and exiting the stage, father and son exchanging a smile and a nod. Just before they turn the corner Kurt reaches up to give his father quick kiss on his cheek, and Blaine thinks he sees them laugh.

Blaine barely hears as his father sighs and mutters "Well, one opponent's out..."

"Out of the closet, you mean!" Blaine's grandfather jokes.

Blaine doesn't care. Kurt's small, messy speech in the car the night before is rushing back to him. *I really want us to be friends.* Blaine does too. He doesn't know if he should, but he does. He fishes out his cell phone.

'It's their race, not ours. This shouldn't matter to us. I don't want it to. – B'

"Blaine, your grandfather's talking to you!" His mother nudges his shoulder.

Blaine shakes his head, unglues his eyes from the screen where he just wants to see a new text "Hum, what?"

"So what do you think, boy?" His grandfather asks, clearly repeating himself.

"Oh, I... think you should get a stylist, dad." Blaine shrugs, turning to his father and then addressing the whole room "Excuse me." He says and leaves for his bedroom, as quickly as he can, ignoring the call of 'Blaine!' behind him.

'You're not mad? You don't think I was faking it just so I could get information out of you? You don't think I'll use you for secrets on your dad's campaign? – K'

Blaine smiles.

'Not after you bring my attention to that possibility, I don't... - B'

'God. So. Much. Relief. – K'

'Come on, Kurt, if it doesn't bother you, it doesn't bother me. – B'

'Thank you! I really, really like you. – K'

Blaine's eyes are stuck on that, and he's torn between grinning, blushing or assuming the worst and accepting that Kurt just meant as friends.

'Would it be terribly pathetic if I just added AS FRIENDS right now? Would you believe that? – K'

'I really, really like you too AS FRIENDS. How does that sound? Genuine? – B'

'I'll take what I can get. Sigh. So, what did you think? I'm curious. – K'

'Well, I'm biased. – B'

'Try not to be. –K'

'It was a great speech and I really liked it, but it may raise a few questions. For instance, it sounded like your father was saying America wasn't already that place, or wasn't even close to being. I'm not saying I agree or disagree, but it might not reflect well on his campaign if people have reason to question whether he's proud to be an American, or if he believes in America and all of that best country in the world usual crap. His identity as a patriot could be questioned, and I don't suppose any President has ever NOT been a patriot. You guys should probably get ready for that particular backlash. – B'

'Oh. Wow. – K'

'I'm sorry, that was a little too much, wasn't it? I swear I wasn't insulting the speech, I actually really liked it. I think it was better than my dad's. – B'

'No, no...! I like the insight. That was **thoughtful**. And I agree, and I actually did talk to my dad about it and he said it's a risk they're willing to take. I like his campaign manager, she's feisty and a risk taker. And I also agree that it was better than your dad's. Sorry :P – K'

'Nothing to be sorry about, lol. He was also better dressed. I think my dad's in trouble. ;) – B'

'I hope so. – K'

'If you need any help on Monday, avoiding everyone's insistency let me know. – B'

'Thank you. I think we're gonna make the most unusual friendship that school has ever seen. – K'

'Well, it is an all-boy school It could use all the help it can get to have any interesting rumors going on between its walls. – B'

'I hope they deliver on that supposed impeccable privacy policy of theirs. – K'

'Afraid to be seen with me? – B'

'No. But you should be. And I don't want you to stop talking to me just because our friendship ruined your dad's campaign. – K'

'I won't. – B'

'Ok. I won't either. For the record. – K'

Chapter Three

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Source: [www . people . com](http://www.people.com)

Trouble in the playground?

Listen, up, listen up! Kurt Hummel, seventeen year old son of newly announced presidential candidate Sen. Burt Hummel, has recently transferred from public school in Lima, Ohio, to all-boys Dalton Academy in Washington DC. The juicy details? It just so happens that it's the exact same school that another presidential candidate and senator's son, Blaine Anderson (also seventeen) attends. So far, no word on how the school or the boys deal with the inevitable divide. Will there be a parallel run for Senior Class President? Will they spice things up in the running for the White House and help us make things all the more interesting? We don't know, but there's sure to be some juice coming out of this, am I right? Oh, how I wish I could be a fly on those walls.

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Monday starts off bizarre. Unlike with Blaine, everyone just stares at Kurt. Kurt eyes them confused, sends a few small smiles to the few boys he recognizes and straightens his bag on his shoulder.

He spots Blaine waiting by his locker, hands in pockets, leaning against the metal doors. Their eyes meet and they beam at each other. Kurt even laughs because this whole thing is ridiculous.

He reaches his locker and Blaine slaps his shoulder amiably "How does it feel?"

"You're real happy the focus is off you, aren't you?"

Blaine chuckles "A little." He admits "But then again, it's only half off me." He shrugs with one shoulder.

"At least they were giving you high fives and congratulating. Me... they're just... staring."

"Well, they already know me." Blaine reasons "They don't feel as guilty trying to pretend being my friends."

Kurt smiles sympathetically because he can see the edge of bitterness in his eyes "Come on, we'll be late for class. And I do not want to run into Wes on the way there. I'm pretty sure he's gonna have a nervous breakdown if he sees us."

Blaine laughs "That is very accurate." He says "But he's had it already, we're safe. He called me on Saturday morning – woke me up, by the way - babbling about how everyone was gonna know we were both at Dalton and it was just a matter of time before the warblers became involved and there was no way we could mess up now..."

"What? Was he planning on messing up before?" Kurt rolls his eyes.

"My point exactly..." Blaine sighs "But he does have a point... I guess there will be reporters there... That certainly adds some pressure."

"I think there might be reporters there if it was just you, anyway." Kurt stops at the door, letting Blaine go in first "I guess we'll just have to kill it, either way."

As Kurt enters his classroom everyone is looking right at him, including the teacher. Once everyone is seated and looking expectantly ahead the teacher finally clears his throat.

"As I'm sure most of you have noticed Dalton is now in an unusually prestigious position. It finds itself the home of Mr. Hummel and Mr. Anderson, both having their fathers candidates for presidency of the United States." He pauses and Kurt's already hoping the ground will open and swallow him whole "As such, circumstances lead me to remind you of the confidentiality and discretion policy you have all signed upon enrolling Dalton. Anyone talking to, leaking or, god forbid, selling any sort of information to the media will face disciplinary measures that may include expulsion." He pauses again, for effect "Do I make myself clear? Now, this very speech is being repeated across every classroom in this school, and we expect nothing but the most exemplary behavior from our students."

It's mortifying.

Class feels like he's stuck on a stage, spotlight on him with absolutely no script or concept and the audience is full of the toughest critics. All day it gets absolutely no better.

Lunch is as close to normal as it gets. He sits with Blaine, David and Wes, and just like the previous Monday they do their best to keep off the obvious topic. Kurt's actually pretty thankful for the three of them – with the amount of stares and whispers he's getting, they're the only thing keeping him from thinking he's grown three heads over night.

They fall into conversation about football and whatever again. Kurt mostly watches them, rather than listen to them.

David wears this ridiculous grin on his face all the time. He's so easily excited that it reminds Kurt of a five year old on a sugar high. Wes is almost the opposite, though, all tight smiles, sarcastic shrugs and quirked eyebrows. But Kurt recognizes more and more signs of genuine amusement each moment that goes by.

Blaine is... Blaine. His smiles should be winning awards everywhere. And his laughter is magic. And his eyes. His eyes are made of gold, but shine as bright as the sunlight and feel as warm as a fireplace on a cold winter's night, and when they're looking at Ku- they're looking at Kurt!

Kurt shakes his head and tunes back again, just as Blaine frowns amusedly "Kurt?"

"Yeah! Sorry!" He gasps out. It isn't until a hand pats his shoulder that he notices Wes and David have left their seats.

"See you later, Kurt!" they call over their shoulders.

Kurt waves before turning back to Blaine who's looking at him with a questioning smile.

"What?" Kurt blushes.

Blaine chuckles "Just wondering where you'd gone, just now..." he shakes his head and waves his hand dismissively.

"Oh, you were talking about football and sports, and I just... tuned out. I'm sorry." Kurt shrugs.

"Oh." Blaine says, and he sounds a little disappointed. Why does he sound a little disappointed?

"Why do you sound a little disappointed?"

Blaine seems to catch himself off guard, maybe he hadn't realized he'd let his feelings show "Oh... huh... not disappointed, but... I was kind of hoping you *had* been serious about... the soccer games... because... we're... playing this weekend." Blaine's rambling and it's so cute and Kurt should stop it but he can't "And Wes, Nick and Jeff are on the team too, so, like... and we were thinking we'd go for a movie afterwards, either celebrate if we win or... you know, forget humiliation and stuff, if we lose. But, hum, I was kind of hoping you'd come. Watch the game, I mean. And then you could join us for that movie. I'd – I mean – the guys would like that." Blaine scratched the back of his head "But... I mean, if you want.. you don't... If you're not into soccer, I get it. I just... you said that, and I was kind of hoping you meant it... But it's cool if you... if you didn't."

Kurt controls his laughter, but can't help the grin on his face "Sure." He shrugs

"S-sure?" Blaine eyes him confused.

"Yeah, I did mean it the other day. I'd love to go." He says cheerfully.

"Oh. Great!" Blaine gasps out, surprised "Awesome!"

Kurt chuckles "Yeah, awesome. The rambling was cute, though." He's not really sure where he got the nerve to say that, but if Blaine can flirt, so can he. Whatever that might mean.

Blaine blushes at once. Kurt thinks it's the first time he's ever seen Blaine blush and it's too adorable for his own good. "Yeah, hum..." Blaine mumbles, hand back to the back of his neck "We should, huh, we should go... we'll be late for class."

Kurt smiles, nods and gets up, waiting for Blaine.

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"Wes..." Blaine whispers "You awake?"

He can practically hear his roommate's eye roll. "No."

"I think I sort of almost asked Kurt out on a date." He says all the same.

"How do you sort of almost ask someone out on a date?"

"I was going to casually ask him if he was interested in watching our game on Saturday and going to the movies afterwards – it was really just going to be a friendly invite... but for some reason my brain disconnected with my mouth and I just started rambling and I may have implied that *I* really wanted him there... it was pathetic."

"You're pathetic, Blaine. It's to be expected." Wes snickers.

"Shut up!" he blindly throws a pillow towards the general direction of Wes' bed, but it seems to collide with wall.

"I was quiet. You woke me up, remember?" Wes sighs "And it's not like I can say much that will help you, anyway. What would I say? Don't worry I think he doesn't like you back..." there's a sigh and some sheets rustling "He totally does."

"He does?"

"Blaine." Wes says sternly "He was staring at you for the entire lunch."

"That's... That's..."

"Blaine, just own it and be happy for it. You like a guy and he likes you back. In any other world that'd be a good thing, buddy. Just bask in the glory of that for tonight and worry about your dad and his stupid campaign tomorrow." Wes's voice softens "You deserve that, Blaine. You deserve to be happy."

Blaine smiles to himself "Thank you..."

"Yeah... Anytime."

"You really think he likes me?"

There's a heavy sigh "Good night. Blaine."

Blaine can't sleep though. All he can think about is 'does he? Does he like me? Does he? Does he?!'. Every part of their rehearsals and practices is replayed in his mind. Every little smile and joke, and, oh, touch! Every single touch! Like that one time Kurt took Blaine's shoulders and jostled him a little bit and squeezed for second just before he let go. Or when they were sitting side by side, going over the lyrics,

working out verse distribution, and their knees kept touching, and then Blaine couldn't help it, and before he got up he squeezed Kurt's knee (knee! It totally wasn't higher than that! It wasn't thigh, no way, no how... it was knee!).

Everything is bigger, brighter and better now. And just for tonight Blaine lets his imagination run wild. Because how cool would it be if he could just reach out and take Kurt's hand in that dark cinema room.

Because, as shy and bad at romance as Blaine is, he thinks maybe Wes is right. He thinks maybe Kurt's bashful, blushing smiles are tell-tale signs, and maybe he was actually flirting when he said that at lunchtime.

Just for tonight Blaine doesn't care about his father, his campaign, or even Kurt's father and *his* campaign. Doesn't care that they probably shouldn't even be friends, let alone anything more. But there's only so much one can do to avoid feelings for someone like Kurt.

Someone whose smile radiates magic, whose eyes are a world of their own, whose wit and humor reduce Blaine to a laughing idiot, who can talk Broadway and show tunes like no one Blaine has ever met, and who has as much passion, excitement and joie de vivre as Bill O'Riley has hate for the gay community.

Blaine has a hard time not squealing and jumping on his bed because he thinks he's found it. Maybe in the wrong place, and certainly at the wrong time, but at least he's found it. It's more than most people can claim to, right? He's found someone who he can see himself falling head over heels in love and, whether he acts on it or not, no one can take that away from him.

He knows now, he knows that it's possible.

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Kurt chews on his food happily "I mean, I've seen the other boy's rooms, and sure, they're bigger, and maybe slightly better, but at least I get my own. And, I guess the less space you've got the bigger challenge you have. I like a good challenge..." he says thoughtfully "Would you mind if I ordered a bookcase I found online? It's amazing – it's small, but it's got so much storage room, and it's perfect for my dorm..."

Burt looks at his son from across the table "Expensive?"

Kurt smiles sheepishly "A little..."

"Save up for half of it, I'll pay the other half." Burt smiles and Kurt grins.

"Ok. Two months. I can do that." He nods happily.

Burt frowns "What? No pleading? No daddy please?"

Kurt shrugs "It's just two months' saving. I think I can handle it, dad." He chuckles.

Burt eyes him for a second before shaking his eyes and shrugging "Well, anyway, I talked to Carole today... She says she's real close to getting that transfer, and Finn's been a little pestered back at McKinley... I suppose having me as stepfather doesn't really help."

Kurt nods "So, when do you think they'll come here?"

"Probably next month." His dad beams. Kurt knows he's missed Carole. Kurt has missed Carole, and even Finn.

"Great! We could throw them a welcome party!" Kurt says excitedly.

"Yeah, that'd be great, bud." Burt nods, as he watches he's son blabbering on about party themes and decorations.

"What?" Kurt finally asks, after he's been talking way too long, and all his dad's done is stare at him, smile and shrug at any question Kurt throws at him.

"It's been a while since I've seen you this happy." Burt says simply.

"Oh...!"

"I was worried, when you started Dalton. That you wouldn't fit in... but, I guess I was worried for nothing."

Kurt beams "Guess not!" his smile falters "Oh, huh, dad, by the way... I, huh, I'm going out tomorrow..."

"Night?"

"No, no... The soccer team has a game in the morning, I was gonna watch that, and then we'd go for some lunch and a movie..."

"You're gonna watch a soccer game?" Burt asked with barely concealed surprise and amusement.

"I've got... friends on the team. I just thought showing some support might be nice." He shrugs, and bites his lip, and plays with his food, and closes his eyes, and takes a deep breath "And... hum... one of those friends... iskindofjohnandersonsson."

"What?" Burt leaned forward "I didn't catch that."

"Huh... One of... those friends is kind of... huh... John Anderson's son." He repeats, slower now "Blaine...? Blaine Anderson. We're, huh, we're kind of friends."

"Oh...?"

"He's actually... like... my... huh... best friend at Dalton... So..."

"Kurt..." Burt sighs "I hope you're not asking me for permission to be his friend." He smiles and leans forward to take his son's hand "I don't want my campaign to determine your life, Kurt. You can be friends with whomever you want, as long as they're good people and good friends. If this Blaine guy's a good friend to you, which I suspect he is, because I have met him before and he's never even been close to rubbing me the wrong way, then I have nothing against it."

Kurt grins "Ok, good. I just..." he sighed "wanted to be sure..." he smiled "He's really nice, dad. And we decided to keep our conversations about campaigns and dads to a bare minimum."

Burt chuckles "That's good to know."

Kurt returns his dad's warm smile and it's one of those times they actually look like father and son.

"He said your speech was great, though."

"Well, then, let's get his vote!"

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Maybe it's a good thing that Kurt arrived late, Blaine thinks, as he chances a glance towards the stand. There was no way he would've focused enough on the game if he'd had an opportunity to look at those clothes up close.

He hadn't even thought that this was the first time either one would see the other out of Dalton's uniform (unless you're gonna count the suits they both wore to their parents announcements). Apparently (and he should've guessed this, really), Kurt's style involves skinny jeans, and form-fitting vests.

And, hey, Blaine's trying to play soccer, here!

So. Again. It's a good thing Kurt was late. Because on those first twenty minutes that Kurt hadn't shown up Blaine had scored a goal.

He chances another look at the stands, but the ball interrupts his line of sight, wheezing right by his face, and it's a miracle it doesn't connect with his nose and break it. He stops in his tracks, looks in the general direction he'd last seen the ball, Jeff's giving him a 'what the hell' look, and Blaine knows it's time to check back again.

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Short shorts. Really short shorts.

Kurt almost whimpers as Blaine makes a spectacular dive for the ball – though what makes him whimper is not the dive itself, but the fact that his shorts ride up, revealing even more toned muscles. Blaine's legs are sure to be a crime against humanity.

Kurt's really glad he was late (fashionably late, thank you very much). Had he been there in time to wish Blaine a good game he's pretty sure his brain would've turned on him and made him say something along the lines of "can I touch your legs?"

He barely notices when Jeff scores Dalton's second goal, all that he cares is that Blaine's wiping the sweat off his forehead with his t-shirt. And. Hello abs.

He's starting to think this was a bad idea.

Kurt had never given soccer a second thought, but he regrets it now. There are no shoulder pads to hide behind, there are no ghastly pants, there are no nothings. Their uniform is only a T-shirt and short shorts. It's a world of muscular legs sprinting to and fro. And aren't Blaine's legs one of the world's wonders!

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Intermission comes as a saving grace for the players, Blaine included.

"Nice to have you back." Jeff teases.

"Hum?"

"I thought you'd gone somewhere else for a few minutes there." He smirks, taking a bottle for the cooler.

"Oh, yeah... momentary distraction. Sorry, won't happen again."

Jeff nodded, not bothering to answer as he poured half a bottle on himself.

Blaine drinks his as he looks around. The other team is huddled up already, and Blaine tries not to feel amused at their eagerness. It's obvious enough they're in over their heads – there's no way they'll win this or even tie.

The stands are, as usual, half filled. He thinks he sees someone with an unusually big camera and sighs, but resumes to ignoring it. What the idiot was hoping to find of interest in a high school soccer game is truly beyond Blaine. He can read the headlines 'Son of presidential candidate sucks at soccer!'

He shakes his head with a small chuckle before looking at the center, where he knows Kurt's sitting. He can't be sure, but he thinks their eyes meet. He beams and waves, and Kurt returns the wave and then gives him a thumbs up.

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The second half of the game, Kurt is torn between thinking it runs too long or too short. He'd give anything to look at that forever, but on the other hand, they have a movie to go to, and Kurt's actually looking forward to that, and the chance of actually getting to see Blaine a little more up close. Even if by then his legs will probably be covered in fabric.

He sucks in a sharp breath when a player tackles Blaine to the ground, and even from where he sits Kurt can hear the loud thump and grunt as they crash. Kurt doesn't even notice he's standing before Blaine is finally taking Jeff's hand and getting up, and Kurt sighs in relief, sitting back down again. He watches attentively, still, as Blaine stands only experimentally on his left foot before putting more and more weight on it. He walks a little and then jumps slightly before deciding it's fine, and waving everyone off.

The referee's whistle sounds and a red card is shown to the tackler. He leaves, scoffing and mumbling, but nobody pays him much attention because the ball's being positioned front and center of the goal post. Kurt smiles to himself, because even he knows what's happening. It's a penalty shot.

He watches as Blaine centers himself, skips a little bit, a few feet behind the ball, rolls his shoulders and his head around, takes a couple of deep breath. The referee whistles and Blaine takes off without the smallest hesitation. It's not a surprise to anyone that he scores. Everyone knows that a penalty shot has a 95% success rate (or something to that effect, because, no I did not bother to check statistics). But as unsurprising as it is, still everyone's celebrating and Kurt's not holding back at all, until he catches himself, recoils his arms and clears his throat, trying to gain back some semblance of dignity.

The players are huddled up in a group hug, happy and laughing and screaming, and Blaine's getting strong slaps on his back, and even one on his butt and Kurt kind of wishes he was on the soccer team for a moment there. He doesn't expect Blaine to look his way, to shoot him a dazzling five hundred watts smile and do a little happy dance, but he's pleasantly surprised and throws his head back in laughter.

The game resumes for the last fifteen minutes, and the Dalton team holds their score at three-nil.

When the referee finally announces the end of the game, several players collapse to the ground panting and closing their eyes. Kurt watches as Blaine fist bumps the air before jogging up to Jeff and tackling him from behind, saying something to his ear with a big grin on his face. Jeff beams brighter and bigger then, and turns to hug him back, and they head together towards the bench, where Wes joins them, and soon after the whole team's participating in a strong group hug.

Kurt lingers for while at his seat, even as the other spectators start filing out. He knows he'll have to wait for them to shower and change because he's agreed to give Jeff and Nick a ride to the restaurant and movies.

He's about to go and wait by his car when Blaine calls his name. He goes down the stairs, to the lowest row of seats and waits as Blaine's still jogging towards him.

"Hey!" Blaine says breathless.

"Hi!" he answers brightly "Congrats! On winning and on your goal, you were great."

"Thanks!" Blaine seems a little awkward before he clears his throat "So, huh, we'll be real quick. Just a quick shower because we're... huh, gross... and then we're out of here."

"Yeah, sure, of course, not a problem. I'll wait by my car. It's in the parking lot." He says "Jeff and Nick still need that ride, right?"

Blaine nods "Yeah, yeah, and Pete and Dan, if you don't mind...?"

"No, of course not. It's not a problem at all."

"Ok, great! Thanks! I'll go... shower." Blaine sighs and shoots Kurt an apologetic smile.

Kurt's not entirely sure what Blaine's apologizing for. If Kurt had any say in it, Blaine could walk around sweaty in his soccer uniform everyday of the week.

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Blaine cringes at himself the very minute he turns around. What's wrong with just shooting him a text saying 'we'll be out in ten minutes.'? Why go and talk to him while literally dripping with sweat and probably smelling like a horse?

He figures berating himself for it isn't going to help now, so he just shakes his head and takes off running towards the locker rooms, catching up with the rest of his team in a matter of seconds.

Everyone's happy and cheerful. First game of the year and they won easily. Jeff, sporting his brand new captain armband, couldn't be happier. Everybody knows that, if he hadn't said no, the armband would be on Blaine, but as they celebrate even Jeff forgets that and graciously accepts the compliments going his way.

The showers are filled with laughter and easy banter, a few towels snapping against bare flesh and yelps accompanied with empty threats. The smell of sweat is soon replaced with shampoo and fresh deodorant and before he knows it, Blaine's straightening his collar, ready to go. He smiles to himself.

Everyone's almost ready, too. Most of them are running combs through their still wet hairs, or putting their things away in large sports' bags.

They head outside soon, without even needing any prompting from Blaine or Jeff, and Blaine's quick to spot Kurt's figure, leaning gracefully against his shiny black Navigator (it's almost funny, the picture of perfectly styled and almost delicate Kurt driving the big and black hulk of that car). He calls Jeff, Nick, Pete and Dan and points them towards Kurt.

Blaine's car is on the opposite side of the lot, and he thinks it's probably a little too much and too obvious to go talk to Kurt now. What would he even say?

They're at Mitch's uncles' restaurant in twenty minutes, table ready and waiting. Blaine's pleased that he ends up seated in front of Kurt. Probably next to Kurt would be better for a conversation, but he doesn't mind just looking either.

Everyone places their order quickly, pleading the waitress to pity them and hurry because everyone's suddenly starving. Lunch goes by quick and smoothly. Blaine's relieved his idiot choice of a pasta with too much sauce hasn't made him look like a complete baboon while eating, and he's thrilled and reassured when Kurt's easily included in the group conversation.

Their feet nudge and touch under the table a few times – accidentally, of course! – and it's all blushes and shy smiles when it happens.

Blaine's sure that if you took away his loud and slightly obnoxious teammates this would be a date. It feels like a date. With company. But a date.

There are other moments, though, when it's even better, even more. When Blaine feels like he just stepped right into a Victorian romance novel, because all they do is steal glances and smiles. Either because there's a whole soccer team around them, or because they're both still unsure if this is even the right thing to do given the circumstances, or actually even just because they're both bashful, insecure teenagers, when they

do exchange a meaningful look, or their feet linger in their accidental brush, a sheepish smile is quick to take over their lips, and a guilty blush their cheeks.

"God... I'm so full!" Jeff groans, next to Blaine, staring at his now completely empty plate.

Blaine snorts, because of course Jeff would eat more than he could handle. He's already feeling the familiar burn of a stretching stomach, and puts down his own silver wear. "You were eating like there was no tomorrow."

"There isn't, for all that we know." Jeff shrugs.

Blaine rolls his eyes and turns to Kurt who's looking between Jeff and his clean plate with a raised eyebrow. Kurt has his knife and fork to the right of his plate, and has stopped eating for a while now, his plate still holding slightly less than half the food. "You didn't like the food?"

"Oh, no!" Kurt laughs "It was great, but I... haven't played a ninety minute soccer game in the last hour, so."

"Oh!" Blaine chuckles "This is not because he just played, this is just how he eats."

"It's not worse than Finn, I guess. So I'm used to it, by now."

"Finn?" *Boyfriend? Please let it be something else, anything else!*

"Step brother." Kurt clarifies "Might actually transfer to Dalton. Dad said yesterday that he's having a few hiccups back in Lima because of the campaign. It must have finally dawned on those Neanderthals back there that my dad's actually an important politician, and I guess they've been bothering him."

"Oh, that sucks."

"Hum, I suppose." Kurt shrugs "As long as I don't have to share my dorm with him."

"You two don't get along?"

"Oh, no, we're friends. Sort of. I love him like he's my real brother, but... dirty underwear. Everywhere."

Blaine laughs "Well, good luck with that, then."

Everyone's groaning and clutching their stomachs by the time the waitress comes asking about desert, and it's a loud and resounding no. Their check comes quickly and everyone pays their part before heading out to the movies, at the nearest mall. When Blaine finishes parking, Kurt, Nick, Jeff and Wes are already waiting for them by the escalators. Wes is holding the program and inspecting it, as everyone talks happily.

"So, what movie?" Blaine asks, going to stand next to him.

Wes gestures towards the escalators, and Blaine follows.

Wes is probably telling him about their options, pros and cons, but Blaine hasn't heard a thing. Because Kurt had been talking but he's not talking now, and Blaine feels why. He feels his own jeans stretching over his own ass as he goes step after step on the escalators.

He can practically *feel* Kurt's eyes on his ass. He can feel his stare burning his skin.

There's heat everywhere for Blaine, he doesn't know if he's turned on or embarrassed (but it's probably not embarrassment, because, let's face it, if it was he would be self conscious and stop moving, but all he wants to do is keep taking step after step, make sure his hips sway just the tiniest bit, that his jeans stretch as much as they can... see, that's not embarrassment).

Wes is probably talking. But Blaine doesn't care. He can't care, because... this... this is not Victorian-novel cute. This is Kurt-staring-at-his-ass hot.

Chapter Four

Ass. Ass. Ass. Ass. Ass.

Blaine's ass.

Everything is ass. Everything is Blaine's ass and Blaine's ass is everything.

Kurt's not even sure asses are allowed to look that good. Kurt almost scoffs as he remembers thinking Blaine's legs should be a world renowned wonder, because his ass. His. Ass. HIS. FUCKING. ASS.

Hands twitching to touch and grab and feel, Kurt bites his lip and buries them in his pockets. It's a good thing Blaine's not wearing skin tight jeans, because if he were Kurt's not that sure he could retain any form of brain function.

It's both a relief and a disappointment when Blaine and Wes reach the top of the escalators and turn around to face the rest of the group. Kurt almost wants to follow his movement and stand behind him. Blaine's cheeks look flushed, and Kurt has to wonder if he knows he was staring at his ass. It's only when he doesn't feel himself blush that he notices he already is blushing, his face burning enough to cook.

He needs to hide, desperately but instead, somehow, raises his eyes to Blaine's and Blaine blushes deeper before he looks away biting his lip.

And god, Kurt really stepped in it, didn't he?

Blaine knows. And Blaine's straight. Of course he is. Of course he's just really nice, and strangely open minded despite his family. It had been ridiculous for Kurt to even consider otherwise, and now Blaine knows he was staring at his ass, because, who the fuck stops in the middle of a conversation and looks the color of snow white's apple after climbing escalators after another boy with an amazing ass?

Kurt avoids Blaine's eyes like the plague, now. It's mortifying.

They wait until the whole group is standing there before collectively moving to the ticket office. Kurt hands the money to Wes, who's collecting, and stands to the side, too worried to engage in conversation with anyone.

Maybe he could just own it and apologize. Maybe Blaine would understand. Maybe Blaine would just say 'I'll take it as a compliment' and they could forget this ever happened.

He dismisses popcorn with an absent wave, as he wanders aimlessly through the lobby, while everybody gets their buckets.

He's staring at one of the posters, trying very hard not to think about Blaine and the inevitable awkwardness that's going to taint their budding friendship (and, oh dear god, their practices for the duet) when a light hand touches the small of his back "Come on... Let's go inside."

It's Blaine! Wait, Blaine's talking to him. Blaine's *touching* him.

"I'm sorry!" Kurt blurts out, and wow. Permission to talk, mouth?

"What?" Blaine frowns slightly.

"Oh god..." *Shit, I said that out loud.* Kurt sighs covering his face with his hands "I really just... shhhh-oot." He peeks through a crack in his fingers to find Blaine looking amused, with raised eyebrows. Well, might as well. "Sorry... Sorry I kind of... stared at your ass back there, and... I totally understand if you're mad."

Blaine's smile suddenly disappears, replaced a slack jaw, and his lips are doing the cutest little 'O' shape, before he centers himself and closes his mouth "I... huh, that's... Huh..."

Maybe he *didn't* know.

Oh god, it just gets worse, and if Kurt needed any proof god does not exist here it is. No god could be this cruel, to put him in a situation like this.

"Blaine! Kurt!" Jeff calls from the door "come on, guys!"

Kurt wants to die. He seriously wants to die.

Blaine glances nervously between Jeff and Kurt, before huffing out a choked breath and pressing his hand to Kurt's back again "Come on."

"Wait, wait..." Kurt begs "Are you mad? You're mad, right? I was... I was just... it was. right *there*. and. I promise I'm not going to molest you or anything, and... oh, god, oh god, I'm just making everything worse, aren't I?"

Blaine stops to look at Kurt, and Kurt must be seeing things because Blaine's smiling and biting his lip before shrugging "I've shown you mine, now you show me yours...?" and grabbing Kurt's shoulders to push him around and towards the room.

Kurt can't even be bothered to notice if Blaine does look at his ass before he's squealing in protest and twisting around "Hey!"

Blaine laughs and pushes him again with a "Come on! Wes has our tickets."

They enter the dark room in giggles and there's a harsh "Shhh!" from the girl in a terribly unflattering uniform, holding a flash light. She holds out a hand for the tickets but Blaine waves it away "We're with them." He gestures to the group already sitting down in a middle row.

Blaine sits first, next to Wes, and Kurt then, next to Blaine.

"Are you mad, though?" Kurt whispers again "Please don't be mad!"

Blaine looks at him with unguarded amusement "Of course not, Kurt."

"Oh, thank god." He gasps out and then realizes how... pathetic he probably sounded "I mean - I... I'm glad you're not mad. I don't want there to be... awkwardness between us... I really... like you. As friends. Or... you know. I'm just. Going to shut up." He says finally with the deepest sigh he can muster, forcing himself to face ahead, because certainly that's better than watching Blaine's face right now.

"The rambling was cute, though..." He hears Blaine mutter, and the teasing tone is so very obvious it kind of makes Kurt forget about everything to glare at him, but when he turns to scowl Blaine's looking at the screen already, a small smirk on his lip, chin resting gently on his hand, as his elbow is propped up on the armrest.

Kurt scoffs, making a show of sitting back straight and looking at the screen, and he thinks he hears Blaine chuckling.

They stay like that, and eventually the movie starts and even though Kurt forgets about pretending to be mad at Blaine, and Blaine forgets about teasing Kurt, they resume to watching, barely even shifting positions.

It's twenty minutes into the movie when Blaine leans closer "This is terrible. God."

Kurt chuckles "Yeah, it kind of is..."

"I'm so sorry, Kurt." Blaine sighs.

Kurt turns to look at him now, frowning slightly "Why?"

"I invited you. I'm sorry you have to endure this."

Kurt rolls his eyes "Don't be. I'm having fun." He says honestly. He hopes Blaine can hear what he leaves unsaid. He hopes Blaine knows that the reason he's having so much fun, despite not liking soccer and despite the movie being terrible is because Blaine's there.

The way that the other boy smiles and looks back at the screen makes Kurt think he does.

Intermission comes, but both Blaine and Kurt stay in their seats and talk a little bit about how bad the movie is. Kurt loves the way Blaine talks so much with his hands. It makes everything so much more enticing.

As intermission's over and everyone hurriedly returns to their seats, practically stepping over Kurt and Blaine's feet, rather than waiting for them to either stand up or recoil them to let them through, Blaine laughs.

"What's so funny?" Kurt shoots him a funny look, just as finally Wes steps in front of them.

"Are you going to apologize to them to?" he asks with a smirk.

Kurt doesn't get it first and he just stares at Blaine with a confused look before it clicks and he scoffs and turns towards the screen again. He sees from the corner of his eyes as Blaine smiles, and goes back to resting his elbow on the arm rest and his chin on his hand.

With malice he doesn't really know where it comes from, Kurt pushes Blaine's arm out of the armrest and settles his own. Blaine's head lurches forward for a split second before he catches himself and glares at Kurt. Kurt pretends he doesn't notice.

The whole thing soon turns into a battle for the armrest. Kurt notices when Wes prods Blaine on the side, and they both giggle and snicker, but resume their little war a lot more silently and discreetly. Then Blaine just grabs Kurt's wrist and holds it tightly down below the armrest. Kurt struggles for a second or two, but he knows if he gives a stronger tug it will make noise or disturbance.

He lets Blaine hold his wrist tightly – for the time being – figuring that a false sense of security could play to his advantage.

He forgets all about it though, because Blaine's hold on his wrist becomes softer, and there's a thumb brushing his skin, leaving a trail of fiery butterflies. He turns to look at Blaine, but Blaine's looking at the screen – the only sign that he's actually aware of what he's doing is that he's softly biting his lip.

Kurt smiles to himself and looks back at the screen, as Blaine's thumb swipes a second time across his forearm.

His cheeks might be burning with a thousand flames, but Kurt still, somehow, gathers the courage to slide his wrist slowly and carefully between Blaine's hand, turning his palm upwards, stopping only when his hand is directly below Blaine's. There's a whole explosion in his chest when he feels Blaine's fingers curl between and around his own, squeezing tightly for a second, before letting go and pulling back just enough to start running soothing fingers and pressing a careful thumb across Kurt's palms. It's like Blaine's trying to memorize Kurt's hand by touch, running his index finger through every line on his palm, taking every one of Kurt's finger between his and massaging slow and steady. Kurt opens and stretches his hand for him, allowing Blaine to explore as much as he wants. Once Blaine's fingers start repeating areas Kurt shifts their hands, turns his hand to hover above Blaine's, and gently rubs each knuckle with as much attention as Blaine had given his.

For as innocent as the whole thing is Kurt's heart had never beat faster.

xXxXx

Blaine could close his eyes and fall asleep right then. Or maybe not, because this is the most exciting thing he's ever done. It's ridiculous to feel that way, he knows – I mean, come on, he's been to a thousand roller coasters before, and yet, he's never felt more of an adrenaline rush than he did as he brushed his thumb across Kurt's smooth skin.

And now, as Kurt handles his own hand like it's some kind of delicate, treasured flower, it feels so good and so surprisingly monumental.

Nerves start to fade and give way to pure and untainted bliss.

Blaine doesn't know if the movie's close to ending or not, because he stopped paying attention to it the moment Kurt had pushed his elbow off the armrest. He wonders if it would be too much to lift Kurt's hand to his lips and press little butterfly kisses on it, and decides that yes, it would be. Mostly because Wes is sitting right there next to him, and if he hasn't noticed that they'd stopped fighting and their hands had disappeared under the armrest, he was sure to notice Blaine kissing Kurt's hand.

But also, because as much as this feels like the best thing in world, so incredibly sweet and somehow sexy at the same time, Blaine wants a special first kiss, hand or lips, or wherever it may be. And in a cinema room with his entire soccer team there to witness isn't even near to what he wants. So he refrains from tucking his head into the crook of Kurt's neck, from turning his face until he's nuzzling Kurt's skin, from pressing his lips to Kurt's smooth, vanilla smelling skin, and from peppering it with kisses, going from soft and chaste to open mouthed with experimental licks.

He refrains from that, but god, does he want to do it.

The movie ends, and the credits starts rolling, and now Blaine's heart starts racing again, because he's not sure what's supposed to happen now. They need to let go of their hands. That's obvious. But what comes afterwards?

They're not boyfriends because kindergarten is long gone and hand holding means close to nothing. But it's safe to assume that his feelings for Kurt are returned, isn't it? Should they... talk? Kurt has to know by now that Blaine is gay, right? There is no need for *that* conversation, is there?

He can see the first of the guys standing up.

With a barely concealed sigh he glances at Kurt, who's chewing on his cheek and looking so incredibly adorable and all too kissable to be true. With a soft squeeze he starts to retreat his hand. He sees as Kurt smiles a little and recoils his hand as well before slowly standing up and starting to walk through the center aisle to the now open door.

Blaine takes a deep breath before following him outside, Wes and everyone else already on his heels.

"So that movie sucked!" Wes rolls his eyes, as they reach the outside.

"I don't know..." Kurt says softly, glancing at Blaine before shrugging and adding "I think I liked it."

Blaine could just fly right now. Miraculously he doesn't. Instead he beams, and they both share a fleeting glance before looking away with a blush. God, it's not even like they made out in the back row!

"Yes, well, your opinion is invalid as you are clearly insane." Wes shrugs, either not noticing the exchange or choosing to ignore it.

Kurt simply chuckles and lets it go.

God, how Blaine wishes he could just reach out and take his hand again.

They take the escalators downstairs, towards the parking lot. Blaine and Kurt stand side by side and a little too close. The backs of their hands brush every two seconds and just as they're about to step out Blaine can feel Kurt's finger pressing against his own, and he's quick to return to gesture, curling his softly around Kurt's, but retreating it just as swiftly before anyone notices.

"God..." he mutters, as softly as he can, surprised to find himself a little breathless "I feel like I'm in a Victorian novel, right now."

He glances at Kurt to find him smiling, his eyes shining as he barely glances at Blaine before whispering "Good. I love those."

It's silly, really, with what they had done just now, and everything before that, but Blaine's heart still skips a beat at those words, those eyes and that smile. He smiles back, resisting the biggest urge he's ever felt to grab someone and just kiss them senseless.

Instead his lips and hands are left tingling and they look at each other like the two complete idiots that they are.

Wes' voice breaks them out of their little bubble "Guys, remember next week there's double time rehearsal e-ve-ry day. I don't want anyone going to sleep before their voice is gone and they're dripping in sweat from practicing. Sectionals is next weekend, guys! Time to gear up!"

They look at Wes with dumb looks of confusion before finally catching up and nodding enthusiastically with a flow of "sure!" "yeah, of course!" and "we'll totally bring it, no worries!".

Wes frowns slightly before adding "Awesome."

They part ways eventually. Each leaving towards their respective cars.

Blaine feels like he's driving on a cloud. He wants to squeal and jump in his seat with how giddy he feels. He does that too, once he's parked. His excitement dampens slightly as he sees his grandfather's car right next to his. Somewhere along his week at Dalton he almost forgot about his grandparents coming to stay. He shakes the frustration off his shoulders, because he held hands with Kurt today, and he flat out flirted with Kurt today and Kurt flat out flirted back. And for as much as the insufferable man likes to use the word fag, not even his grandfather can take today away from him.

He unlocks the door and steps inside, finding his grandparents sitting on the living room, watching TV, drinks in hand. The smell coming from the kitchen tells Blaine that Anita's probably making dinner already. He can see his dad's study door ajar.

"Hey, Blaine!" his grandmother says sweetly "How was your game?"

"We won." Blaine tells her, returning the gentle smile.

"You score any?" His granddad asks.

"Two, actually." He nods, smile straining a little.

"Atta boy!" he winks cheerfully and Blaine nods before gesturing towards the stairs and heading to his room. He pours the contents of his bag to the laundry basket and turns on his laptop to check his Facebook and e-mail. He wonders at Jeff's light speed updates, because there's already photos from the game going

around. He checks into twitter, types out a quick 'God that movie was bad... But I had fun! #DaltonSoccerTeamFTW' and rolls his eyes as they catch the number of followers he so stupidly has now.

He's checking an article on the New York Times about the thus far known presidential candidates when his mother knocks gently and sticks her head inside "Hey, Blaine, how was your day?"

"Great, we won the game."

"Congratulations." She smiled "Dinner will be ready soon."

"Ok... let me know when it is." He says, pretending he doesn't know that's code for 'Why don't you come downstairs and spend a little time with your grandparents?'

She nods, barely hiding her disappointment before leaving and closing the door.

He rolls his eyes, finishes the article, concludes that it's safe enough and shares it both on Facebook and Twitter.

He listens as what he's sure are his father's footsteps come up the stairs and soon enough his bedroom door his open again "Blaine, dinner will be ready in fifteen minutes. Go sit with your grandparents while you wait."

He sighs and nods, closes his laptop and follows his already retreating father down the stairs. He sits next to his grandmother because she's fifty times more tolerable than her husband. For a few minutes the three of them chatter about his game, and then she tells Blaine about their day – it kind of bores him beyond reason, unsurprisingly – and finally everyone falls silent and turns to the TV.

At least it's turned on the news channel.

There's a segment on the news about the candidates and Blaine watches attentively until they start talking about Burt Hummel and his grandfather's muttering about fags and commies.

Blaine has a hard time controlling his sighs, and even though the man couldn't possibly know Blaine stills channels the frustration he feels about John Anderson Sr into daydreaming about Kurt.

He excuses himself to go to the bathroom, because he never wants his family to taint this, and once he's locked the door behind himself he fishes out his cell.

'I really like the movie too. Even if I don't remember half of it. – B'

'Why not?! – K'

'Got distracted. – B'

'It was a fantastic movie with a completely surprising plot twist at the end, Blaine. So, for your sake, I sincerely hope it was worth it. – K'

'So worth it. – B'

'You're this close to reducing me to smiley faces. That's not acceptable. – K'

'I'm sorry...? – B'

'You're forgiven. – K'

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Kurt's torn between staring at his ceiling with a stupid grin on his face or burying his face in his pillow and squealing into it.

Why had he ever thought staying in Ohio was a good idea?

How long ago would he have met Blaine if he'd just agreed to his father's idea the first time he'd propositioned, at the beginning of his junior year. He could've been with Blaine for a year now.

Because, let's face it, they would. They would've met – Kurt would've still joined the Warblers, and they would have met and they would have played this very game they're playing right now.

During dinner he's excited and a little chattier than usual, but his father knows he's having a good time at school and doesn't ask further. It's a good thing because Kurt's not sure he wants to tell him this just yet.

It's so silly and ridiculous he finds himself laughing at everything many times along the day, but it feels a little bit like magic. And he knows this thing he has with Blaine... he knows it's special. He's been on the sidelines long enough to tell when something's good or when something's... just... for show.

This is good. This is great.

He's not sure how he feels about the whole aspect of Blaine's father, yet. But he's not going to let this slide just because things seem... challenging.

It doesn't take a genius to know Blaine could never be, publicly, in a relationship with Kurt, or even just come out, while his father's in the running for the White House. It's probably something Kurt should bring up and talk about with him, but... it's so early, and they're so... adhgfagh!

He's sure they'll be able to work something out. Eventually.

Blaine's worth the effort. He knows he is.

There's even a small voice inside his head that points out how great it would be if word got out that Blaine was gay, because then John Anderson would be way out of the run. But he quickly shuts it up with a stern warning. That's not how his father wants to run the campaign, and that's certainly not how Kurt would like it to be.

Besides, that would probably hurt Blaine.

Kurt understands. He understands Blaine's need to be accepted by his parents. He wonders if Blaine's out to his parents. Kurt remembers his own fear. He remembers when he was fifteen and came out to his dad, assuring him that he knew this would hinder his career, and that he could try to keep it quiet, but he just wanted to be honest with Burt.

His father had been adamant that Kurt live his life the way he wanted to. He'd hurried to tell him that Burt's career was Burt's career and it had nothing to do with Kurt. Kurt came first. Kurt would always come first.

He can't begin to imagine what it's like for Blaine to think or maybe even know he doesn't come first. That his father would rather he live a lie than have to suffer the consequence of an awkward speed bump in his career. And yes, speed bump. Let's be honest. There are plenty successful republicans with LGBT family –

they're still active, they're still relevant. So, maybe they're not running for President, but they're one step closer to a loving, healthy relationship with their families.

The thought alone of what Blaine must feel about this whole thing just makes Kurt want to be closer. So he knows, one way or another, Blaine's father isn't gonna hurt their chances of becoming... an item.

It's late after dinner when Kurt texts him again.

'I've been smiling like an idiot for the whole weekend. You should be ashamed of yourself, Blaine Anderson. You've made a fool out of me. – K'

'Is that supposed to make me feel bad? – B'

'Yes. Apologize! – K'

'Why am I always apologizing? Besides, I'm afraid it wouldn't be very sincere... - B'

'Because! Do your best. – K'

'I'm sorry for making you smile, even if your smile is really, really pretty and makes the butterflies in my stomach dance and sing! – B'

'You were right. That wasn't a very good apology. But I'll still forgive you. I'm afraid I can't help it. – K'

xXxXx

Blaine walks cheerfully down the hall, morning rush leaving him unaffected as he sips his coffee.

"You seem happy..." A voice drawls from next to him. He turns to find Wes squinting slightly, nursing his own cup of coffee like it's his life-line "What gives?"

Blaine beams and shrugs "Had a nice weekend, I guess."

"What? *Your* family actually had quality bonding time?" Wes questions, incredulous.

Blaine laughs – actually laughs – before shaking his head "I didn't say I had a nice weekend with the family." He rolls his eyes "Of course not. Dad spent his days on the phone, holed up in his study, mom spent the days following the new maid around because she thinks Anita will steal something at any given moment, and my grandparents watched TV and insulted everything I love and hold dear to my heart while doing it." He stops in front of his locker "Same old, same old." He smiles opening the metal door.

"I'm not sure that explains the idiot grin." Wes says, but Blaine doesn't listen. He stops listening the moment his eyes fall on the white rose perched on top of his books. It's big, and beautiful and Blaine's grinning and blushing and looking around like a crazy person.

"What-" Wes stares at him for a moment before glancing at Blaine's open locker and catching sight of the rose "Oh my god!" he gasps, yanking the rose out of its place and inspecting it closer, like it would make anything different to look at it an inch from his eyes "He's giving you flowers?!"

"Shhh!" Blaine hisses, snatching the rose from Wes' hands and putting it back. He turns to Wes and smiles again "He likes me, too." He bites his lip in a feeble attempt at keeping himself from grinning until his cheeks hurt "we like each other..."

Wes looks at him like he's grown an extra nose, before shaking his head and sighing as he finally understands "Hence the nice weekend..."

"Wes, Wes...." Blaine drops his voice to a whisper, leans closer "We held hands, in the movie theater on Saturday... we held hands."

"Held ha-What are you? Five?"

Blaine laughs "I don't care... It was amazing. And he likes me, Wes. He really likes me."

"Of course he does, idiot." Wes rolls his eyes, but there's a small smile tugging at his lips "I'm assuming you haven't kissed yet... seen as you're still alive and not dead from an emotional overload..."

"No... I...." Blaine tries to collect his thoughts "I'm not sure.. how... I don't know ... Huh...."

Wes eyes him with a frown "You're both crazy."

Blaine sighs before he lets his good spirits lessen considerably "I think... he should have time... I want to talk to him... about my dad... the implications of this whole thing... and I want him to have time to think about it. Let's face it. A relationship between the two of us is a little bit crazy. The pressure, and... the secrecy, and..." Blaine shrugs "I don't want us to kiss if afterward he's just gonna regret and say... 'no, sorry, can't do it'"

"Every relationship has a risk factor, Blaine, you can't just-"

"Wes, come on." Blaine gives a humorless chuckle "E-ve-ry-thing would be against us."

"You're letting you father own your entire life, Blaine, you know that?"

Blaine smiled sadly "Anyway... No matter what happens now... I got a rose out of it." He smiles wider now.

"You, my friend, are ridiculous!"

"You looove me..." Blaine teases.

Wes rolls his eyes "Only because I've known you since we were both wide eyed, naïve, innocent little freshmen."

Blaine grins and laughs "Admit it. My charm has no limits."

"Yes, well, your charm better win us sectionals! I want your pretty little butt practicing itself off this week."

"Yeah, sure." Blaine nods.

"And no love sick, heart eyes at Kurt."

"I can't make that promise." Blaine says, almost seriously.

Chapter Five

Monday's rehearsal runs smoothly, even if by the end everyone's just about ready to drop dead. Between singing and dancing for two hours straight, Kurt's pretty sure he'll just crash on his bed the very moment he gets to his dorm room.

But it's so worth it. Nick is doing a great job with Uptown Girls, and Blaine's doing Silly Love Songs and it sounds amazing, obviously. But their duet might just be the best competition number Kurt's ever done (even if he does say so himself)! The Warblers are amazing with coming up with the most original and interesting acapella arrangements, and it's refreshing and so much fun.

Wes seems finally pleased with the level of hoarseness from everyone and dismisses them with enthusiastic praise. Kurt is rolling his eyes only slightly annoyed, closing his bag, when someone leans on the wall next to him.

He turns to find Blaine smiling softly. They've shared glances and smiles throughout the day, and during lunch, despite Wes and David's company, Blaine had pressed his foot to Kurt's under the table and mouthed 'thank you', to which Kurt shrugged and smiled – and of course their duet had given them the perfect excuse to just stare.

But now, as everyone else leaves in pairs and trios (and Kurt thinks he sees Wes literally pushing a confused David out the door), it's the first opportunity they have to talk.

Blaine takes Kurt's books from his hands and starts walking towards the door "Mind if I walk you to your room?"

Kurt thinks he might swoon. "Not at all."

"So... if this was a Victorian novel, what would happen now?" Blaine asks with a small, suddenly shy smile.

"Wooin'." Kurt says after a moment's consideration, attempting to sound witty and coming out breathless "Lots of wooin'."

"Hence the flower?"

Kurt merely smiles in response. It had been a silly idea, really. He'd seen the bouquet on the coffee table this morning, and quickly stole the prettiest white rose. Its understated beauty had reminded him of Blaine.

"Wooring..." Blaine says, as if testing the word out on his tongue "I can do that."

"Yes!" Kurt gasps, remembering the perfect moments they'd had at the cinema, and even just now, as they walked side by side and Blaine held his book "Yes you most definitely can..."

Kurt's pretty sure he should feel like an idiot for saying that, but surprisingly it's Blaine who blushes and ducks his head "I... huh... Kurt... I... really like you."

Kurt's struck at how hearing that out loud sounds so much better than just knowing it. And knowing it felt great. This just feels... surreal and not his life at all. "I really like you too."

"And Saturday was... god, Kurt." Another sigh and more blushing "The flower...! I'm not even sure what to say. I feel like a schoolboy with a crush, but multiplied by ten."

Kurt chuckles "Do you have butterflies in your stomach?" he says in what he hopes is only a lightly teasing tone.

"Yeah!" Blaine gasps out, not even ashamed to admit to it "And I feel like I'm about to throw up rainbows, right now."

"That's... weird." Kurt laughs "But, hum... I... think I have butterflies in my stomach too, so..." Kurt let's his voice trail away and they share a glance, blush and look away.

They both laugh "God, we're ridiculous."

They walk in silence for a moment and Kurt's torn between enjoying it and breaking it, but when he looks at Blaine, still half searching for something to say, Blaine's already looking at him, chewing his lip, ready to speak "Kurt... there's... something we should talk about."

Kurt knows what Blaine's going for at once. His whole posture has changed, and he looks almost sad. Kurt wishes they didn't have to have this conversation, but it's unavoidable "About your dad...? And his campaign..."

"I can't tell anyone I'm gay." Blaine sighs "It's kind of our deal..."

"But you told me."

"No. I didn't" Blaine chuckles humorlessly "I never once told you I'm gay, you just guessed it." He shrugs and rubs his face tiredly "I know it's a lot to ask, and maybe I was just trying to bask in the glory of the moment... I don't... I'm not asking you to..." he takes a deep breath "I admire your courage to be so open about yourself, and it's all I've ever wanted to be like, but..."

"Your parents come first." Kurt nods, having never thought anything different for a second.

"Normally, they wouldn't. Not anymore. But."

Kurt stops as they finally reach his door, and puts the key in the lock, turns it, but leaves it ajar before he turns back to smile sadly "I understand, Blaine." He really does.

The other boy sighs defeated, all of his giddiness gone and replaced with hunched shoulders and somber eyes. It reminds Kurt of a kicked puppy, and he always thought it would look funny in a cartoon-ish kind of way, but it's about as funny as actually seeing a puppy getting kicked. "And I understand as well, Kurt. I shouldn't even have thought that... I wasn't thinking really."

What is Blaine even saying?! Does he actually think Kurt would turn him down because of that? Just like that? "Blaine, what- Blaine. Don't. Shut up." He says and he tries to smile just for good measure "I thought we'd agreed this was a Victorian novel!"

"What...?"

Kurt giggles, he actually *giggles*. "Woo, Blaine, woo." He says with a smirk before he leans over and presses his lips carefully to Blaine's cheek.

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Blaine's standing there, in the middle of the corridor, staring at the closed door.

His cheek burns. But it's a good burn. He likes that burn. It's like all of his blood is rushing there just to try and have a taste of Kurt's kiss. Only, it's gone now, and it barely left any trace.

With his newly patented idiot grin in place Blaine makes his way down the corridor, finding his own dorm room and pushing the door open. Wes is already there, having a bowl of cereal for dinner. Wes eyes him attentively. "Whose books are those?"

Blaine looks at his arms cradling unfamiliar textbooks "Kurt's."

"Did he kiss you?" he asks through squinting eyes.

"No." Blaine grins "Well. He kissed my cheek, but."

"Your cheek?!" Wes gasps "What the...!" He sighs "You're pathetic. You're both pathetic."

"No, no, no... Wes... It's perfect. Don't you see? It's wooing... we're wooing... and it's... magical."

"You are the gayest gay to ever gay."

Blaine grins and plops down on his bed.

There's a moment of silence, when Blaine merely smiles at his ceiling as Wes chews on his cereals, and then the chewing stops and a chair shifts against the floor "I hate to bring this up, Blaine. But did you talk to him... About your dad?" Wes shuffles his chair closer.

"Yeah..." Blaine nods, sitting up, and returning to a semi-normal state "I explained that I couldn't tell anyone that I was gay..."

"And he....?"

"He said that he understood, he said that it was ok that family came first." Blaine shrugged "I kind of thought he was saying like 'it's fine, I understand why it won't work... oh well, maybe next time'... and then I was like, 'yeah I understand that you wouldn't want to be in a relationship with me', and he

interrupted me and told me we were in a Victorian novel, said we should woo, and then kissed my cheek and disappeared."

"That's... confusing."

"Yeah..." Blaine nodded, a little absent.

"I think you should be more... direct... in your approach. Lay it out as it is. Tell him you like him-"

"I did"

"Tell him your dad's an ass."

"I implied it."

"And tell him that even though you really want to be in a relationship with him, you'd have to keep it under wraps until you somehow manage to take your soul back from the evil clutches of your father."

"Also implied."

"And then ask him straight up if he'll be in a relationship with you under those circumstances."

"Wes. No offence. But I'm not asking Kurt, who I've known for two weeks, despite really, really liking him, if he wants to be in a relationship with me or not." Blaine says "I think we should... go slowly. Given the... circumstances. And he's probably right, with the wooing thing, as ridiculous as it sounds. I think it's the right thing to do. We both know the other's interested, but we should make it... more solid. Before we start talking about relationships."

"Well, it is your love life..." Wes shrugged "And I guess wooing can't hurt."

Blaine laughed "But I will tell him he should consider the variants seriously." He adds, much to Wes' approving nod and they resume to their separate activities: ceiling observation and cereal munching.

The next day, Blaine repeats his course of action. Waits until Kurt's almost done packing his stuff and takes his books.

"Walking me to my room again?" Kurt smirks.

"Last time was such a success, I can't help myself." Blaine beams "Thank you." He says as Kurt holds the door open for him.

"You took my books, yesterday."

"Oh!" Blaine remembers now "Sorry, I forgot, I left them on my desk, I meant to give them to you over breakfast if I saw you..." he mumbles.

"It's ok... I'll text you tomorrow morning about it, if you want. I actually need two of them."

"Yes, that'd be great. Thanks." Blaine bites his lip.

"You're nervous." Kurt says. It's a fact, not a question. "You always bite your lip when you're nervous."

"Oh..." Blaine frowns and then smiles a little "Guess I do..." is it weird that he likes it that Kurt's noticed this things?

"What's got you nervous?"

"Besides you?" he teases and Kurt blushes. The banter is short lived as Blaine gives up on trying to postpone the subject "Honestly...? Would you mind if I went back to yesterday's talk?"

"The dad talk?" Kurt prompts and Blaine nods "Not at all. Actually. I do have a question. Have you... Are you... You're out to them, aren't you?"

"To my parents? Yeah. And to Wes. And you, I guess. That's four people that know I'm gay."

"Ok... Do you... want to come out? Like, publicly?"

"Mostly..." Blaine sighs "...I want to live my life freely... And if that means coming out publicly, then yeah. I wish I lived in a world where there was no such thing as coming out, and I could just fall in love with whomever I wanted, but... Alas... For practical purposes let's say, yes. I want to. But... I always thought I'd come out once I turned eighteen, because then if my dad wanted to throw me out, I'd at least be of age... But now... my dad's running for president, and as much as... I just.... I can't bring myself to do it. It would

destroy his campaign for all the wrong reasons." He sighs "And even he does get elected, what... another four years of this prison? And re-election?! I... I'm losing my mind because of this..."

Kurt looks at him for a second, even though he doesn't look particularly at loss for words. It just looks like he's making sure he chooses the right ones "It should never be like this..." he mutters, but then turns back to Blaine and asks "So... If your dad loses the elections, you'll come out."

"Of course." Blaine says without a second's hesitation.

"Do you think he'll win?" Kurt's voice is honest, no hidden agenda, he's just Kurt asking Blaine – Hummel and Anderson forgotten.

"I hope not...!"

"Wh- wait." Kurt pauses in his step "Blaine. If he wasn't your father would you vote for him?"

The question confuses him, but mostly because it comes from Kurt. He thought Kurt would've guessed by now "What do you mean if he wasn't my father? You think I'll vote for him? You think I'm crazy?!" He gasps "Have you read his program? Kurt, gay rights aside, there's nothing in that program that I believe in or support."

"W-won't he be mad?"

"Last time I checked it was secret ballot." Blaine shrugged "Besides, I wouldn't vote for him, even if he knew."

Kurt gives him a small smile "You take daddy issues to a whole new level."

Blaine chuckles "You have no idea..." and he really doesn't "Listen, Kurt. When I said I didn't want to ruin his campaign by coming out, it's that I want him to lose because he's not a worthy candidate, not because Americans think he should be ashamed of me." He tries not to let his own words affect him, but the truth in them hurts all the same. The truth that America would think that his dad should be ashamed of Blaine, and most of all the truth that his dad would (and is, for that matter) be so. He sighs and tries to push those thoughts away "Until my dad is out of the run – I'm hoping he loses the primaries, but it's not likely – I can't be out."

"I know." Kurt says. He pauses, deep in thought for a moment before saying "Listen, I won't lie. It'd be nice if we didn't have to hide. If I could give you a bouquet of white roses in the school courtyard or the cafeteria... But... we're just figuring out this... thing between us... and besides... my dad might not ever tell me that, but I know it would destroy his campaign if I ever came out publicly with a relationship to you, or anyone mildly important. His gay son is already a hot topic as it is, if we added you to the mix it'd be crazy. People may be kind of ok with the concept of me being gay, but the moment they saw me acting on it, it would be real, and they'd get cold feet."

"So..." Blaine stops himself before he could bite his lip "We're good?"

"Depends on what you mean by good." Kurt shrugs and smirks.

"I mean if the wooing still stands?"

Kurt's laughter is light and clear "If by wooing you mean you walking me to my dorm after practice, I think so." Kurt nods with a wide smile.

"And that kiss... does that stand as well?" Blaine's aiming to tease, but he thinks his cheeks might be betraying him.

Kurt stops by his door and turns to Blaine "Wouldn't dream otherwise..." he says leaning over and placing his lips against Blaine's cheek, just like the day before, maybe even lingering for a moment more.

He turns to unlock and open his door and just before he steps inside he gasps "Oh!" spinning on his heels he takes the books from Blaine's hands and with another brilliant beam he slips through the door.

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The week passes in a hurry. Every day after practice Blaine walks Kurt to his dorm room, and every time Kurt kisses his cheeks. Every day they talk about nothing, and sometimes they even linger at the door for up to an hour (yes, they stood outside a door for an hour) just happily talking. And not just 'getting to know you, tell me your life stories' kind of talking. Actually talking about common interests: the kind of talk that doesn't run out of subject or things to say. That's the part that most excites Kurt. And that's the part that makes him think he might get a best friend out of this, before he gets a boyfriend.

On Thursday he leaves a small bouquet of wildflowers he picks during his free period in Blaine's locker, and, again, Blaine thanks him quietly over lunch and it isn't until he's taking his books out for class that he notices the small origami flower tucked into his bag's outer pocket.

Between wooing Blaine and practicing to insane perfection Kurt only has time to be nervous on the actual day of their performance.

He thinks his blazer might be a little too big on him, and god, what if he sits on a dirty chair and makes a mess out of his pants? And what the hell is wrong with his tie that it won't stay straight?!

He 's fidgeting, all frustrated sighs and trembling legs as he tries to adjust his tie in the mirror, when Wes walks by him. "You ok?"

"Yeah..."

"Alright, we're up in ten." He says that one louder, for everyone to hear. Around Kurt there's a few mumbles of Ok's, and the rustling of clothes gets a little more frantic.

A hand comes to rest on his arm "You seem nervous..." Blaine's voice is teasing.

God, if he wasn't so freaking charming he could just... smack that smirk off his face. "I am nervous." Kurt rolls his eyes, and before Blaine can say anything or smirk wider he adds "Don't you dare judge me." He gives up on his tie "This is my first solo in a competition... I think I'll die."

Blaine laughs and shakes he's head "You won't..." he reaches to straighten Kurt's tie "And I'm not judging. I think it's adorable, and I think you're adorable." He beams "There, it's perfect."

"Thank you..." Kurt sighs.

"If you start feeling too nervous, just... pretend it's just you and me on that stage. Pretend it's one of our practices, and that we're just gonna sit down and talk about Wicked afterwards."

"Ok." He nods "We'll be great."

"We will. And you will."

"And you, too."

"And Nick!" Blaine says, turning towards the room "And everyone. We will ALL be great, right guys?!" There's a collective 'yeah!' "And guys, you know the drill, if Dom starts looking a little greenish just incorporate it into the choreography!"

"Oh, ha ha, Blaine, very funny." Dom says.

"I'm kidding Dom, you'll be brilliant, I'm sure." Blaine stresses, walking over to Dom and wrapping an arm around his shoulders "There's absolutely nothing to be nervous about!"

Wes comes striding back in "Alright guys, they want us to take our places." He announces "Group circle!"

He places his hand in front of him, palm down, arm outstretched. David grins and follows suit, and soon everyone has their hand in the center and Wes smiles and says "Guys, we've practiced blood and sweat and we could do this in our sleep, so let's go and kick some ASS!"

"YEAH!" Everyone raises their hands and whoops and Jeff has his fingers in his mouth and his whistling obnoxiously loud.

They hurry through the backstage, and a stage assistant directs them to their places. Wes makes a last round to check positions, David gives hushed last minute directions and Blaine's smiling encouragingly to anyone his eyes catch.

Kurt's had that smile directed at himself so many times this past week that you'd think it'd be old news by now, but it still makes his stomach flip. His eyes are still caught on Blaine's, as they grin at each other, when the loud booming voice sounds.

"And now, from Dalton Academy, the Warblers!"

There's surprisingly loud applause as the curtain opens, and there's even a few camera flashes that Kurt doesn't remember from Ohio. He barely has time to register everything and the size of the audience, before David has given the signal and they're singing and Blaine's stepping out of formation for his spotlight. The cameras flash wildly and suddenly Kurt realizes they're not 'proud mamma' types of cameras. Those are paparazzi flashes.

It's ridiculous, really. So ridiculous that he doesn't even let it affect him as he continues in perfect synchrony and with flawless choreography. But he can't help but wonder what they think they'll find in a god forsaken show choir competition.

When Blaine steps back o thunderous applause, Nick is rushing forward already and formation regroups for Uptown Girl. Nick is fresh and jovial up there, and it's so cheerful and Kurt thinks he definitely deserved that solo. Back to his place next to Kurt, Blaine is perfect as back up, and follows choreography without a hitch, even as they share quick glances and smiles.

Finally, Nick as finalized his solo, back in his original position and Kurt lunches forward projecting his voice to perfection as he sings "You think you're better, you're better than me! You blow me off as history! To avoid conversation, you're ignoring me!" For the first time since they started with this song Kurt is actually surprised and slightly intimidated at how powerful the group sounds when they back him up for the last two words. He hides his surprise as Blaine steps forwards to take his own sultrier lines.

"You've had enough and you need somebody to know. You're looking tough, but you need a way to let it go. Come on now, what's a boy supposed to do?"

Kurt joins him as they belt "When I can't seem to leave you alone!"

He steps forward and mimics pushing Blaine aside as he sings alone "Touching me touching you!"

Once again the power of the entire group almost overwhelms and they all sing in perfect unison "I wanna be your brother, or the things your father do, never make you run for cover even if they want us to. I wanna be your sister, or the things your mother do, I wanna be wanna be, whatever else that touches you!"

"Whatever else that touches you!" Kurt sings, high and powerful.

"Whatever else that touches you!" Blaine counters.

"For fear of losing, losing your way...!" Kurt starts towards his side of the stage "You stop and listen to the things that they say, to avoid conversation, **you walk away!**"

"Growing up, found the need to compromise, well, I've had enough twenty years and I realized, come on now, what's a boy supposed to do?"

"When I can seem to leave you alone?!"

"Touching me touching you!"

As the rest of the group launched into the chorus again, Blaine and Kurt harmonized, and for a few moments it was an almost overpowering amount of voices sounding together, and suddenly they were gone and Kurt was quirking an eyebrow and singing as raspy as he could "When you've had enough and you need somebody to know..."

Blaine's running towards him and matching his tone "Well, you're looking tough, but you need a way to let it go..."

"Come on now,..."

"What's a boy supposed to do?"

"When I can seem to leave you alone! **Touching me touching you!**"

And then it's Kurt's shining moment, his crown of glory as he sings so high and clear, and so easily in tune. "This isn't a perfect love, one that we're guilty of, what am I supposed to do, I can't seem to leave you alone, touching me touching you!"

And soon, the group has divided itself into two groups. On the left Kurt, singing the high parts with some back up, and on the right Blaine leading them through the chorus over and over again, while in the middle Jon and Jeff give a spectacle of dance.

Blaine and Kurt finish in unison and to complete silence "Whatever else that touches you."

The applause is nearly overwhelming and the audience is on their feet.

Kurt barely has anytime to register before a mess of arms and heads are surrounding him and he's hugging and being hugged by everyone. He thinks, at some point he recognized Blaine's cologne, and he looks to find him right by his side, unwrapping his arms from Nick. Kurt takes his shot and wraps his own around Blaine. He feels Blaine's hands squeezing his back tightly, and his heart skips a little when he thinks those might be Blaine's lips on his neck. God, he wants to turn his around and capture them in his own so much.

They part because they somehow still have the good sense to remember they're in public, but in the mess of warbler hugging warbler the lingering of their hands on each other's waist goes unnoticed.

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The stage is insane with tension. Third place is announced and it's not them. Hopefully that's a good thing.

Blaine resists the urge to reach for Kurt's hand. He noticed the flashes earlier. He knows why they're there – in his two years of show choir competitions he's never once had those many flashes shooting at his face. Instead he takes deep breath and closes his eyes because he probably shouldn't look either.

Blaine's so concentrated on it that he only registers the word winner came out of the announcer's mouth when the man's already opening the envelope labeled '1st Place'.

"The Warblers!" he announces cheerfully.

"YES!" Wes screams, practically into his ear, and Blaine would complain but he's too busy gasping with relief himself. Wes arms hug him so tightly it almost feels like he's trying to choke him, but Blaine hugs back all the same, even feels his feet lift slightly off the ground as Wes pulls him completely flush against him. He can't stop laughing, and if he wasn't so happy himself he'd be telling Wes he seriously needs to get a life outside the Warblers. Next to him he can hear Kurt's amazing laugh and he resists the urge to let go of Wes at once and follow that sound, but he waits until Wes is done hugging him to turn around and pull Kurt into their second hug today.

It's quick and, like before, he only allows himself a quick brush of lips to whatever part of Kurt's skin that's exposed and closer to his mouth. They part with giddy smiles and if they're infatuated with each other no one can tell – it's well hidden beneath the rush of winning.

Wes receives the not that small trophy and holds it high above their heads, quick to pass it on so everyone can experience the thrill of holding it.

"You're a good captain." Blaine tells him, with a strong one armed hug.

"You can tell me that again when we win Nationals!" Wes beams and returns the hug briefly before turning to whoop and grab and shake as many shoulders as he can find.

Blaine finds David and hugs him fiercely too "Your song selection was spot on, as usual!" he says once he pulls away.

David nods excitedly "It was Mika, man, Mika is god and god is Mika."

"What if we do a Mika medley for Regionals, man?" Blaine suggests.

"Do not tempt me, Blaine!" he laughs "You might find yourself singing Lollipop!"

Blaine shrugs "I don't see how that'd be a bad thing." He hugs David quickly again before going to find Thad, just as they start being ushered out of the stage.

He tackles Thad's back with a strong embrace and the miraculously shorter boy nearly yelps. Blaine leaves only one arm around Thad's shoulders as they walk cheerfully backstage "Congratulations, my dear friend, once again your brilliant arrangements have brought the house down."

Thad blushes and smiles "Thank you, Blaine. You were great, as usual."

He smiles in responses and squeezes his shoulders before letting go and starting to pat everyone's shoulders with words of 'great job' and 'terrific performance!'.

"One would almost think *you're* captain." Kurt teases once he reaches him.

"No, but I am lead soloist, and that kind of makes me front man, even if Wes is captain."

"I thought you- we were lead by the three-manned council."

"Yes, but the council is divided into three jobs. David's in charge of song selection and solo distribution. Thad makes up the arrangements and transitions into acapella. And Wes is captain – he schedules rehearsals, books shows, talks to the principle, etc, etc."

"You have one person in charge of solo distribution? How does David not take every solo for himself?" Kurt frowns.

Blaine laughs again, and even though he doesn't voice it he really wants to ask Kurt how his old glee club actually worked "I don't know if you've noticed, Kurt, but we're a team and we work like a team. We do

have a council, and they have the final say in everything, but we're very democratic. I was voted lead soloist – it wasn't just David." He explains "And, anyway, it's not like he could appoint himself a soloist. Councilmen can't have solos."

"Oh... why not?"

"To make sure that the only interest they have in mind is that of the team..."

"Oh, wow." Kurt gasped, completely stunned by the concept and Blaine does make a mental note to google New Directions and see what comes up. "Good thing I'm not on the council." He adds with a breathy laugh of relief.

Blaine laughs "They had their solos last year, they're more than happy sharing the spotlight."

"What is this?" Kurt frowns, but he's smiling "Show choir heaven? Only the pure of heart can be in the Warblers?"

Blaine shakes his head with a smile and bumps their shoulders "I don't know how your old glee club was, but... welcome to the Warblers."

Their green room is now home to a bunch of loud, obnoxious teenage boys, reminiscing excitedly about something that happened not five minutes ago. Blaine sees from the corner of his eye, as he stands next to Kurt, Jeff taking his fingers to his lips and he's quick (and the only one) to cover his ears. The whistle is loud and brings the room to silence. Wes pats Jeff's shoulder and thanks him before he launches into his (now familiar to Blaine) congratulatory post-competition speech. Blaine gives Kurt a pointed look when Wes makes sure to include a small note to everyone in his speech (even if it is complimenting a particular 'ahh'), and Kurt nods back acknowledging Wes' terrific captainship.

As he finishes he announces that the bus is ready and waiting for them, and everyone picks up their stuff as Blaine assists David and Wes in putting the trophy in the thick flannel bag.

Back on the bus Blaine finds Kurt sitting in the back, next to the window, his bag occupying the seat next to him. Their eyes meet and Kurt raises an eyebrow.

"I'll sit in the back..." Blaine mutters to Wes, before nearly sprinting.

Kurt collects his bag with a smirk, tucking it away at his feet, just as Blaine reaches the final row. "Excuse me. Is this seat taken?" he asks quietly.

Kurt raises an eyebrow "Yes."

"By who?" Blaine sits down nonetheless.

"Just this guy I've got my eye on... I was kind of hoping we could sit together and, you know..."

"Well, I'm extremely sorry for the inconvenience." Blaine sighs.

Kurt's going to say something when Wes' voice interrupts every conversation going on – thankfully without the help of Jeff's whistles this time. "Ok, listen up, everybody. Please don't forget the Dalton Carnival is this Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday everyone is on booth building duties. No excuses. And I don't want to hear any 'we can use last year's booth' nonsense. We absolutely cannot. Design ideas are your homework for tomorrow, and on Monday morning I want everyone's sketches on my hand. And Jon, your four year old sister's sketch of your family and home next to a strangely giant flower is not a design idea." He shoots warningly towards the tall boy who merely shrugs and grins, and everyone laughs.

David pulls a white sheet of paper "Also, seen as we have everyone's attention right now, might as well go through shifts distribution. Now, I know everyone wants to stay at the actually kissing part of the booth, but someone needs to man the register, so may-"

"I'll do that." Kurt's voice pipes up, so unexpectedly Blaine almost jumps in his seat.

"Oh. I was going to suggest rotating shifts."

"No. I'll do it all day. I don't mind."

Everyone frowns slightly, confused, but David grins and shrugs after a second and says "Great, one less problem..." he scribbles something down "Now. Blaine, I understand you'll be running tours of the school to prospective students and parents?"

Blaine nods in his seat. The carnival was as much a fundraiser as it was an opportunity for Dalton to publicize itself, and almost every year there were enough visitors to warrant organized tours of the

school. As Student Body President he was in charge of welcoming visiting and prospective new students, and making sure they knew the advantages of enrolling at Dalton.

"I also have to stop by the soccer team booth."

"Yeah!" Jeff pipes up "Me too."

"And me and Nick, I know." Wes rolls his eyes "And David has football..."

"Anyway." David interrupts with his usual smile "I have foreseen all of that, and the football and soccer team captains" he shot Jeff a wink "have e-mailed me their schedules and ideas. So, we figured it would be a little exhausting sitting at the booth all day" everyone laughs and Blaine shakes his head too, because at the end of the day, as preppily pristine as they are or pretend to be, they're all just a bunch of horny teenagers "We've arranged you into shifts, anyway. And those of you with more than one booth can try to coordinate ours with the others." He holds up a sheet of paper with a grill on it "This will be hanging on the Warbler's practice room door. I want you to check with your other clubs and then come sign up for the shifts you want. It's four guys for every shift, no more no less." He warns and then beams and says "And the girls from Jane Adam's will be arriving at three."

There's a general buzz of excitement and shouts of "sign me up for that shift!" and Blaine turns to share a half amused look with Kurt.

The rest of the ride is quick. Wes and David come to sit in the row in front of Kurt and Blaine, and the four of them resume their usual lunchtime dynamic: David excitedly talking about something, while Wes quips sarcastic remarks, Blaine makes good natured jokes and Kurt gently steers David back to the initial subject when he starts straying.

Once back to school grounds most of them return to their own cars and merrily part ways.

"Seen as there's no dorm room to walk me to, maybe you could walk me to my car...?" Kurt's voice says from behind, just as Thad walks away, still waving cheerfully at Blaine.

Blaine turns to smile "Of course!"

He puts his hand lightly on Kurt's back and steers him towards the parking lot.

"You were fantastic tonight, Blaine." Kurt says.

"Thank you." Blaine blushes "You were too."

"Yeah, I was." Kurt rolls his eyes with a smirk, and they both laugh "We were all amazing. I can't believe we actually go a standing O..." He sighs "First time I've ever received a standing O..."

"I'll never understand your old glee club." Blaine says.

Kurt chuckles and it's only a little bitter. They reach his car then, and Kurt unlocks it before he turns to Blaine "Wait... huh... I don't really know how to say this... but.... Did you notice the flashes? I'm pretty sure they weren't just proud parents snapping pics of their kids..."

Blaine sighs a little sadly "You noticed that too, then..."

"Yeah... I mean it's fine. What're they gonna print? That we had a duet together? That we're in the same glee club?"

"That we hugged?" Blaine supplied with a shrug.

"Yeah, but we didn't even hug the way I wanted to hug you..." he says sheepishly.

Blaine's heart warms a little at that, and he makes a show of looking around them – the parking lot is completely empty "Maybe you could hug me now... The way you wanted?"

Kurt rolls his eyes, like he's trying to play it cool, but his cheeks are a little red when he finally throws his arms around Blaine's neck and pulls him close – really close. He loosens his grip around Blaine's shoulders only to have his hands slide against his back and press tightly. Blaine buries his face in the crook of Kurt's neck and wraps his arms around his waist, taking a deep breath and committing Kurt's scent to memory.

"I could never have asked for a better duet partner. I was proud to sing with you." Kurt mutters.

"I could sing with you for hours and not get tired." Blaine mutters back, and this time it's him who pulls back and places a careful gentle kiss on Kurt's cheek, lingering for what feels like forever.

"Promise me something." Kurt says, as he steps back a little, and only their hands are touching.

"Of course..."

"Promise me you'll think this through, too." He says "You told me to think about your dad and what it would all mean for me. You think I might regret it. So, promise me you'll think about what it'll mean for you, and make sure you won't regret it, either. I don't want to be the one to push you towards something you're not ready for... I don't want you to regret it, and I don't want you to resent me."

"I'd never-"

"So, think about it, Blaine." He shrugs "Whether it's with me or with some other boy, something as innocent as a first kiss could become a nightmare for you if word got out. And I promise you can trust me, but... Like I said. If I have to think about it, so do you."

"Ok."

"You promise?"

"I promise."

Kurt smiles and squeezes Blaine's hand before letting go and climbing onto his car.

Blaine watches him pull out and disappear before he walks to his own car and drives home.

He expects the exact same scenario as he found exactly a week before. But his grandparents aren't watching TV and his dad isn't holed up in his study, and his mother isn't hovering over their maid's shoulder as she cooks dinner.

They're crowding over an open laptop and the very minute Blaine comes in the house they're glaring at him.

Chapter Six

Source: www.People.Com

Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer?

That is our official theory behind what happened today at a DC sectionals show choir competition! Remember when we reported last week that Blaine Anderson (son of Senator John Anderson, Republican, currently running for US President) and Kurt Hummel (son of Senator Kurt Hummel, Democrat, also running for President) went to the same school? Well, it appears they also attend the same clubs – or at least one of them!

The Dalton Academy *acapella* show choir club, a.k.a. the dreamy Warblers, performed and won first place just this afternoon. And to the surprise of everyone on that audience (maybe even Sen. Burt Hummel, seen sitting front row like a true proud daddy!) the number featured a lively duet between both teenagers! They seemed alive with music, and the number – Touches You, by Mika – was truly terrific! (watch the performance [here](#)!)

But what surprised us the most was the wide smiles on both of their faces as they sung with each other, and the easy banter that seemed to flow between them. And then, both as the number was over and again when results were announced, they *hugged*!

So, are they truly the friends they seem to be despite the particularly awkward circumstances, or is this all for a politically correct show, and the lyrics to their show actually mean something:

You think you're better, you're better than me.

You blow me off as history

To avoid conversation you're ignoring me.

Well, friendship or not, so far team Anderson is winning on this side: with more time on the spotlight for this performance (as Blaine sung another solo besides the duet) and, according to sources, Student Body Presidency already under his belt. Will the score even out soon?

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Burt's laughing at his computer when Kurt closes the front door behind him.

"What's up?" Kurt asks.

"Kiddo!" Burt stands up at once and crosses the room to hug his son "You were terrific! Congratulations!"

"Thank you." Kurt beams "I thought so too!"

"The whole club was great!" Burt says with a smirk "Even that other kid who sang with you... huh...?"

Kurt blushes slightly "Maybe I should've told you?" Kurt grimaces "I told you he goes to my school, right?"

"Kurt, Kurt!" Burt laughs "Relax!" he claps his son on the arm "I've met the kid a couple of times actually. I told you, right? I don't think I've ever met someone so polite." He chuckles.

"I know, right?!" Kurt sighs, relief flooding through him as he realized how stupid he'd been, thinking his dad would be mad "He was going to give me his entire solo...! He's so nice!" Kurt gushes "And we've become really good friends, dad! I told you that, right? I think you'll like him. He said he'll vote for you." Kurt's eyes pop open and he covers his mouth with his hands, mortified, and gasps out "Don't tell anyone I told you that!"

Burt lets out a good natured bark of laughter and he rolls his eyes "Your secret's safe with me." He starts back to the coffee table where he'd left his laptop "Come see something."

"What is it?" Kurt frowns.

"Your very first tabloid moment!"

Kurt blanches. Of course. It's not that much a surprise. He'd seen the flashes, hadn't he? But in all honesty, he had never thought they'd do anything with the pictures, it's not like there had been anything interesting happening, right? And on the actual day?! Already this soon?!

The main picture shows one of their hugs – Kurt's pretty sure it's the post performance one. Luckily it's Blaine who has his back to the camera, because Kurt's pretty sure that's the exact moment Blaine kissed his neck, judging from the look of surprise on his own face. Below, a montage of both their parents illustrates the actual problem.

At the end of the article there's already a Youtube link to their performance, and it's actually from the Warbler's official channel – which Kurt didn't even know they had.

He skims the article and it's a little bit ridiculous, but at least they said the performance was terrific.

"This is insane." Kurt mutters.

Burt chuckles next to him "A bit, yes..."

Kurt can't share his dad's amusement. He knows Blaine's probably not so lucky as to have his parents laughing it off. He wants nothing more than to call him and ask what they said, or what they did, and he wants to delete the stupid story!

"Kurt..." Burt sighs as he notices his son's rapidly decreasing spirits "I know what you're thinking..."

"You do?"

"Yeah. I know having to look over your shoulder for the entire race is gonna be hard, buddy. But I don't want you to censor yourself or do anything different. You're a good kid, anyway. I don't think you're gonna go and smoke pot or get drunk, so we're safe. I don't want you to change your life for this." Burt sighs "Just... be careful... about what you do and who you let into your life, but... don't stop living your life because you're afraid it'll hurt my campaign."

Kurt looks at his father and the smile that spreads over his face is honest and genuine. It was not what he was thinking, but his dad doesn't need to know that, and, anyway, it was a really nice thing for him to say.

"Thank you dad..." *I just wish Blaine was hearing the exact same words, right now.*

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"And then, both as the number was over and again when results were announced, they ***hugged!***" his father read out loud, turning to glare at Blaine the first moment he could.

Blaine frowns. He can't believe this. He can't believe they actually reported something that ridiculously insignificant. He can't believe his parents are making such a big deal out of it. And he can't believe he's been there for five minutes now and hadn't even been given the opportunity to drop his things or move before being drilled.

"He's my teammate! We won! What was I supposed to do?!"

"You hug your friends!" His father snaps "You shake your teammate's hands!"

"He's my friend!" Blaine counters and he barely let's his family's gasps affect him "And it's not like you said anything when you went to my soccer game last year and we won and I hugged everyone on the team!"

"It's soccer!" His grandfather says "There are no fags on the team! This is you hugging a fag!"

Blaine feels the hot burn of tears in his eyes but he does his best to keep them away "So? I should just keep away from him? Is that it? Have everyone saying my father's raising a bigot?!"

"Don't you talk back to me, young man!" His grandfather stands, and Blaine wants to laugh because how does he even think that's going to make him look any more intimidating when he needs to hold on to that chair for support. It's not a nice thought to have, Blaine knows, but that's not a nice man either.

"Well!" He grunts "Isn't it true?! You're saying you're not a bigot?!" he rolls his eyes "What would you have me do, Grandpa? Discriminate him in front of everyone?" He shakes his head "It's one thing for my father to be openly against gay rights, but to be openly *for* their discrimination is going one step too far!"

"And instead this looks like he supports fags!"

"It's ***gay!***" Blaine nearly screams "The word is *gay!*" He turns to his father, pointedly ignoring his grandfather's glare "You can call your campaign manager and ask him what I should've done and I promise you, this is exactly it." He says, cursing himself because he almost sounds like he's pleading or

apologizing, and then adds as sure of himself as he can "This is the politically correct behavior, this is me being respectful of other people whether they're gay or straight, whether they're a democrat or a republican, and whether they're opposition or not. This is me showing our family's open for debate and diversity of opinion, and this is me showing that we know politics is about dialogue and not petty rivalries. And in case you haven't noticed, you're a politician! Start behaving like one!"

Blaine takes the stairs two steps at a time and bangs his bedroom door closed. He knows he's in trouble now. He knows his temper got the best of him and he still remembers what happened last time that happened. Sure enough his father's voice sounds from downstairs, loud and intimidating "You're grounded!"

Blaine scoffs. It's not like he can't survive two weeks without a cell phone. And not leaving the house? It's almost laughable – he boards at Dalton anyway, the only time he comes home is on the weekends. If his parents think it's hard for him to live through two weekends at home with no cell phone... well, then he's not going to tell them any different.

He opens his bedroom door, as he turns his cell phone off, and puts it outside, before slamming the door again.

Shaking his head he turns his computer on. Opens twitter, and even though he's probably taking things a little too far he shares the link to the article with the small comment "Not a ploy at all! Lol! KurtHummel Pleasure singing with you today, Mr. You were great! #NotEverythingIsACompetition" and following that up with 'Warblers kicked butt today! Whoop whoop! 1 place, regionals next! So proud to share the stage tonight with such talented friends! #OnceaWarblerAlwaysaWabler'

And, flicking his eyes over to his bedroom's door, because he feels unusually and particularly spiteful of everything he opens Kurt's twitter profile and clicks on follow.

He is browsing Facebook, when the open tab of his twitter signals a new tweet. He smirks as he notices it's Kurt's reply.

'Speak for yourself, Anderson! I've been plotting this all my life (JK!). And likewise! #DefinitelyNot ACompetition'

And in the next two seconds he gains a follower.

Without a second's hesitation he opens a private message.

'So, I'm grounded. Lol. Anyway. No cell phone for two weeks, I think. I'm not sure. But yeah.'

As he waits for Kurt's reply he opens his dad's newly founded campaign website and nearly chokes on air as there is a link to article and a comment beneath it.

"I can't believe they'll dignify that with a response..." Blaine mutters in disbelief. They're idiots, they have to be. All this will do is call attention to the issue – which in itself shouldn't be an issue. If they just kept quiet it would blow over and virtually no one would care.

He reads the statement and he wants to cry and laugh at the same time.

'Senator John Anderson has always maintained that his family must be open and respectful towards other people, no matter their age, gender, sexual orientation or religion – or in this case parentage! It is one thing to disagree and another entirely to discriminate. Blaine made his father proud as he accepts his new team mate with nothing but respect.'

Before Blaine can wrap his head fully around it, there's a new message on his inbox.

'Grounded?! God, I'm so sorry! We shouldn't have hugged at all!'

'Oh no... (link) didn't you hear? I made my father proud as I accepted you with nothing but respect! (God, they make it sound like you're a leper!) Sigh... Besides, I'm not grounded because of the hugs, I'm grounded because I talked back.'

He hopes it'll be taken both the wrong and the right away (whatever you might think right and wrong are) as he shares his father's campaign website with the comment 'Make an informed decision. #Presidentials'

He checks his inbox again.

'Talked back? Blaine! What did you even say? And how grounded are you, if you're still happily tweeting?'

'If it's the usual I'll be two weeks with no cell phone privileges and stuck home on the weekends. It's bad, but I think they think it's worse than it actually is. Joke's on them. I told my dad he needed to grow up and

be a politician because politics is about dialogue and respect and not petty rivalries and quick discrimination.'

As he waits for Kurt's reply he opens tumblr, takes a deep breath and actually goes through with what he thought was only a fleeting thought a couple of months ago.

He's finished filling out his e-mail and his password when he checks his twitter inbox again.

'Oh, so he grounds you but uses your own speech as his statement! How very mature! I'm curious, btw, is that last tweet of yours supposed to be taken as *look at the bullshit he says and don't vote for him*, OR *look at how smart he is, vote for him?* ;)'

'Whichever strikes your fancy ;P'

He checks his e-mail, opens the tumblr confirmation e-mail and clicks the link.

'Did you notice your dad's campaign twitter retweeted it?'

'It makes me both sad and amused.'

He chooses the simplest theme, deciding to eventually go back to change it another time, and starts typing out the title of the blog: The Informed Decision.

His url: andersonscrutiny

'The irony is definitely interesting. So how are you going to survive the next two weekends stuck at home?'

Blaine types out his first post before replying to Kurt.

'Making the informed decision

With the presidential election coming up and the various candidates coming forth it might get a little confusing to keep up with who thinks what, and who says this. But there is one candidate you can surely trust to remain consistent throughout the race.

Senator John Anderson will undoubtedly run the most consistently ignorant, offensive and uninformative campaign this year.

Following his own son's very smart advice I am not only asking you to make an informed decision, but also doing my best to provide you with the actual **information for said decision**.

I promise to attempt a (paradoxically) unbiased deconstruction of his campaign, and I might even, ever so often, branch out to other candidates and their own missteps on this fine popularity contest, but I should warn you: **This is a blog run by a democrat**. And even if I am, by no means, blind to mistakes that may come from the democrat candidates, I can only promise to try my most faithful impersonation of Switzerland.

Now, shall we have some fun?'

He tags it carefully (politics, US Presidentials, Jonh Anderson, amongst other things) and publishes it. His stomach feels funny, but it's almost a good kind of funny.

Now he can reply to Kurt.

'(link) ups.'

'BLAINE!'

'My hand slipped.'

xXxXx

Kurt stares at his screen with a slack jaw and bulging eyes.

His awe is interrupted by his loud, blaring cell phone. He picks it up without ever averting his eyes as they speed through the post for the third time.

"Kurt, I can't believe there was a news article abo-"

"Rach, I can't talk right now..." He mutters, still staring at his computer.

"Why not?"

"I'm staring at the single most hottest thing I've ever seen." He gasps out, refreshing the page only to see that Blaine's updated it already.

"You're watching porn?" Rachel whines, her tone disgusted and outraged.

"Yeah, political porn..." he says dismissively "B-Huh... I... huh, I found this blog that's just... deconstructing John Anderson's entire campaign. It's new, it's only got like two posts, but... seriously. It's hot."

"Who writes it?" She asks, not seeming all that interested, but obliging nonetheless.

"I... I don't know." He lies. He's not stupid. He's pretty sure he's going to be the only person to ever know Blaine's behind that blog. Maybe Wes will know. But still.

"Well, would it still be hot if it was a sixty year old woman with seven cats?" she (probably) rolls her eyes.

"Sush..." He waves her off "Of course it'd be hot. It's... well written, it's articulate, it's serious, and it has class...."

She sighs "Whatever, share the link on twitter or something. Your dad would probably appreciate that." She chuckles "Anyway, as I was saying..." she blabbers on about the article, and the performance (critiquing in a way that's her own entirely) and Kurt lets her, but he doesn't really listen – merely mm'ing and huh-huh'ing every once in a while.

He's too busy reading over Blaine's well-worded response to his father's stance on tax increase.

He wants to share the link. He really wants. He knows that if he put it up on twitter Blaine would have at least a hundred followers by tomorrow morning, and a hundred more the next days and, if he kept his post this good and regularly coming, he would have a steadily growing base of followers in no time.

But wouldn't it look like *he* was the one writing it if he tweeted it now? So soon after it started.

And would Blaine be ok with that?

Blaine! He forgot to check he's inbox after that.

There is a new message.

'My hand slipped.'

'Your hand slipped? If people find out you're running the blog this would destroy his career! Not just his campaign!'

'Huh..... don't tell anyone...?'

'Of course I won't!'

'Good. Because I really don't want to delete it. I've wanted to do it before, but I wasn't sure.'

Kurt looks around his room searching for anything to make sense. When did things get this complicated. When had he started have such strong feelings for Blaine *Anderson*? When had he become Blaine Anderson's confidant? And when had he gained the power to destroy John Anderson's campaign with one simple tweet?

Two years ago, Kurt realizes with a small tightening in his chest, he wouldn't have hesitated. He wouldn't have just tweeted 'Look this blog I found! (link)', he would've tweeted 'Look at the blog that I know for sure Blaine Anderson is running (link)'

Now the only reason he wanted to share the link in the first place was because he was pretty sure Blaine would thank him afterwards.

Kurt takes a moment to feel strangely proud of himself. He smiles. It's not every day you get to actually realize how much you've grown as a person.

'It's a great blog, Blaine. I can see now why you're SBP at Dalton, it's not just because you're Mr. Congeniality. I know it's only got two posts, for now, but... *jesus!* I promise I won't tell anyone it's you. But if you want - once it does have a little more posts, so people won't think it's me - I could share it on twitter?'

'Three posts, actually ;) And yes, I'd like that.'

Kurt smiles and refreshes the blog again, and beams wider. There's a screencap of the People's magazine article and his dad's statement about it, and underneath Blaine writes.

'So much for graceful nonchalance.

I didn't even want to comment on this, but every time I go through that website I can't help but feel pulled back into it. The fact that they felt the need to issue a statement because (*gasp!*) Blaine A was seen hugging Kurt Hummel – who happens to be his team mate – is disappointingly unsurprising. That they actually stoop to the level of dignifying people who think politics has anything to do with teenage friendships and who hugs who after a successful show choir performance is ridiculous. And the actual statement itself is mortifying. You'd think Kurt Hummel had a contagious disease – I hope Blaine Anderson got his shots before performing his duty as ambassador for the Anderson clan. As if the guy deserves special commendation for treating his team mate like the normal human being he is.

Maybe he should get a medal for it. Maybe everyone who's actually sane should get a medal for that.'

He opens a new message to Blaine 'You're ridiculous and insane! Even if this whole thing is insanely hot.'

It's only a matter of seconds before a reply comes.

'Insanely hot, heh?'

Kurt blanches and immediately afterwards blood comes rushing back to his face. He goes frantically back to check what he sent. He actually typed that.

'Let's pretend I didn't say that and go back to bashful wooing, shall we?'

'Just a moment. I'll even the score for you, shall I? You should know that your lower, husky voice is pretty damn hot. Insanely hot. Ok. Now back to bashful wooing.'

'Thank you. What are you doing now? Still writing?'

'No, I'm compiling old speeches and other stuff to quote from. Daddy dearest just called me down for dinner, though. If I don't get back to you in the meantime assume I'm either dead or computer-less. With affection, yours truly.'

'Don't die please!'

Kurt sighs, finally closing his twitter. He considers opening Facebook and adding Blaine, but he thinks that might be testing the waters a little bit too far. Maybe next week once the whole thing blows over in the Anderson household.

He closes his laptop entirely and goes to make some dinner. He asks his father if he wants anything in particular and when the answer's negative he sets about making a quick dish of pasta.

As he cooks he considers everything he promised Blaine he would think about, and what Blaine promised to think about as well.

It's like they're walking in circles. They tell each other they'll think about it and they do for five minutes, until the only thing they think about is how much they actually like each other. At least that's what it's like for Kurt.

He hasn't known Blaine for that long, but they're kindred spirits, and he doesn't need to know Blaine to know he likes him, and to know they will soon be best friends. So it's not a stretch for him to think that whatever he may have with Blaine – romantic or not, though, lol, let's be rational here – will be pretty damn big.

Life is made out of experiences, after all, and Kurt can't bring himself to even consider passing up something that could be one of the best experiences of his life.

In the few weeks he's known Blaine, the boy had made him feel things he's never let himself dream to be able to feel. He'd felt things he thought were only possible in books – because it's certainly not possible to feel butterflies in your stomach, is it?

Is he supposed to just let it go because they'll have to keep their romance a secret?

Sure, it's indefinite how long the secret will persist, and who's to say they won't break up after two months and they're just getting ahead of themselves here. But there's something in Kurt's heart that's so absolutely sure things with Blaine could be amazing. He'd get to see that smile every day and have it directed at him, be the reason behind it, even!

How is anyone supposed to say no to that?

Sure, it was all very strange and unfortunate, but god dammit, the Hummels will not be pushed around!

The Hummels will not be forced to forego something just because someone's dad is an ass.

xXxXx

Dinner is a quiet, awkward business. Everyone is so silent that Blaine can hear them chewing. It's slightly disturbing. He can practically feel the contempt coming from his grandfather, and he can see both women on the table exchanging nervous glances every two minutes. His grandmother makes a feeble attempt at conversation when she asks Blaine about college applications, but once Blaine has assured her that every single one was already sent and well within the dead line the silence is back and just as charged.

Between giving them the satisfaction of showing himself affected by the silent treatment or actually using said silence to his advantage Blaine doesn't have a hard time making his choice. He uses this quiet dinner to reflect upon the day's events and conversations.

He realizes now that things might be a little worse than he'd imagined. If a celebratory hug can make his parents go ballistic Blaine's not entirely too sure what would happen if they caught hold of his texts to Kurt, or the messages they exchanged not ten minutes ago. And he certainly does not even want to imagine what would happen if, when eventually they do start dating (which Blaine is more than adamant making sure happens), they were to find out – or worse, the press!

He sees now what Kurt meant earlier. Blaine sees now that he has a choice to make. Between his family and Kurt. Between maybe coming to resent Kurt once their relationship wrecks Blaine's family once and for all, or letting go of that same pretense of a family altogether long before it can come back and bite him in the ass.

Only, the way he sees it, it's not exactly Kurt he's choosing. Kurt's more like the cover to the whole book. He'd be choosing the life he actually wants to live. A life where he's free to love who he loves, a life where he's free to say what he thinks. A life where his name is more important than his dad's.

And, in the end, he's not the one making that choice – they are. They're the ones pushing him over and over again, each time closer to the edge. And the edge isn't his downfall, it's his liberation.

Blaine almost wants to jump now. Blaine almost wants to change that blog to say 'Blaine Anderson' at the very top. He wants to tell the freaking world he wouldn't vote for his dad if he was the *only* candidate for

President. He wants to write to People's magazine and offer them an exclusive story about Kurt Hummel having the most amazing voice, the most beautiful eyes, the most adorable blush and the most captivating mind he's ever met.

He wants to do those things and then some. But he doesn't. He knows if he does that he destroys everything his father's ever worked for – not just his campaign. And as much as he hates everything the man stands for, he's still his father, and Blaine, somehow, still... loves him.

Yes, he wants him to lose the elections. But no son would ever want to be the reason his father loses the election, no matter what. Blaine's no exception.

He wants his father to lose on his own merit. Because at the end of the day this is still about politics, isn't it? And politics shouldn't have anything to do with family dynamic, anyway. John Anderson's lousy parenthood should not be of consequence to his campaign. And frankly Blaine's tired of being treated like a puppet – and that's all he would be if word of any of this got out. He'd still be a puppet, but with a different master, is all. And he wouldn't even have the smallest control of the strings. He wouldn't even know who was pulling them.

At least this way, he knows where he can tie or break the strings.

In the end, it seems. He has only one choice to make and it's not between his family and Kurt. It's whether he wants to live his own life or not. And he does. He'll do exactly that: he'll choose to live the way he wants to live.

And for now, that means not wrecking his father's career.

But it also means being with Kurt. And he can do both.

He will be with Kurt Hummel. He will not ignore his feelings for Kurt Hummel.

He will be quiet about it, and he will be careful about it. But he will do it. Because there's only so much prison he's willing to endure and his cell was getting a little too small for his liking.

And if anything should happen. Then... he knows what he wants first and foremost. He knows his priorities. **HIS** own priorities.

And besides, let us not forget, if anything should happen, he has leverage. He has the power to destroy his father's career. He doesn't want to do it, but he can. So. The strings are all tied up, and if Blaine can't move, neither can his master.

He takes a deep breath and sits straighter then. He holds his head high, because he refuses to be belittled in his own home, even if every day it feels less and less like it.

His grandfather notices the movement, and it elicits his attention and a sigh "Are you even going to apologize?" the old man grunts.

Blaine raises an eyebrow "About...?"

"Talking back to me? Undermining both your father and I? Making your father look bad?"

"Huh... No." Blaine says quietly "I will not apologize about speaking my mind. I will not apologize about thinking you were both wrong. And I will certainly not apologize about hugging my friend."

His grandfather clenches his jaw as his father mutters a stern warning "Blaine...!"

"No, John" the older man says "Let us talk." He announces like he's about to rip Blaine a new one. Strangely, Blaine can't wait. Blaine's always played the part of dutiful son and grandson, and even though his *parents* knew better, John Anderson Senior, however, was in for a rude awakening if the subject got pushed a little too far "When you say something like that, you are making your father look bad. It's not just about hugging Hummel's son. It's about hugging Hummel's faggy son! It-"

"Ok, that's *enough*!" Blaine interrupts. He's never interrupted an adult before. But one can only take so much "The word. Is. Gay." He punctuates every syllable as if his grandfather were deaf "And will not stand here and let you talk about a good friend of mine like that. So yeah, he's gay, so what? You got another thing coming if you think I'm gonna be like you. Newsflash, I happen to believe in same-sex marriage, and I have several gay friends or who are ten times the men any of you will ever be!"

His grandfather sits there with wide eyes and open mouth, lost for words.

It's his grandmother who speaks first "Blaine!" she gasps "What's gotten into you?!"

He rolls his eyes "Grandma, nothing has gotten into me." He takes a deep breath "I'm nearly eighteen. I'm allowed to have my own opinions and just because I never say anything near the two of you doesn't mean I agree with what's coming out of your mouths."

"Young man this is no way to talk to your grandmother!"

"And the way you talk about Kurt is acceptable?!" Blaine counters, he dabs his mouth with his napkin "If you'll excuse me, I believe I'm grounded. I'll go back to my bedroom without eating desert. Have a good night."

He nearly sprints to his room. He doesn't know why but he feels his tears burning his eyes and he sure as hell is not gonna let them see those.

He knows what he's done; he knows what his grandfather's like. If he's any lucky, he'll drop the issue in a month, but it's unlikely. Blaine can only hope that the cold shoulder is all he'll get. He's not sure he can survive that long being provoked without doing something stupid. Like coming out.

He opens his laptop only long enough to message Kurt ('I'm alive. No casualties yet, but the war seems to be only at the beginning. I'll talk to you tomorrow, maybe.') and then he works on his mandatory readings. He's not so sure he can trust himself with thinking right now.

Eventually he falls asleep with his cheek plastered to page 21 of his English Lit assigned novel. He doesn't wake up till ten am on Sunday. He takes his breakfast quickly and quietly, avoiding everyone. He goes back to his bedroom, finishing the pile of homework from the past week before lunch.

Lunch is, again, awkward. Only now it's about ten times worse. His grandfather glares at him through the whole meal. His father ignores him. His mother drops her silverware so many times Blaine wonders if her hands are working at all. His grandmother looks at everyone with nervous glances, and every time looks away disappointed.

Even Anita seems affected, her interventions as she brings and takes the food meek and strained.

At some point halfway through the meal Blaine actually starts finding the whole thing a little funny. Of course he has better judgment than to actually laugh. But he can only imagine Wes turning to his grandfather and asking if he wants some ice with that burn, or David so very eagerly attempting to start

conversations about whatever sport's on his mind that week, or even Kurt looking at everyone like they've suffered some kind of brain damage.

He finishes his food and cleans his lips carefully "May I be excused?" The silence is such that it almost sounds like he's yelling.

"Yes." His father says simply.

He pulls his chair back, takes a step aside, puts the chair back in place, hands Anita his plate and cup, and leaves quietly to his bedroom.

He makes another post on his blog and is surprised to find that he already has a dozen followers and a few notes on his other posts.

Dinner goes by in the same fashion, and unsurprisingly Blaine can't wait for his whole week at Dalton.

He's packing his school bag when he receives a message from Kurt on his twitter.

'How's the war going? And on happier subjects, on a scale of one to ten how proud would you say you are about your kissing booth design? Because I'm at 12 right now!'

'Meal time makes Siberia feel like a warm summer's day. I haven't designed anything. Got distracted, thank you for reminding me. Shall whip something up as we speak, suggestions?'

'!'

'Are you suggesting I cover the booth in exclamation marks?'

'yes.'

'Ok, then. Tell me about yours.'

And just because he can, Blaine doodles a kissing booth and covers its walls in exclamation marks. He wonders if Kurt will think it's funny, or just stupid. Probably just stupid. He sighs, but doesn't make a new one anyway, It's not like his design would ever be any good.

'I'll show you tomorrow, but it's very romantic.'

'Does it have hearts all over it?'

'No! What do you take me for, Blaine Anderson! I take offense! How unoriginal do you think I am?'

'Sorry, sorry, sorry! Don't be mad at me, please. One more cold shoulder and I think I'll freeze to death.'

'God, Blaine, how bad are things over there?'

'Nothing I can't handle. But I don't wanna talk about it. A week in Dalton is all I need to re-charge my soul. A week with you... (close enough bashful wooing?)'

'Well, if you do wanna talk about it at some point, I'm here. You know that, right? And yes, close enough :) '

'I do. I'm going to go to sleep now. Good night Kurt, I'll see you tomorrow.'

'Sleep tight, Blaine. Don't let the beg bugs bite.'

Chapter Seven

Source: [www. some sort of serious journal like the Washington post . com](http://www.some.sort.of.serious.journal.like.the.Washington.post.com)

Anderson reiterates: Marriage is between a man and a woman

In a quick interview tonight presidential candidate Senator John Anderson has made his official position on gay marriage as clear as water. To whomever hadn't heard it before, the republican candidate has, once again, professed his belief that same-sex marriage should not be legal.

"Gay rights, I believe, are not civil rights. I understand if the individual state wants to put it to a vote, but making it a civil rights issue is crossing the line."

Anderson goes on to say that "what people do in the privacy of their own homes is their own business, but certain behaviors should be kept behind closed doors." And later on he added "I think nowadays there is too much exposure to sexual themes, especially homosexual themes. I definitely believe that that has lead to an increase in the number of gay and lesbian teens, and I think our educators – parents and teachers – should definitely strive to counter these influences." He continues "Traditional values must be upheld, and I most certainly want to play a big part in that struggle. I think the fundamental fabric and values of our society are threatened and have been threatened for a while now, but what's important is to know that there will always be people like me, who are not afraid to stand up for the right thing."

Whereas this speech might appeal to those more conservative minded and certainly set the tone for a traditional values friendly campaign, several gay rights organizations and spokespeople have already issued strong worded responses to these statements, and it is certainly a stark contrast to other candidate, such as Burt Hummel who is, by a large margin, the most outspoken supporter of LGBT rights. In these times, this is bound to be at the centre of the political agenda, and might very well be a deciding factor in who ultimately wins the race.

Comment on this article and let us know what you think.

[Annita009](#)

Omg. "our fundamental values are threatened and have been threatened for a while now" what are you? Amish?!

Jerrymayers

This guy cannot be my president. I dont like seein 2 men making out in the middle of the street, but this is going too far, man.

Anderson4president

Spot on! Brilliant. Fags married?! Makes me gag.

Cantstandanderson

I wish he'd wake up one day and be gay. Or better yet, have a gay son. Wouldn't it be great if he just woke up and BAM Hummel's son was his son?!

Jayjay33

Cantstandanderson ahaha! Yes! Definitely! Someone should ask him how he would feel if one of his kids were gay. Not so fast to discriminate then!

Susanhoffman9

This is by far the most ridiculous thing I've read. Tell me, Mr. Anderson. How would you feel if someone you love (yes, maybe one of your sons) came out to you and told you they were gay? Would you think he was threatening the fundamental fabric of our society? Would you think he shouldn't have the same rights as everyone else because of who he loves? Would you feel like he was threatening the sanctity of *your* marriage? It's time to wake up and live in the 21st century, Senator.

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"So, you're grounded then..." Wes raises his eyebrow as they lift the wooden plank.

Blaine sighs and shrugs "So it seems." He smiles a little sadly before adding "I guess that's the bright part of them being stuck in the stone age." They turn the narrow corner of the corridor, careful not to let it drag

and scratch against the wall "Their idea of grounding is taking my cell phone and not letting me go out on the weekend."

"I suppose that's when you decided to start the blog, then?"

"Well..." he feigns innocence "I have to pass my time somehow..."

Wes smirks for a moment but returns to his stern stance soon "And what happens if anyone finds out?"

What *does* happen if anyone finds out? In all honesty, the farthest Blaine's gotten with that question is that no one can find out.

"I dunno..." he mutters.

There's a crash behind them, a loud, particularly uncouth gasp and they turn to find Nick and Jeff standing with a plank much like Blaine and Wes' between them on the floor, and Jeff's hopping around on one foot, trying to clutch his other foot and only succeeding in looking like an idiot.

They chuckle and continue on their way outside.

It's Monday and, like every year when Dalton's carnival day comes along, everyone in a club (which is practically *everyone*) is excused from morning classes for booth building duties. All in all, the yearly Dalton Carnival day results in more than half a week of hardly any classes and a lot of manual work.

"Well, just... make sure no one finds out, Blaine. I don't want to see your pretty little head on a platter."

"I don't get it. First you tell me I need to stand up to my dad, cuz he owns my life. Then, you tell me to be careful and lay low."

Wes rolls his eyes, as they start climbing the stairs "Of course I want you to stand up for yourself, Blaine. I just don't think running a counter-campaign on his back is really the best way to do it. If this get's out, shit's gonna really hit the fan."

"I know, I know!" Blaine assures him "But... fuck it. Worst case scenario? They kick me out. So what? I'm almost 18. When I do turn 18, my college fund is mine, so college is a given. And you do not want to know how much that fund has. I don't want their money anyway. I need it for college, but that's it." Blaine says

with finality "They have me until I turn 18, but after that I'm free and they can do whatever the hell they want."

"So... no one can find out until March?"

"Basically. But here's the deal. If anyone else finds out, yeah, I'm screwed." He shrugs and rolls his eyes, but then he smirks "But if only *they* find out... Then... All I gotta do I hang it over his head. I mean, I may get kicked out, but the moment I told anyone I ran that blog – among other things – his campaign would be over." He smiled "His *career* would be over."

"Ok..." Wes sighs "I suppose you're right. But I don't know, too many variants at risk."

"I know. I'm not saying it's ideal. I'm saying it's manageable." Blaine shrugs (well tries to, it's kind of hard shrugging while carrying a heavy wooden plank) "But it's something that I feel like I have to do. Or I'll go crazy."

"I understand that, man, I really do. I read an article yesterday, quoting your dad about gay marriage. I'd be pissed too. Oh... and the comments..."

"Trust me, the irony isn't lost on me." Blaine dead pans. He's never really understood if he should feel amused or angry. He's sure people wouldn't be so quick towards wishful thinking if they knew exactly what they were wishing for. It's not like the person who hurts the most in their home about Blaine being gay is his father.

"Yeah..." Wes agrees with a deep solemn breath before he shakes his head and says "But I was saying. With what comes out of his mouth I'd be itching to rip him a new one, too. And I actually admire you for how... civilized you've always been about the whole thing, and still are... but..."

"I really, really need this, Wes."

"Al-" Wes is interrupted as Kurt's voice sounds from a few feet away.

"Hey guys!" He gasps, halting his jog "I'm so sorry I'm late."

"You're five minutes late" Wes frowns, shrugging it off.

"I didn't know we didn't have class. I waited outside my classroom like an idiot until a janitor went inside and asked me what the hell I was doing following him" Kurt explains and both Wes and Blaine chuckle at his distress "Anyway, here's my design!" Kurt hands a neat little folder.

"Kurt..." Wes sighs "My hands are a little occupied at the moment."

"Oh! Right!" He gasps "Didn't notice!" he excuses himself and Blaine's torn between laughing or simply staring in adoration "Do you need help with that?"

"Yes, please." Blaine sighs in relief and Kurt goes towards the middle of the plank as they lift it shoulder high and distribute its weight equally through their shoulders.

"Blaine!" Wes calls from the front "Don't think this conversation is over!"

"What conversation?" Kurt asks, trying to glance between Wes and Blaine, but obviously unable to.

"It's – huh – private, sorry." Wes mutters.

"Oh!" Blaine closes his eyes, trying not to anticipating how much grief Wes'll give him about it "Kurt knows..." He tries to sound as nonchalant as he can.

"WHAT?"

"What do I know?" Kurt asks.

Wes ignores him entirely "You told Kurt? Are you crazy?! I mean, no offense Kurt, I'm sure you can keep a secret as well as the next guy, but you told **Kurt?**"

"Is this about the blog?" Kurt ventures, quietly.

"Yeah..." Blaine sighs "Wes doesn't think it's such a bright idea. He fears it'll be too easy for someone to find out, and I'll be dead once they do. I disagree. I think it's fun, it's something I enjoy doing."

"Wes has a point, you know?"

"Thank you, Kurt." Wes says from the front as they reach the back door and step outside "Even if I can't believe you told Kurt of all people!"

"Wes also has a point there, you know..." Kurt says, his voice tilting towards amused.

"When did you two decide to gang up on me?!" Blaine whines.

"I said he has a point – well two – I never said I agreed." Kurt throws back "I think if you're careful it might be a good way to vent out your frustrations without getting snippy with your parents and getting grounded again."

"Ha!" Blaine beams

He hears Kurt chuckle ahead of him "I'd very much like it if you wouldn't stay grounded for life."

"Save the flirting for when you're alone, guys." Wes says from ahead, and the back of Kurt's neck turns scorching red. He wants to forget the plank and lunge for Kurt's neck, kiss that flushed skin and make it red for a completely different reason.

He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Not here. Not *now*. And certainly not like that.

"Ok, guys." Wes says from the front "This is our spot."

They lay down the plank. Blaine takes a deep breath, puts his hands on his hips and takes a look. Jeff and Nick are now stepping outside.

"Should we go back?" he asks.

"Nah..." Wes waves his hand "the rest of the guys are already bringing the rest up." He takes a deep breath, loosens his tie and unbuttons the top of his shirt "Ok, my lovely gays, if there is still any hope, it's with you, now let me see your designs..."

Next to Blaine, Kurt perks up at once, making a small noise of delight before reaching to his bag "Here!" he hands it "I know it's a little ambitious, but there's some compromising I'd be willing to do..." he says really fast and that's about all Blaine gets, because he continues, but he's speaking too quick about colors and

shapes that Blaine's never even heard of. He wasn't sure that was possible. Blaine knows his colors – his bowties are color coordinated.

Wes stares at Kurt's design – Blaine's pretty sure Wes got lost after two seconds – and just nods. When Kurt finally does stop talking and just stares at him, wide eyes and slightly crazy grin, Wes nods and turns to Blaine.

"Your design?"

Blaine splutters for a second before patting his pockets and yanking the paper out of his back pocket. "Here.."

Kurt peeks over Wes shoulder and immediately and glares at Blaine "Are you serious?"

Wes rolls his eyes "Great. Blaine."

Blaine smiles and merely shrugs "The concept was excitement. Kissing makes people excited. So, a kissing booth, is, inherently, an exciting concept. Hence the exclamation marks."

"Awesome." Wes deadpans, he turns to Kurt "Kurt, I'll be honest. Love the design, didn't understand a word you said. Think you could make it a little more... minimal? Adapt it..."

"S-sure." Kurt's nod was beyond eager, cheeks bright pink.

"You're so cute..." Blaine mutters, and blanches once he realizes he said that out loud. Wes and Kurt are looking at him with the worst disguised smirks ever. Wes snorts a little at first, and then again, and then he burst out laughing. Luckily that's the exact same moment Nick and Jeff arrive with their wood.

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Kurt's a little tired of the wooing. He is. He truly, truly is.

He's just spent two days setting up a kissing booth. 70% of that time was spent next to or near Blaine. Blaine screwing things (literally screwing, though, like, with screws and screwdrivers). Blaine hammering on things. Blaine putting up wooden planks. Blaine painting stuff. Blaine getting paint on his forehead, and then on his nose, and on his cheeks.

Kurt's tired of the wooing because, lately, all he can think about his kissing. Blaine's lips are the very definition of perfection. They're... pouty. And full to the right amount. And they're always just begging to be kissed.

More than half of his time Kurt's lips are tingling, missing something they've never even had before. And sometimes – and Kurt blushes just thinking about thinking it – even his mouth feels empty because he kind of wishes Blaine's tongue would be there. And oh god, did he really just think that?!

It's Wednesday morning. Kurt is happily setting up his station at the register's when Blaine finally arrives, all smiles and charm and probably breath mints. And there are people around, Kurt, there are fucking people around. ALL THE TIME.

They're not even dating yet (well, not for real anyway, not with the real... say... benefits) and it's already frustrating.

"Reporting for duty, good sir!" Blaine announces proudly.

"I'm not Wes, but ok..." Kurt smiles "Step right this way, Mr." he opens the little door and stands to the side so Blaine can join Dom, Travis and Jack in the actual kissing compartment.

The other three have been there for five minutes already. Kurt doesn't really care, but they've been bitching the whole time. Apparently, this is the lousy shift. The girls from Jane Adams haven't arrived yet. Which means no costumers at all (save for the few gay guys, who Dom's more than happy to attend to).

Kurt smiles to himself as he finally understands why Blaine was so ready to take this shift.

"Hey..." he mutters "I'm sorry the Jane Adams girls aren't here yet."

Blaine smiles back "That's alright..."

They're such simple words, but Blaine's voice and Blaine's eyes say so much more and Kurt's blushing, because, god, what wouldn't he give to be alone with him right now and have a single, teasing dollar in his hand.

The morning passes by in a whirlwind of hidden, meaningful glances, and giggles. There's also the ongoing sound of all the other boys complaining about the lack of girls – except for someone's grandma, which

makes Kurt burst out laughing at the look of absolute mortification on the grandson's face as he receives the ticket (it's on the cheek, don't look so disgusted!). There were a few teachers who dropped by and bought 'kisses', which horrifies Kurt until he understands none of them actually intend on using their tickets.

But it's soon time for Blaine, and the rest, to hop off their stations. Blaine shoots him a brilliant smile and dashes off towards the soccer booth, on the other side of the field – they're doing penalty shots with prizes and the actual team players are taking turns as goal keepers.

Kurt stares after him, leans his chin on his hand and sighs. Behind him Wes chuckles. It startles Kurt and he jumps and whirls around to glare at him. Wes shrugs, laughs again and singsongs "You're so cute!"

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"Thank you so much for coming." Blaine smiles as he shakes one last hand.

Internally he's cheering and dancing because finally the last tour is done. He's exhausted, but most of all he needs for the booth to still be open. It had something to do with how Kurt's eyes looked that morning, so open and earnest. But he needs a ticket. He needs to buy it from Kurt directly and not use it on any of the boys actually on bank. Why couldn't he have thought of it before? When he was actually on the booth!

He reaches the booth just as Wes closes the little wooden door.

"Crap!" he sighs.

Wes turns to him and huffs with a small smile "He took the money inside. Choir room."

"Oh... yeah" Blaine smiles "You don't have any tickets there, do you?"

"I think he'll accept cash." Wes rolls his eyes.

Blaine sighs and nods, turning towards the building. He doesn't bother explaining Wes why he wanted to buy it. He wanted Kurt to know he wanted that kiss. He wanted it to hang between them for the rest of the day until they managed to be alone. He wanted to have time to bask in the knowledge that he'd kiss Kurt that day. And he wanted Kurt to know that too, to bask in that too.

After days and days of... well... sexual (for lack of a better word, because he's pretty sure none of them is actually thinking about sex just yet) tension between them, he wanted the dial to hit maximum.

But he could live with this. He could live with an empty choir room and a single dollar and maybe a slightly cocky 'I believe this will earn me a kiss?'.

He finds the door ajar as he reaches the room. He peeks inside and sure enough Kurt's closing the cabinet, turning the key in its lock.

"Hey!" Blaine says softly as he steps inside.

Kurt whirls around, slightly alarmed and sighs and smiles as he sees Blaine "Hey!"

"You really spent the whole day at the register..." Blaine says. It sounds so dumb. He didn't mean to sound dumb. He meant to sound teasing.

Kurt shrugs "Yeah, well... I wasn't really... I..." He drops his shoulders a little more "I just didn't want my first kiss to be bought." He says unexpectedly. The dollar bill in Blaine's hand suddenly feels hot and he's so confused he doesn't even ask. Kurt explains though "After what happened in Lima..." he breathes "It was hard enough convincing myself that wasn't my first real kiss, and I don't know if I could've done it again. I... I'm just a silly romantic, I guess. But I want my... actual first kiss to mean something."

He raises his eyes to meet Blaine's. It's amazing. It's fucking amazing. Because Blaine knows Kurt's telling him he wants Blaine. He wants Blaine to kiss him. He's stepping closer.

"Oh..." Blaine wants to curse himself because why have words escaped him now of all times? "I... hum... it's... it's not silly." Blaine shakes his head and then he sighs and laughs, he raises his hand and shows Kurt the dollar "I was... I was going to... but hum" Kurt's so impossibly close – all Blaine would have to do was reach forward and press their lips "You deserve meaningful and honest, and definitely not a lousy dollar." He smiles.

Kurt's eyes leave Blaine's to find the money but returned soon "Oh..." Kurt's eyebrow quirks, but it's still soft and a little breathless as he closes his hands around Blaine's briefly and tugs on the money "It is for a good cause after all..." he says with a small giggle, before leaning in.

Blaine doesn't really know how he does it, because Kurt's so close he can feel and smell every part of him, and it's the single most thrilling, exhilarating experience he's ever had in his life. But Blaine turns his head and Kurt's lips land on his cheek. Before Kurt can pull back, his body suddenly stiff and Blaine knows what it looks like, and he knows only speed and the right words will beat the rush of hurt settling over Kurt right now – before he can pull back Blaine's wraps his arms around Kurt's waist and nuzzles his neck, and takes a deep breath and they're so close, and it's so fantastic that he shivers with want.

"No-no-no..." he mumbles into Kurt's neck "It's not that." He rushes to say "I want to, I do, god I do."

"Then...!" Kurt sputters and he almost lounges forward again – Blaine sees it in his eyes.

"Y-You said you wanted romance." Blaine smiles – maybe it *is* stupid, maybe he should just go forth and press their lips together and explode into a million tiny rainbows of joy "I want to give you that. I want to deserve your first kiss."

Kurt laughs and drops his head to Blaine's shoulder "You're not real!" he says "You've been giving me romance for weeks, Blaine! I'm pretty sure no one has ever deserved something so much..." He pulls back to smile at Blaine, every trace of hurt gone from his face.

Blaine reaches to place careful reverent fingers on his face, thumb trailing his jaw line, and coming to soothe over his bottom lip. "Humor me..." Blaine says "I want to deserve *my* first kiss as well." He doesn't know how he manages to actually pull away instead of just throwing everything to the wind and pulling Kurt in "Be at my dorm room at eight."

"What about Wes?"

"I'll kick him out." Blaine says simply.

"He'll be mad..." Kurt muses.

"He'll live." Blaine counters.

They stare at each other for too long. Clearing his throat and starting to put some distance between them is all Blaine can do not to give in and just kiss him, romance and roses and candles and slow dances be damned.

But resist he does, and with a slightly awkward wave and a "I'll see you at eight." He leaves the choir room, already muttering under his breath the very extensive list of items he'll need to find before eight.

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Kurt checks his hair one last time. Straightens his collar over the vest and debates, again, on whether he should put on a tie, but decides, *again*, that that would make it look like he was trying too hard. He smoothes over his dark wash skinny jeans, takes a deep breath and heads out.

At precisely eight o'clock he knocks on Blaine's door. He only waits for a moment before the it's swinging open.

"Hey!" Blaine breathes.

Kurt had suspected Blaine would arrange his room romantically, maybe a few candles, but he doesn't even notice *that*. Blaine is standing before him with his hair perfectly combed through, and he is wearing the most amazing olive green henley that brings out his eyes perfectly and hugs his body in all the right places, and black snug jeans that do wonders for his thighs.

It isn't until Kurt's eyes, somehow, force themselves back to Blaine's face that he notices Blaine's blushing just as much, and *his* eyes have yet to return upwards. Kurt clears his throat (it comes out slightly squeaky and embarrassing, of course), and Blaine starts a little before clearing his own throat and stepping aside with a "Come in!"

Now Kurt can actually take in the darkened, candle lit aspect of the room. The little coffee table is covered in a perfect white cloth, and there are two plates on it, and (empty) wine glasses, and a pizza between them.

"P-pizza was really the best I could get... taking the short notice..." Blaine mutters, the door clicking shut behind him.

"It's fine!" Kurt finds himself gasping. There's music – so very discreet he barely recognizes, but he thinks it might be Ella Fitzgerald or something of the sort. "You need to give me a moment to register this... Then I'll go back to being me, ok?"

"Ok..." Blaine chuckles, maybe apprehensively.

Kurt is having a hard time choosing between staring at Blaine or around the room in disbelief. Who does this?! No. Actually, who does this for Kurt? Kurt, whose other only crush had turned out painfully straight (and soon to be stepbrother). Kurt, who knew guys were afraid of being seen with. Kurt, who never even had anyone interested in them, let alone preparing a dinner date just for a kiss. Kurt, whose first kiss (that most definitely doesn't count!) was closely followed by a death threat.

His eyes are prickling and he needs to turn his back on Blaine, so he can rub them discreetly.

He's not so lucky as suddenly there's a hesitant hand on his elbow "Kurt...?"

"Oh..." he tries to laugh it off "Don't mind me... I'm just... having a paradigm shift, is all." He chuckles weakly.

"Is that... good?"

Kurt laughs heartily now "Yes!" he assures Blaine, finally meeting his eyes and trying to ignore the fact that his are probably bloodshot now "Let's eat!"

Blaine smiles and steers him towards the plush pillows by the coffee table "Now, I couldn't get any wine, either, but if you want I have orange juice, or coke, or water, or..."

"Coke's fine, thank you." Kurt nods gracefully, trying to make up in poise for his racing heart.

He is, after all, on his first honest to god date.

Blaine returns with both of their glasses full and puts them carefully down.

They stare at each other, and the food, in silence, before Blaine cracks up and groans "God, this is so awkward! Why is this so awkward?!"

"Maybe we took the wooing a little too far...?" Kurt shrugs with one shoulder, and finally takes a slice for himself, Blaine following suit.

"Maybe..." Blaine nods.

"But then again, I think it was necessary..." He continues "For thinking purposes, I mean. Given the circumstances..."

Blaine looks at Kurt a second, smiling and then sighs "Yeah... I suppose." He takes a bite before speaking again "And I did, by the way. Think about it. I did."

"You did?" Kurt says, prompting him to go on.

"I can't let my dad's career control my life." He shrugs "I won't come out as long as his campaign is running – which I really, really hope won't be long – but the moment it's over. whether because he lost or won – I'm out."

"Oh..."

"And I'm really sorry for what that means for you, for us, I guess. But. At least it's not forever." Blaine smiles sadly "You said you were willing to try it out. I hope that hasn't changed...?"

Kurt couldn't rush his answer enough "Of course not!"

"Good."

"Sure, maybe I'd like to hold hands with you in public, or maybe even kiss you. But. I wouldn't be right even for me, let alone you... And anyway..." He sighs "I really like you, and I really like the way you make me feel, Blaine. Tonight, this... Just wow. And... I don't want that to end because your – *our* – world is kind of messed up right now."

"Is that why you were crying...?" he asks, his eyes still sad and nervous.

Kurt goes on a limb and takes Blaine's hand "No!" he says at once "No, I promise. I was... I just." He giggled because he couldn't get over how ridiculous it all sounded out loud "I was just having a hard time believing someone would do this for me." He squeezes Blaine hand "They were happy tears, I promise."

Blaine beamed "Well, I never thought someone would give me a beautiful flower day after day, and yet..." He blushes "You make me feel great, too, you know?"

Kurt feels his cheeks burning a little and he sips his coke, before giggling and sighing "Ok!" he rolls his eyes "Have you read this month's Vogue?"

Blaine laughs at once but nods nonetheless. Soon they're engrossed in conversation, as easy as it usually is. They barely notice as they eat slice after slice, drink their glasses empty and shift closer and closer.

"Oh, wait!" Blaine gasps "I have ice-cream too!" he jumps to his feet and goes for the mini-fridge.

"I'm full!" Kurt complains, but Blaine shushes him and sticks his head in the refrigerator.

Once they're both settled side by side again, two boxes of ice cream (one chocolate, the other lime) and a spoon each, they go back to their banter and once, when Blaine makes a remark about Kurt's jeans (and the comparison between them and the Dalton uniform slacks), he gets a nose-full of ice-cream.

Kurt squeaks and jumps away before Blaine can retaliate with his own ice-cream. Blaine wipes it clean with his sleeve before lunging and catching Kurt (who, let's be honest, wasn't trying all that hard to keep away). They stay laughing in a sort of close embrace until the music changes and Blaine whispers "Dance with me...?"

Kurt's giggles almost disappear as he nods, and Blaine's hand comes to pull his waist closer, as the other takes Kurt's, and lets them rest against his own chest, between the two boys.

It isn't until Blaine starts singing along that Kurt even recognizes the tune.

"You're just too good to be true..." Blaine sings under his breath, but the music is so soft, that Blaine's whisper is so much stronger than Sinatra's voice. *"Can't take my eyes off of you..."* Kurt smiles and sighs before he rests his head on Blaine's shoulder. It's a little awkward first, because he's taller, and it strains his neck a little, but if that's the price to pay to be able to inhale Blaine's smell so fully, and to have his smooth voice breathy right against his ear, brushing his hair – then, it's a price he'll gladly pay. *"You'd be like heaven to touch. I wanna hold you so much..."*

Kurt can feel Blaine's lips brush against his skin as he sings and he wants those lips on his just as much as he wants to keep dancing and listening and feeling everything he's feeling right now. *"At long last love has arrived. And I thank god I'm alive..."* Kurt pulls back and Blaine's eyes are eager and just as dark as his own probably are *"You're just too good to be true, Can't take my eyes off yo-"* The last sound, and the next words are swallowed as Kurt finally presses their lips together. It's soft and gentle and it stays like that for a few

moments more – the movement between the two of them is minimal, as if they're trying to memorize the feeling of what they've been waiting for for weeks now.

The music barely registers with Kurt now – it's a distant sound of eager *I love you baby's* – as Blaine finally exhales through his nose and suddenly the pressure on Kurt's lips triples, and he answers with as much eagerness, moving his mouth against Blaine's, untangling his hand from Blaine's, only to tangle them in his hair, tilting his head just right. And he hopes he's doing it right as he lets his tongue flicker over Blaine's lip. As the other boy's mouth opens willingly his doubts evaporate and all that really matters is Blaine's mouth and his tongue in Blaine's mouth, and Blaine's tongue touching his, glazing over his, twisting against his; and then Blaine's mouth sucking on Kurt's tongue for just a second, before Kurt draws it back in, and Blaine chases it with his own, and Kurt wastes no time in keeping it there, until Blaine whimpers slightly, fingers squeezing into the small of Kurt's back, pulling him impossibly closer.

They break apart when there's no air left in either of their lungs, both gasping, foreheads resting against one another.

Chapter Eight

Kurt lays awake in bed that night. His hand itches for his cell, but he can't. He can't tell anyone. He knows that, he's known that since it was even just a fleeting possibility.

But god does he want to. Does he want to gush about his perfect first date, his perfect first kiss, and his perfect first boyfriend.

Because, yes, that's what they are. Of course Blaine would have to be the dapper gentleman that he is and actually *ask*!

Swoon, swoon, swoon, it's all that Kurt is apparently allowed to do tonight! *Well*, he thinks, *you did ask for a Victorian romance*. He smiles to himself and decides that the next morning he'll leave a whole bouquet of flowers for Blaine. He always knew being (sort of) friends with Puckerman would pay off one day, and learning how to pick lockers was definitely in his Top3 possible reasons.

He lets himself think for a while about probably needing to tell his dad about it, but it's only a second, before giddiness takes over again and his squirming and squealing into his pillow. But he can't take it. And for lack of *anyone* else he talks to the one person he can.

'I went on my first date. I got my first kiss. I have my first boyfriend. Life is good and I needed someone to know! – K'

'Oh man. – W'

'I thought you'd be happy for us! – K'

'I would. If all of that didn't mean I'll have to endure Blaine sighing, smiling and swooning for god knows how long. – W'

'God. You'll be one of those couple whose honeymoon phase last for like a year, won't you? – W'

'Maybe you can bask in the glory of our romance and happiness....? – K'

'I don't think it works that way. But thanks. – W'

'Well. For what it's worth, Blaine adores you. You must be doing something right, despite all the sarcasm. He never stops talking about you. You do make him happy. – K'

'So that makes two of us he can't shut up about. (and I love him and he makes me happy too but I forbid you to tell him that) – W'

I wouldn't dare (but *you* should). I'm glad he has you, btw. And thank you for not getting mad at me for this whole texting-you-about-getting-a-kiss thing. I feel like a 12 yr old girl. But I just needed to tell someone. – K'

'I tell him. Sometimes. I'm glad, too (but you should know I 'have him' too). I'd never get mad at you for that, Kurt. I *am* happy for the both of you, despite how annoying life will be from now on. And I know I'm Blaine's best friend, but I'm your friend too, I hope. You can come talk to me whenever you want to or need. Honestly. – W'

'Thank you. That means a lot. And the feeling's mutual, Wes. I'll try to keep the sighing and swooning to a minimum. Just for you. – K'

'And like that I believe we will become the greatest of friends. – W'

'I'm sure we will! And I also apologize for the inconvenience tonight may have brought you. – K'

'Not much. I'm still at David's. We were watching a movie but he fell asleep. David's snoring. It's mildly disgusting. Well, I guess it's time for me to go face the horror of a dorm room where a post-first-kiss Blaine awaits me. – W'

'Good luck with that. – K'

'Shut up, you. It's your fault! (I'm kidding, have a good night, Kurt) – W'

'I know. You too. –K'

xXxXx

Blaine didn't sleep much, but there's still an easy smile on his face the next morning. Wes groans about obnoxious good humor and nauseating heart eyes, and mumbles about choosing hung-over Blaine (which he'd had the not at all pleasure of meeting a couple of times) over this any day of the year. Blaine sing songs he's just jealous and Wes throws a pillow at his face. In Wes' defense, he thought it was a book.

They stumble out of the room for breakfast, Blaine giggling and Wes scowling about the lack of effect his pillow had. Sadly for Blaine, luckily for Wes, Kurt is not there yet. They're joined by David, whose good spirits (although, honestly when is David ever *not* happy?!), only serve to annoy Wes further, but by the time their plates and cups are empty Kurt is still nowhere to be seen and a pouting Blaine is dragged out of the cafeteria.

"I swear to you, Blaine, if we're late to Mrs. Jeckins because of your-"

"Oh!" Blaine gasps as he flings his locker open.

"What is- Oh for the love of god!" He groans.

Right on top of Blaine's books is a whole bouquet of white roses, and one beautiful and larger than life red rose in the center, and it's really, really pretty (or, how Wes would put it: really, really dumb). Blaine grabs it and sticks his nose between the flowers inhaling its sweet scent deeply.

"Gag reflex..." Wes sighs.

Blaine glances at him and rolls his eyes before taking out the red rose, and leaving the rest in his locker.

"Could you just be happy for me?" Blaine teases.

Wes snorts "I think you're happy enough for the both of us. I hardly think you need my help."

Blaine laughs, but finally Wes is smiling, even if he's still rolling his eyes

xXxXx

Warbler practice is strange.

As Kurt enters the room the first person he sees, of course, is Blaine. Sitting on the two seat couch. He wonders if he shouldn't sit there, if it'd be too obvious. But it's ridiculous. They've been sitting together for weeks now.

After spending the entire lunch time exchanging coy looks and playing a dangerously reckless game of footsie under the table, while next to them Wes sighed a lot and David rambled animatedly, and then the entire afternoon taking the booth apart and carrying everything inside with barely any time to just stop and look, let alone stare or talk, Kurt welcomes the large group around them. Maybe they can exchange a few words without the fear of being overheard.

He sits at a respectable distance from Blaine, his bag carefully poised on his lap and he turns to his (squeal!) boyfriend and beams "Hi!"

"Hi...!" Blaine says back, chuckling a little.

"How was your day?" Kurt shrugs.

"It was *ok*." Blaine smirks "Yours?"

"Terrible!" Kurt drawls "Woke up, found myself randomly holding some god awful roses, and I didn't know where to put them, so I just shoved them into the first locker I found and I didn't even have time for breakfast!"

Blaine laughs and his eyes are bright when he says "Oh, well, at least it's not as bad as whoever got those flowers. I mean... imagine *that*!"

"I know, right?!"

"I should apologize!"

"You should!"

"I should probably compensate him, actually."

"Definitely." Blaine agrees just as Wes bangs his pretty little gavel and everyone falls silent.

"Hello, hello, hello!" Wes starts "First off, it has been determined that we were not the responsible club behind the broken doorknob on the hall, so, collective sigh of relief" he pauses for said sigh "Second, a big congratulations to all your luscious lips, we have managed to raise 238 dollars, which is exactly seven dollars more than last year!"

"Praise Jesus!" Jon hollers from the back and everyone chuckles, even Wes.

"Praise indeed." He concedes "Third! Christmas is coming guys. Which means, Christmas show. Which David will tell you all about in a second, but before let me be the cool guy for once in my life and tell you all that New Year's Eve is almost as close and – suspense – I have secured my family house for a week of full debauchery. I hereby invite all warblers and, furthermore, I demand the presence of all of you, my faithful little minions!"

There is general excitement at once and Kurt barely has time to exchange a look with Blaine before the gavel is banging again "Guys, guys, calm down now. I'll e-mail you with every possible detail you could think of – and you know I will. But, just for now let me say I'd be terribly happy if we could all spend those few days together and just have fun."

"As long as you leave the gavel here." Jeff pipes up and everyone laughs.

"I won't make any promises." Wes winks and then turn to David "Right, Christmas show."

"Right!" David beams, picking up his notebook "We'll have five songs, as per usual. Two at the beginning of the evening, and the three at the end." He pauses before continuing "Our lead soloist should have three of those. Maybe one song at the start, two at the end, yes? Yes. Ok, and, hm, Dom, I was thinking you could have your spotlight back...? Yes? Great!" he smiles to himself and Dom receives a few shoulder pats from those around him, as he blushes and smiles "And Kurt could have the remaining solo." David finishes "Shall we vote on it. Who approves this distribution?"

Hands are raised and it's, like every other time, unanimous. Kurt wonders how this would ever work in the New Directions and then laughs at how ridiculous the concept alone is.

"As per usual, song suggestions will be welcome until Sunday, and we will decide on those by Monday."

xXxXx

They walk side by side as usual. It's become their routine after practice, that Blaine should walk Kurt to his dorm room.

"So, what songs are you thinking of suggesting?" Kurt asks.

"I don't know yet. Most of my favorite Christmas songs are actually duets, so..." he shrugs "Any ideas for yourself?"

"I'm not all that phased by Christmas songs..." Kurt sighs "They're mostly so... religious."

"You're not religious?"

Kurt seems to falter for a moment when he says "Not one bit. Are you?"

Blaine tilts his head "A little." He nods "I'm not... active. I mean, I only go to church when I have to, but... I take a little comfort in thinking someone up there's looking out for us."

"Hmm..." Kurt says.

"Did I just lose points?" Blaine teases, bumping their shoulders together and smirking lightly.

"What? No!" Kurt gasps "I mean, I do think God's like Santa for grown-ups, but... No, of course not. Both my best friends from back home were pretty religious. It just... it surprised me. Is all."

"Because I'm gay?" Blaine prompts as they reach Kurt's door "And the bible says it's wrong, so I should be choosing between myself and faith...?"

Kurt leans against his door, as Blaine presses his right shoulder to the wall, resting against it.

"Well..." Kurt sighs "yeah, but I'm not... it's just initial surprise, I know it's not exactly like *that*."

Blaine smiles. Wes had had the same reaction for a moment when they'd first talked about it. "I think the Bible's taken too seriously, for a man-made book compiled endless centuries ago. I prefer to think of it as something a little more open to interpretation." He chuckles a little, trying to keep any tension off their conversation "Any particular reasons you don't believe?"

"A lot of them, actually..." Kurt sighs "I think the illusion shattered with my mom's death, and I never actually managed to glue it back together."

"Oh..." Blaine's brain blanches. He knew Kurt's mom had died – everybody knew, it had been Burt Hummel's platform when he actually did go into politics, his wife's death still recent as he battled for affordable health care – but it hadn't actually clicked yet. "I... huh..."

"Blaine," Kurt smiles, sliding a gentle hand over Blaine's arm to find his hand and squeeze a little, saving Blaine from sputters and stutter "You don't have to say anything. It's fine."

He doesn't let go of Blaine's hand, and after looking around them, pulls Blaine a little closer. As Kurt starts leaning closer Blaine can feel his heart soar to new heights, and, staring at mesmerizing pools of blue, green and grey, he waits until the last moment to close his eyes, just as their lips press together gently. It shouldn't still feel like this, they'd kissed before – yesterday they had shared quite a few kisses, most of them with *tongue*!

It's short and sweet, and Kurt hovers closely pulling back just enough to lock his eyes on Blaine's. "Do you want to come inside?"

Blaine sighs. God, he'd love to. But he had his week planned to the nanosecond, with end of term evaluations coming up. "I'd love to, Kurt... But I can't..." he sighs "I have a French test on Monday, and I'll be lucky if I know how to say my own name!" he shakes his head with a laugh "I really need to study."

"I can help you." Kurt smiles and pulls Blaine's hand a little "As much I do love kissing you, I have to study too, silly, I was thinking we could just study." He opens his door before turning back to Blaine with a smirk "Et je parle parfaitement le Français, voulez-vous de l'aide?"

Blaine feels his face spread into a grin, even if he's not quite sure what Kurt just said. Something about speaking French. "Did you just offer help?"

"Yes." Kurt laughs.

"You sure? I'm pretty terrible at it." Blaine rubs the back of his neck self-consciously "You might think I'm dumb afterwards."

"Come on!" Kurt rolls his eyes laughing, and pulls Blaine inside.

The room is a lot nicer than most Blaine has seen. It has Kurt's flair all over it. And it's tidy and neat. They're not allowed to nail anything up to the walls, but every room has a corkboard over the desk. Kurt's is filled with pictures and several other memorabilia and Blaine blushes and smiles to himself when he sees a familiar RENT ticket at the top left corner.

"These your friends from Ohio?"

Kurt turns to notice the board – as if he'd forgotten it was there. He smiles at one and says "Yes. That's the whole New Directions, before Nationals, last year." He points to a group picture of smiling teenagers in handsome black costumes "We came in twelfth."

"That's fairly impressive. We didn't get to Nationals, last year." Blaine shrugs.

"I know. I do my research." Kurt winks "And this is Rachel, she was our little Barbra, nose and all. There's Mercedes, one and only and absolutely fabulous." He pointed towards everyone, including his stepbrother.

Afterwards he gave Blaine the desk and settled himself on his bed, and they both resumed to study. Every once in a while they would pause for a light exchange of words, or Blaine would ask Kurt for help with something. It was easily the most peaceful study session Blaine had ever had with anyone (excluding Wes, of course) and he was so thankful for it.

Blaine would be lying if he said he hadn't been nervous about spending alone time with Kurt. Now that they had kissed, now that they were boyfriends... where to go from there? But, it was surprisingly easy. At least like this. They were occupied, and it made everything so much smoother. It took the attention away from the inevitable change in their dynamic. Blaine is kind of sure this is the best way to transition from friends to boyfriends and he can't stop smiling to himself as he writes.

"Oh wow...!" Kurt gasps quietly as he leans even closer to his laptop "He really did mean every detail!"

Blaine frowns in confusion at first but then he remembers Wes' New Year's Eve invitation "Wes likes details and organization." Blaine nods "Which is why he's probably the best captain the Warblers ever had."

Kurt hums and Blaine goes back to his work. It's only a short time before the other boy's voice calls his attention again "Are you going?"

"Probably." Blaine shrugs "You?"

"I don't know... I spend every Christmas at Lima, and I was planning on spending New Year's Eve there... but..."

Well, doesn't that put Blaine in a delicate position? What does he say? Of course he wants Kurt to come with them to Lake Tahoe, of course that would probably make it the best New Year's Eve Blaine has ever had. But then again, it's Kurt's closest friends, and one of the few opportunities he'll have to be with them for the foreseeable future. And Blaine doesn't wanna be one of those douche bag boyfriends that stand in the way of friendships. Friends are good, friends are important.

"I won't lie, Kurt..." Blaine finally sighs "I'd really like you to be there, but... if you choose to be with your friends I totally get it."

"No... I... They're just gonna get drunk and dry hump each other and I'll just stare at a wall or something, I just know it." Kurt rolls his eyes "I don't know. I'll have to talk to my dad about it, anyway." He clicks and types away before turning back to Blaine "You think it'll be fun?"

Blaine smiles "I'll be there... you'll be there... it'll be fun."

"You promise?"

"I know the Warblers seem like the kind of dudes that don't know the first thing about having fun..." Blaine can see Kurt's poorly concealed smirk "But you're wrong."

Kurt chuckles "I thought you had a collective stick up your collective ass when I first got here." Kurt says "And that's... something, coming for me."

Blaine laughs "I know the feeling. I had it when I got here too... It feels like everyone takes themselves too seriously." he agrees "But the actual self-important, arrogant douches stick mainly with the lacrosse team. And the rebel without a cause wannabes stick mostly with back of the parking lot."

"And I suppose the Warblers are the truly dashing gentlemen?" Kurt teases, climbing out of bed and moving to stand in front of Blaine, each hand coming to rest on Blaine's shoulders.

"Yes..." Blaine smirks and shrugs with only one shoulder.

"Sounds like I joined the right club, then." Kurt muses as he lowers himself down.

Blaine's heart is racing as he mutters a not so teasing "Definitely."

Everything he'd just been thinking about studying and transitions and calmly sharing spaces is quite gone. Puff. If being alone with his boyfriend in the same room means he can have Kurt's lips on his like this every second, he never wants anything else again.

Kurt's lips capture his slowly. They're tender and patient as they move over Blaine's, capturing Blaine's lower lip and sucking the tiniest bit, before, after a quick moment of increased pressure, he pulls back with a smile "We should go have dinner."

Blaine sputters for a minute before nodding "Yeah, ok."

xXxXx

"Dad..." Kurt says after an all too noticeably silent first course.

Burt raises his eyes from his nearly empty soup bowl "Yes?"

"I need to tell you something."

"Go on."

"You need to promise me you won't tell anyone." Kurt says "Part of the reason I'm telling you this is to ask you that if anyone on your campaign team finds out about it, I need you to tell them to keep it out of the newspapers."

Burt frowns, suddenly squaring his shoulders and sitting straighter "What's going on Kurt?"

"I'm dating someone."

"A boy?"

Kurt rolls his eyes "Obviously..." he almost chuckles "And you should know, he's everything I never thought I'd have. He's amazing, he's so nice, so sweet, he's honestly the kindest person I've ever met, and I'm really happy about it..."

"Ok."

"It's also Blaine." Kurt drops. He's pretty sure he's said everything he could to salvage the situation.

"Blaine?" Burt gasps "Blaine Anderson?! You're dating Blaine Anderson?!"

Kurt cringes "Yeah... It just..." he sighs and lets his body deflate a little, shooting his dad a little helpless smile.

"Kurt, I'm not... mad at you. If you're really happy and if he's as good as you say he is, I don't have anything to say about it, other than, he should come over for dinner some time." the man sighs and rubs the bridge of his nose tiredly "I'm not gonna say you can't see him and I'm not gonna question your judgment about him because I know you and I know you'd never be with someone who doesn't respect you." Burt says, making sure Kurt's eyes are on his "I'm just... a little shocked."

"I know." Kurt says "But dad, please promise me you won't tell a soul."

"Of course I won't."

"And promise me that if anyone on your campaign finds out about this you'll make them destroy any info. Promise me any word of this will never come out of your office!"

"Of course it won't, Kurt!"

"Because if it did... Yes, his dad would lose, but it would hurt Blaine *so* much."

"Kurt, Kurt, calm down. Of course I would never let anything about you or him get out from my campaign staff. You know I'd never stoop to that level, kid." Burt rolls his eyes "But have you thought about what all of this means. Having a secret relationship isn't easy, son. I know it sounds exciting at first, all the sneaking around, but it'll get tiring after a while."

"Dad, I don't care." Kurt sighs and then he smiles in spite of himself and blushes before he adds, all small voice and rushed words "I couldn't stay away if I tried."

Burt laughs "How so?"

"Well, I see him every day, we have classes together, we have glee club together, and we're really good friends. Don't tell me you could just be friends with someone like that if you knew the other person was attracted to you, too." Kurt says in a rush of adrenaline and courage "How do you ignore that? Who are you trying to kid? Yourself?"

"I suppose you have a point." Burt chuckles and pushes his soup aside, to serve the roasted beef.

"Thank you..." Kurt says as he accepts his plate.

"But what about his family? Do they know?"

"About him being gay? Yes. About us? I don't know... I don't think so. I hope not."

"They aren't supportive?" Burt asks with the air of someone who already knows the answer.

"Not at all." Kurt shrugs and feels his heart drop a little "They pretend it's not real. He told them when he was fourteen, I think. And he said they just... ignore it. But in the end, I think they ignore *him*. He said his dad tried turning him straight for a while, man him up, but it didn't work and since then it's just hello and goodbye."

"That's tough..."

"I'm glad you're my dad..." Kurt smiles, making sure his father knows he means it with every cell in his body.

"I'm glad you're my son." Burt nods, smiling as well, but then his smile fades a little and he leans closer "Just promise me one thing, Kurt. Promise me you won't be anyone's dirty little secret...?"

"It's... It's not like that." Kurt says with every cell in his body "It's anything but that."

"Good."

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'I don't want to be one of those nagging and clingy boyfriends. But you really did help me with French, and now you're gone and I don't understand it again... - B'

Blaine closes and opens new tabs, aimlessly as he waits for Kurt's reply. He's posted twice on his tumblr blog today and he knows he can't postpone studying anymore, anyway. Even if with every post he gains like ten followers – he's slowly, yet steadily building a small group of readers and it makes him strangely proud of himself. By this time next week he will be easily over 100, maybe even 200. It's not much when you stop and look at it, but it's not like he got to publicize it or anything.

'Skype? – K'

':D my username is BlaineDAnderson – B'

He logs on and waits for the request which he accepts right away, clicking on Kurt's name.

"Hi!" he beams once Kurt's face has occupied most of his screen and he clicks it to full screen, as his other hand plucks the ear buds in.

"Hey there, stranger." Kurt smiles.

"You are my life savior. I just want you to know that."

"C'est pas de problem." Kurt waves dismissively with a small giggle.

"I understood that!" Blaine beams.

Kurt laughs and shakes his head. Then, and at first Blaine thinks it's the connection that falters, his smile slips a little "Blaine. Promise not to get mad at me."

"Mmm..." Blaine frowns "What is it?"

"I... told my dad about us." Kurt says "It's ok, isn't it? You're not mad?"

"Hmm... No...?" Blaine leans a little closer "I'm not mad. But. Why?"

"Because I always tell him everything..." Kurt says, his face still a little anxious "And because I needed him to know, so that if anyone on his campaign office finds out about us, he'll stop them from making it public."

"Oh!" Blaine gasps "That actually... makes sense."

Kurt smiles and gives him a pointed stare "In time you'll learn, I'm always right." He says before sighing "So, French."

"French!" Blaine groans.

They resume studying after that. At first there's a lot of talking, as Kurt clears Blaine's every question, but after a while they're back to the previous evening's dynamic. Kurt has put on some music and it's the only thing they hear most of the time, besides soft rustling paper and pens.

The next day it's the same thing – except for the awkward moment when Senator Hummel's voice suddenly starts Blaine out of his homework and he looks up to find Kurt with his back to Blaine, talking to his dad. The Senator only notices Blaine on the screen when he's about to leave, but by that time Blaine's face is already red beyond repair anyway, and it's not even the slightest comfort the way the older man's cheeks turn a little red too and he stutters out a "Hi there, Blaine." He mumbles "Haven't seen you in a while, everything good?"

Blaine opens his mouth, but has to clear his throat twice before any sound comes out at all "H-Hi! It's nice to see you, Senator. Everything's good, thank you."

"Alright... I'll leave you two boys... to study...? Hmm, Bye!" the man says awkwardly, and he's already halfway towards the door when he starts and turns "Oh! Call me Burt!"

"Oh..." Blaine forces a smile "Ok, thank you, B-Burt." It doesn't sound natural at all. Maybe in time.

After he's left Kurt laughs and Blaine wants to scold him for it, but he can't because Kurt's laugh is the single most infectious thing ever. Once they manage to calm down Blaine rolls his eyes and says airily "Well, that wasn't awkward at all..."

On Monday, after Warblers practice (wherein, as scheduled, solos and songs were decided upon), they resume to their studying, both feeling the pressure of actual tests coming up, and knowing that exploring the newfound territory of kissing will have to wait until all the tests and due papers are finished.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, all follow the same fashion. On the weekend they resume to skype once more.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, again, pass in exactly the same way the previous week had, with the added pressure that Friday night is the Christmas party.

On the bright sight... no more studying.

By Christmas party what is meant is a formal dinner with families, dates and a couple of alumni and a small dance afterwards. The Warblers would perform right before and after dinner. Blaine knows his parents, at the very least, are coming, but he still wonders if Cooper or his grandparents will bother showing up. He has a sneaking suspicion his grandfather will, if only to keep a close eye on Blaine's social abilities.

Only as he finds himself hoping Kurt will remain close throughout the night does Blaine notice just how much he has been trying to provoke his family lately. On week days he has completely ceased to communicate with his parents, and just last weekend he'd spent every possible minute holed up in his bedroom, and meal times were exercises of silent meditation. He had never once, been so obvious and consistent with a cold shoulder. He smiles to himself as he finds Kurt approaching, straightening his tie.

"You look happy..." Kurt says once they're close.

"I am happy." Blaine shrugs. He finds, now, that he's never had a reason to stand up to them. And even if, for the time being, he can't *tell* them, the fact alone that, later that night the two of them will find a quiet, isolated place to kiss under the mistletoe, is enough to straighten his back and heighten his chin. He stands up to them, because whatever it is that he has with Kurt, and what it promises to become is worth it.

Kurt beams in response and brushes their hands together for a fraction of second. At the moment, it feels almost as intimate as a kiss.

"Is your dad coming?"

Kurt nods and beams even wider "And Carole! And Finn!"

"Oh!"

"Yeah, they got to DC last night." He explains "I'm so happy, I've missed Carole so much. Even Finn...! So excited!" he jumps a little "You should come meet them... yes?" he smiles pleadingly, pushing his lower lip out.

"Ok" Blaine laughs "You'll excuse me if I don't introduce you to my family, ... you can guess how they are."

Kurt's smile falters for a moment but he nods "Yeah, sure. It's fine."

"Guys, come on!" Wes interrupts "Show time!"

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There were pats on his back from his dad and Finn and a tight squealing hug from Carole as Kurt finally joined them at their table for dinner. "It's so good to see you!" she cries practically into his ear.

"It's good to see you, too, Carol!" he says as he pulls back "I missed you! I missed you both!"

"Sweetie, you look so dapper!" She gushes "And you looked very good up there. Your dad tells me you have a solo after dinner, I can't wait to see it."

"I do, I do!" he claps his hands together.

"The boy singing that first song... that was Anderson's son, wasn't it?" She asked, head tuning from Kurt, to Burt, to Kurt.

"Yeah" they both say and Kurt adds "He's Blaine."

"He's very good. Very charming." She nods to herself and then turns, teasingly to Burt "Takes after his father!"

Kurt swallows back a bitter chuckle and thinks to himself 'as if!'

Dinner goes by smoothly (with a few glances towards their general area and, Kurt notices, the Andersons' from most of the crowd) And after dessert Kurt spots Wes' little wave and excuses himself with an excited beam and quick kiss to Carol's cheek.

Everything goes without a hitch (after all, who doesn't love a little reinvented Mariah Carey?) and there's a strong (though very, very civilized) applause. Kurt thinks he can see the hereditary aspect of the whole stick-up-the-ass aspect much better now. Maybe it's part of some rite of passage.

They climb out of stage only to receive, at once, a handful of nice ladies with kind compliments and kisses for their cheeks. Every single one of the Warblers is as dapper and charming as expected. A person looking from the outside might very well wonder if a degree in etiquette is pre-requisite to the group.

Kurt finds himself shaking too many hands to count before he finally returns to his family. Soft festive music has started playing and Carole is pestering Burt to dance. Finn is laughing to himself and Kurt joins him as they watch their parents' banter.

The room turns quiet all of a sudden and the four of them have a hard time keeping their mouths closed as they find the Anderson family approaching *their* table. Blaine is trailing after his father, partially hidden, and shoots Kurt a pained grimace.

"This is gonna be awkward..." Kurt mutters to Finn, who eyes the approaching people and nods.

Blaine's mother, in a very smart and classy midnight blue cocktail dress, is the first one to speak "Hello, Senator, we haven't met in too long!" she smiles "How's everything?"

"Oh, you know!" Burt smiles, standing up and brushing a hand over his shirt as if that's going to make the wrinkles disappear "Just as busy as your husband, I suspect." They all laugh and Kurt wants to gag at how fake it sounds. Burt extends a hand to Senator Anderson "How are you? I hope Chicago was good."

"As good as it was windy." The man smiled as they shook hands. He steps aside to let an older man with short white hair and deep frowning lines through "This is my father..."

"John Anderson Sr." the man says, a smirk that makes Kurt's stomach uneasy, as he shakes Burt's hand.

"And my mother."

"Bettie." Blaine's grandmother is a short and frail looking woman, her eyes are so blue they're almost see-through and her face is still, somehow, beautiful despite all the wrinkles and old skin.

"It's very nice to meet you both." Burt says with ease "This is my wife, Carole, and my step son, Finn."

"Charmed!" John Anderson Sr says as he clasps Carole's hand, interrupting when Burt was clearly about to gesture towards Kurt, and then he steps back and announces cheerfully "I guess we'll be seeing a lot of each other in the future, now, won't we?! Well, best of luck, or not, hey...?" he jokes "And we'll-"

"Oh wait!" Carole interrupts and the man looks absolutely shocked for a second there "I haven't had the chance to meet Blaine here, you have to give me a second to gush over such a fine young man!" she beams and Kurt sees Blaine's sudden blush as he steps forward and extend his hand only to have Carole bat it away and kiss his cheek "Honey, that was lovely!"

"Thank you, Mrs. Hummel! It's mostly the group. It'd sound flat without all of them backing me up." He says gently, ever humble.

"Nonsense!" She waves away "Oh, have you met Finn? Of course not."

She practically pushes the two boys toward each other and they shake hands and exchange confused, nervous smiles. "Finn was in glee club, too. With Kurt actually." She informs everyone proudly "They went to Nationals last year!"

The Andersons nod, smiling politely and feigning interest. Kurt decides to put everyone (well, actually himself and Blaine) out of their misery "Well, it's terrific getting to know all of you, now, if you'll excuse us, Blaine, I think Wes was calling us just now." Kurt tilts his head towards the other end of the room where Wes is talking David and a tall, dark man Kurt assumes to be David's father.

"Right, well, huh, it was a pleasure, Carole, hope to see you again sometime soon." Blaine says hurriedly, clearly nervous and slightly overwhelmed by all the awkward, and Kurt wants to roll his eyes and push him along "And, Finn, nice meeting you." He nods, mostly to himself before taking Kurt's lead and leaving.

They walked, side by side, in silence until they were halfway towards Wes and David "I'm so sorry!" Blaine finally gasps.

Kurt chuckles "It was awkward and just about the worst piece of acting I've ever seen, but I hardly think it was your fault, Blaine."

"No, but..." he whines "... And my grandfather!"

"He's charming." Kurt says, voice dripping with sarcasm.

"He was treating you like you weren't even there! God!" he groans "It's disgusting. It's embarrassing. I'm sorry. For him. I'm apologizing for my grandfather."

Kurt smiles and shakes his head. "You're being ridiculous, Blaine. It's ok. I couldn't care less about your grandfather. I care about *you*. That's it. Just you."

Chapter Nine

"You're here!" are the first words out of Blaine's mouth once Kurt steps out of his Navigator. He resists the urge to wrap his arms around Kurt and press their lips together. They haven't seen each other since the Dalton Christmas Party. It's been more than a week. Texts, calls and sometimes Skype don't make up for the fact that, for the first time in his life, Blaine has a boyfriend during Christmas. The only thing better than that will be, if things go right, having a boyfriend during Valentine's Day.

It feels so new and magical that the fact he has a present for Kurt, sitting in his bag on his bed, makes him giddy, which, in its turn, is ridiculous and makes him feel silly.

"So are you!" Kurt laughs a little as he closes the door.

The rest of the boys are coming to meet them as well, and Blaine sees as this information registers on Kurt's face and he too resists any form of physical affection.

"I missed you." Is all he says, with a soft smile.

"I missed you too." Blaine says at once, before the first of the boys catch up with them.

"Howdy, Kurt!" Jon says, tilting the ridiculous cowboy hat he found hanging on the living room and has been sporting ever since.

Kurt chuckles "Hi!" He participates in the quick one-arm hug "How was Christmas?"

"Same old, same old. Does your ridiculously old aunt also insist on giving you socks every year?"

"I have no such aunt." Kurt says with a smile, just as Wes reaches them, and hugs Kurt briefly as well "Hey, Wes, this house is huge!"

Wes nods and sighs "Family *is* huge..."

"And gorgeous..." Kurt sighs "If all the keys disappear and you find yourself locked out of it, I had nothing to do with it."

Wes smiles and laughs as Kurt goes around his car to pop the trunk open and haul out a surprisingly appropriately sized bag. Blaine reaches for it and mumbles "You're tired from the trip..." before Kurt lets him take it with an eye roll and continues saying hi to the rest of the guys. Blaine smiles to himself.

He likes the small things. Even if no one else knows it, he likes knowing that he's carrying his boyfriend's bag. The small group that has gathered hops along down the hill towards the almost mansion. Blaine watches as Kurt takes in the whole house outside, and then again inside, all wide eyes and open mouth and he tries to remember if that was his reaction the first time he came here.

Everyone is quick to shrug off their jackets because the house's heating system is crazy powerful. Wes takes Kurt's coat and Blaine tries not to glare at him for taking *his* job.

"David and Nick are arriving later tonight." Wes informs "I thought we could all go skiing tomorrow...?"

The first time Blaine came to this house was for Christmas a few years back – he'd just started at Dalton, and his parents were away on business (well, his dad was, his mother was just going along) and he and Wes had already become great friends, so he begged his parents and they'd let him invite Blaine for the Holidays – and that had been the first and last time Blaine had ever gone skiing.

It's not as fun as everyone makes it out to be. At least not when you end up looking like a complete tool.

He's about to remind Wes of that – among other things – when Kurt says "That sounds like fun."

Well, now that Blaine's come to think about it, it does sound like fun. "Yeah..." he shrugs and Wes sends him a funny look, then shakes his head to himself. Blaine ignores it and turns to Kurt "Come on, let's chose a bed for you." He gestures for him to follow up the stairs.

He hears Kurt's soft chuckle as he walks behind Blaine and teasingly moves Kurt's bag to block his ass from his view, Kurt laughs louder and Blaine feels as he nudges the bag a little bit. They reach upstairs and Blaine turns to face him, smug smile in place.

"Shut up." Kurt rolls his eyes, but he's smiling.

Blaine laughs and starts down the corridor "How do you feel about sharing a room with me, Jeff and David?"

"How much time are Jeff and David going to spend there sleeping?"

Blaine smirks "None at all." He answers truthfully. Jeff and David are the sort of people to plaster themselves drunk and pass out on the couch, floor, bathroom, front porch, really anywhere...

"Then I'm sure it'll be more than adequate."

"Wonderful!" Blaine sing songs.

They reach the third door on the left and Blaine opens it gingerly. He's just gotten there this very morning, too. And Jeff arrived only shortly after lunch. So both their bags were still closed and untouched on top of their beds, claiming each as their own.

Blaine made sure the one next to his was vacant. He drops Kurt's bag on it and turns to him "You good with this one? Or would you rather the one closer to the door..." he gestures towards his own.

"Window's fine." Kurt nods, before sticking his head out the door, looking around and turning back inside. He smiles and closes the door with a soft, ominous click. He smirks slightly before quirkling an eyebrow and saying "So...?"

Blaine's heart is racing. A week without Kurt's soft lips, not even a simple brush of them after glee practice. That's how long it takes for him to itch for them, to ache for them. He wants to play coy, like Kurt, but he can't. He needs to kiss him and he needs to kiss him *now*.

In two quick steps he closes the distance between them and crashes their lips together. He doesn't remember ever sharing a kiss quite like this before. It's hungry and desperate. Blaine may have started it, but Kurt's giving back just as much, dropping his messenger back to the ground with a soft thud, to wrap his arms around Blaine's waist and pull him close, close, closer. Blaine's hands hold Kurt's head in place, his fingers burying in Kurt's hair and his thumbs caressing his cheeks. Kurt's tongue is plunging into Blaine's mouth before he even notices opening it. He sighs into the kiss, only it's more like moan than anything else. He pulls back for air with an obscene sound and they're both taking deep breaths.

"I missed you!" Blaine gasps before pressing their lips together.

"I missed you..." Kurt says into the kiss.

"I have something for you." Blaine says, suddenly feeling like his gift is a little too stupid "For Christmas... It's silly, but huh..."

Kurt smiles "I have something for you, too."

"I'll give you mine first, cuz I'm pretty sure it's stupid, so..." Blaine muttered, finally extricating himself from Kurt's embrace and going for his bag, rummaging its side pockets. It was a small package wrapped in midnight blue paper and golden ribbon around it.

Kurt took it and carefully removed both the ribbon and the paper, and smiled a little in recognition as he held a CD case in his hands, the cover simply saying Merry Christmas.

"Is this a mixed CD of your favorite Christmas' songs?" he asks with a smile.

"No..." Blaine blushes "I... huh... I recorded myself singing a couple of songs that made me think of you... so yeah... listen to it... and... huh... just not when I'm like... here." He scratches his head "Cuz it'd be kind of... awkward."

Kurt's beaming though, so Blaine's stomach loosens a little. "I love it." He says, holding it close to his chest.

"You haven't even heard it, yet!" Blaine smiles and rolls his eyes.

"I don't need to. I still love it!" he says with conviction before leaning in and stealing a quick kiss from Blaine's lips and taking a bright red package from his bag and extending it towards Blaine. Blaine can't stop himself from grinning as he unwraps the first present a *boyfriend* has ever given him.

It's a beautiful brown and green scarf. It's made out of several shades of brown, mostly golden and caramel, and some olive green and jade colored stripes. He notices each stripe is its own fabric and he turns to look at Kurt who's blushing and cringing slightly.

"Do you like it?"

"You made this, didn't you?!"

"Yeah..." Kurt nods shyly "It's the color of your eyes."

"It's several colors...!" Blaine laughs.

"I know." Kurt says stepping a little bit closer "I'm pretty sure I got them all..." he half whispers as he stares intently into Blaine's eyes "Your eyes are the prettiest in the world, you know?"

Blaine's breath catches because it's the first time anyone's ever paid that much attention to his eyes (or well, any particular part of himself, really), but mostly because it's the first time Kurt has openly said anything like that, and he's still not quite sure how to react to it. Thank you doesn't seem quite appropriate and before his brain has time to figure out the alternatives his lips have made all the work for him as he finds himself surging forward to capture Kurt's lips in a deep, passionate kiss.

Kurt pulls away with a smile "I'll be sure to comment on your eyes a lot more often, then..." he says with a chuckle before adding "I have another thing for you... a surprise, really..."

"Oh..."

Kurt fishes out his iPhone, and taps away at it, Blaine can see that's he's logging in to twitter, and then he scrolls a bit before shoving it under Blaine's nose with a beam.

'Rachel Berry

Look what I found! Good for an interesting read! .com #Presidentials

Retweeted by Kurt Hummel'

"Kurt?!" Blaine's eyes bulge and he fishes out his own phone at once, logging into tumblr and Oh. My. God.

Kurt giggles and squeezes his shoulder a little "Better start working on those posts."

xXxXx

Dinner is a surprisingly civil and domestic affair that night. Kurt volunteers to cook (Kurt has never seen such a thoroughly supplied kitchen, it's culinary porn, really), assisted by Nick and Dom, while Jon and Thad set the table. And by nine thirty everyone is sitting down for dinner.

Everyone comments and compliments the food for a long time while Kurt preens.

Halfway through Wes clears his throat and calls for everyone's attention "I would like to announce that the sign-up sheet for our annual New Year's Eve Talent Competition is now ready for your names. Be sure to make it memorable." Wes beams.

Kurt frowns slightly, taken aback by this new information of an apparent tradition. He searches for Blaine's eyes. Blaine is smiling broadly and teasing Jon with soft punches to his arm "You're gonna lose this year!"

"Nuh-huh!" Says Jon, doing his best impersonation of a proud black woman.

"Oh, you will!" Dom says "I feel it in my bones!"

"We'll see." Jon answers with a deep voice, bringing his hands together and resting his chin atop them with a twisted smirk.

Kurt finds himself laughing despite his own confusion; he figures he can ask about it later.

Everyone clears their own plate (and the dishwasher is ridiculously big, Kurt has to wonder if this house was supposed to be a hotel or a restaurant or something) and they move to the living room where the debate of what to do now starts.

They're five minutes into the movie they'd decided upon when there's a knock on the door and, despite Nick's desperate cries to leave it be because it's probably a crazed axe murderer, it's opened to reveal a cheerful David holding his bag and a large supply of beer.

Everyone moves to help him first, then hug him and ask about the holidays. Kurt hugs him briefly before returning to the couch. He sits at the corner and looks quietly to where everyone is still crowding David, reveling in the fact that he'll probably be as much part of that group as any of them by the end of the year. He feels good about it. He loves the New Directions, and he'll never forget about them or stop thinking of them as family. But, as different as the Warblers are, they are their own kind of amazing, their own kind of family. It's the first time that Kurt's ever felt comfortable in a whole room full of boys. Hell, he's even having fun. It's still new and even a little awkward sometimes, and they still have their traditions and their things, but Kurt knows it's just a small matter of time before he sees himself as an actual Warbler and that makes him happy.

He catches Blaine's eyes and they share a smile before Blaine claps David's back once and makes his way back towards the couch.

"That's a lot of beer..." Kurt comments.

Blaine laughs as he pulls his knees up and hugs his legs close to his chest "That's day 1..."

Kurt feels his heart tightening a bit. For a moment he rethinks the whole thing. *They have traditions.* And that's all very nice, but what if... Kurt doesn't see himself in those? What if he's rubbish at them? What if their Traditions aren't all as fun as kissing booths and talent shows? They've all done this before. They have fun together. Suddenly, Kurt barely has a clue what he can or can't do, say, think... "Hmm..." he mutters "I don't drink alcohol... ever... do you think they'll... be mad?"

Blaine looks at him seriously "Kurt." He admonishes "Don't even say that. Of course they - we won't mind. We're all just trying to have fun, you should have fun too. We want you too. If alcohol has anything to do with it, it's your business and your business alone."

"Ok..." Kurt sighs, worries placated for the most part – ok, so maybe the panic had been silly and rushed and well,... in Kurt's defense his experience and his life told him that when something looked too good to be true, it usually wasn't. He lets himself forget about his doubts. "It's just... I had a bad experience once, and..." He shrugs.

Blaine prods him with a socked foot "Do tell..."

Kurt hangs his head and laughs to himself, because it is that ridiculous. It should make him feel bad, but all he can do when he remembers Ms. Pillsbury's face is laugh. "I puked on my guidance counselor shoes." He says and Blaine's eyes open wide "Yes, I was drunk at school."

"Oh, my... If my dad's campaign manager gets a hold of that intel."

"Shut up...!" Kurt bumps their shoulders together and they laugh a little "I think the best part is that she had OCD... I think she spent three weeks rubbing ethylic alcohol on her skin."

"Poor woman!"

"She was so nice, too!" Kurt sighs "She really was. Poor miss Pillsbury. Did not deserve that." He says mostly to himself before sighing and grinning "Besides, I'm not gonna make a fool of myself yet, while you're still very much able to run for the hills." He says it like a joke, means it as dead serious.

Blaine throws his head back and laughs heartily – it makes Kurt feel a little bit better about it, too. If Blaine can accept it as a joke so easily, maybe it really is just silly insecurities dabbing away at Kurt's brain and heart.

"I don't think you need to worry about that..." Blaine finally chuckles "You could –"

He's interrupted as Jon plops down next to him "What'd I miss?"

"I... dunno... Kurt was telling me about his drunken adventures" Blaine shrugs, just as everyone else starts returning as well, some of them already holding glasses filled with beer.

They resume to watching the movie, even if every once in a while someone interrupts for a joke and it starts a conversation for a few minutes.

Next to Kurt, Blaine has shifted so their bodies are pressing as much as possible and his fingers are playing with the fabric of Kurt's slightly loose shirt. Kurt discreetly moves his hand so it rests against Blaine's ankle and runs his fingers up and down it. It's not the first body part he'd think of to draw mindless, soothing patterns, but beggars can't be choosers.

The next day they do go to the snow. They leave shortly after lunch, because their idea of waking up at a reasonable hour is almost noon, by which time Kurt has had enough of going around the house alone, praying for someone to wake up, and started cooking lunch.

But Kurt can't even bring himself to be annoyed at anyone or himself because, even if it was in separate beds, and even if Jeff and David were there too, he'd slept next to Blaine. And Blaine looked positively adorable while sleeping. He slept on his side, and kept a hand under his cheek, just like a young child, and it made his face look all squished up and he had his mouth slightly open, pouty lips pushed a little by the pressed cheek. He didn't look beautiful, no, not at all, maybe not even attractive, per se, but he did look adorable.

And the best part is that Blaine didn't get to see his puffy sleepy eyes or his bed head, or, god forbid, the little pool of drool on his own pillow because by the time Blaine woke up, Kurt had showered, dressed and made his bed.

Now, as they climb out of their cars, and meet while walking towards the reception, Kurt still finds himself trying not to giggle as he remembers this morning.

Everyone rents their skis and boots and stuff – except Wes who has his own, obviously. Kurt has a hard time keeping himself off his own ass. Between laughing at himself (and others) and actually trying to keep balanced, he's failing spectacularly.

They've been at it – Kurt, Blaine (well, here's one thing Blaine's not good at! Hooray! He *is* human!) and Jeff have been relegated to the newbies' track – for two hours, when they bump into Wes – pro skier Wes, the Jerk – who takes off his (oh so tacky) sunglasses and smiles, slightly breathless "How's it going?"

"I don't want to talk to you." Kurt announces.

"Why not?" he chuckles, probably guessing the answer.

"I do not associate with show offs." Kurt holds his head as high as possible. Behind him Blaine comes to a spectacularly ungraceful halt.

"Wes." He pants "I think these are broken."

"*You're* broken." Wes scoffs.

Blaine gasps, outraged and makes to turn around and walk away but all he accomplishes is an awkward, frustrated shuffle of movements and almost falls flat on his face. Kurt can't stop himself from laughing and maybe it's the altitude and don't they say these places have... like... more oxygen and isn't that supposed to make you feel high? Anyway, Kurt finds himself doubling over laughing (and of course falling over himself, because have you tried doubling over laughing while on ski boards?).

Wes laughs too and announces his departure while Blaine glares at the both of them.

"Well, I'm sorry I can't storm out properly in these damned things!" Blaine whines and there's a fading howl of laughter from Wes' retreating figure.

Kurt laughs a moment more before reaching out to grab Blaine's wrist "I'm sorry, but you just looked so ridiculous..."

"Oh well, then!" Blaine rolls his eyes dramatically.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry I laughed at you, Blaine!" Kurt pleads, but he's still laughing so it's not the world's most believable apology.

Blaine sighs and chuckles a little "At least it amuses you." He shrugs "At least I don't suck at skiing for nothing."

Kurt holds out his hands "Help me up, please!" he asks in the sweetest tone he can muster.

Blaine takes his hands and tugs Kurt up "I shouldn't." he says "You laughed at me!"

"You were funny!" he whines.

Blaine stares him down. There's a hint of a smile there, so Kurt's not worried at all. He refrains from throwing his arms around Blaine or kiss him, but he does say "I like it when you look a little bit like a fool..." he smiles, and he really wishes he could be hugging Blaine and nuzzling his neck right now – in his mind that's exactly what he's doing when he adds "It makes it more believable that you'd ever be with me."

Blaine's eyebrows shoot up and he looks at Kurt with surprise and endless affection now – all of his faked outrage or resentment vanished "Kurt...!" he sighs "What are you even talking about?!"

Kurt shrugs, suddenly feeling a little stupid for saying that "I'm just..." he tries to find the right words to strain out, but he knows whatever he says will probably sound idiotic at this point "You could have any guy you wanted."

"I want *you*."

"Yeah... but why?" Kurt says before he can stop himself.

Blaine likes Kurt. Blaine wants to be with Kurt. Kurt knows that. Rationally, at least. He does, really. He's known it since they held hands at the movies. He even suspected it before. But the question isn't whether

Blaine likes him or not. It's for how long. It's how, and when, and why and who – it's not *if*, it's everything else.

And Kurt really likes Blaine, and he really wants to be with Blaine. But Blaine's kind of like... perfect. For now, at least. And it's ridiculous, really. He's smart, he's kind, he's funny, he's talented, and he's gorgeous. And what the hell, man? Is anyone allowed to be that perfect?!

How's a person supposed to date someone perfect? That's not humanely possible. Well, perfection isn't humanely possible.

So Kurt kind of likes the little cracks.

He really, really does. Because they mean Blaine's not perfect, Blaine's human, and maybe, just maybe, he's not that ridiculously out of Kurt's league. So maybe Kurt won't have to spend his days worrying about every guy that Blaine's going to meet that might be so much more interesting, or attractive, or captivating than Kurt. Maybe Kurt will actually be able to enjoy their relationship for what it is and not judge it for what he's afraid it will never be.

"Kurt." Blaine looks around them before taking a step closer and tripping over his feet a little "Fuck." He mumbles and bends down, taking off his ski boards with hurried movements "I fucking hate these things."

Kurt smiles a little to himself before bending down and helping a little more calmly, before moving on to his own.

They step aside and collect the skis.

"Come on, I need us to go somewhere more private." Blaine says "I want to say something, and I need to kiss you afterwards."

Kurt nods, body already tingling in anticipation, and they start walking towards one of the facilities' buildings.

"Kurt." Blaine starts again "Just because you had a crush on a straight guy and he didn't like you back, it doesn't make you unattractive or anything of the sort and – no, wait let me finish!" Blaine holds his hand as Kurt starts to argue "And, fuck me if having a boy kissing you out of hate and threatening to kill you afterwards is ever going to mean anything about your worth as a person, or make you unlovable or

whatever you might feel it does. That was his problem, his issues, and you and your... perfect lips had nothing to do with it." Blaine pauses and smiles sweetly before adding "I don't see any of that in you. Just like you don't see my family in me..."

Kurt feels his cheeks burning. He was not expecting this. He was not expecting Karofsky to be brought up. Hell, he hadn't even thought of Karofsky. But then again, he didn't need to think of Karofsky to feel the consequences of what he did.

"I just... feel like you're out of my league, sometimes, Blaine." He says "And I don't want a relationship where I'm constantly holding my breath waiting for the moment you're gonna find someone better. I'll stop breathing altogether. That's not very healthy for my lungs, or my brain, or my body!" He sighs a little "So I need those little flaws, those little flashes of human sometimes."

"That's-"

"My turn." Kurt warns "And yeah, maybe I think that because how in the hell is someone ever gonna look at me... that pale weird kid who no one ever even looked at closely enough to see he was covered in bruises. And maybe a lot of it has to do with the fact that, before you, the closest I ever go to romantic interest was a guy who was so disgusted with the idea alone that he would threaten to kill me if I told anybody. But still, stupid as it may be, it's the way I feel."

They reach the bathrooms, and head towards the back of the building, effectively shielding themselves from the rest of the world.

"You don't think I have the same concerns, Kurt?" Blaine smiles "That pale weird kid is kind of gorgeous and he doesn't look like anybody else, and he doesn't sound like anybody else, and he doesn't talk or think like anybody else. That weird pale kid is the best breath of fresh air I've ever had in this world made out of plastic and brain dead clones. And if it makes you feel any better, I think you're out of my league too, but... I don't know. I've got so many things I can't control in my life, and I just can't with another one, so I just... don't think about it much. I just thank god you're actually, for some weird reason, into me." He laughs a little.

"Yeah?" Kurt fishes. It feels really nice to have someone say those things. He'd always thought it would, but I suppose you really have to experience it. It's sort of like a warm blanket and hot cup of cocoa on a rainy winter's day.

"Yeah." Blaine nods "I'm definitely and really into you and you can breathe all you want, and make fun of my skiing inability and whatever else you find, too, because I kind of have my eyes set on you."

Kurt almost preens at that, and after a moment of just staring at each other and smiling like idiots he finally prompts "I believe, good sir, you lured me here under the premise of some sort of kiss."

"Oh!" Blaine beams and laughs "I did, I did too!"

And he leans in and presses their lips together, and it's not like yesterday, where it was desperate and wanton, this time it's almost like their first kiss, so sweet and so gentle, though not hesitant in the least.

"Oh..." Blaine smiles as they part "I have a question for you."

"Yes?" Kurt prompts with another soft peck.

"Will you be my partner for the talent show?"

"Only if we duet..." he teases.

xXxXx

Practicing for a duet turns out to be the best excuse for alone time there ever was. As Kurt and Blaine rise from the dinner table, under the pretense of brainstorming ideas and practicing, only Wes side-eyes them and mouths to Blaine "Not on my bed!"

Blaine resists the urge to lock the door, because maybe that'd be going a little too far, but he does close it and lean against it while pulling Kurt towards himself. They stand a mere inch from each other, smirking before Blaine lunges in to capture Kurt's lips in a quick, almost teasing kiss. He does it again, and again, and a third time before Kurt laughs and presses their lips together more tightly. Blaine feels Kurt's smile at first, but as the kiss evolves and they both become more and more committed to it, it fades.

In truth, Blaine's not sure how or when, but any trace of amusement is gone from their kisses or their minds. Blaine's head is invaded by sensations and smells and noises... He feels their tongues sliding together, and when Kurt sucks on his tongue he lets a soft moan escape him. He feels as Kurt's hands slide around his waist and start tugging him closer. Only it's not exactly closer, because Kurt's backing away, and it confuses Blaine for a second, almost breaks him out of the kiss, until he realizes they're walking, and

Kurt's moving them towards the bed. And holy shit, now Blaine really does break out of the kiss because, fuck. Is he really about to make out on a bed with his boyfriend? Like, make out, *make out*?!

Kurt's apparently not having quite the same freak out, or if he is, well, he's a lot smoother about it than Blaine, because he seamlessly moves from Blaine's lips to his jaw and then neck without hesitation – like it's the most natural thing to do and holy hell does that feel good! Blaine had never considered his neck as a place for pleasure. He'd been dumb.

He lets himself be pulled down towards the bed and Kurt's on his back, his hands guiding Blaine's back lower and towards him, and Blaine manages to somewhat gracefully climb on top of Kurt and hover, because he's pretty sure it'd be rude to just lie there, like a dead weight or something.

Kurt finds his lips again and the edge of familiarity it has yanks Blaine away from his mild freak out. A good freak out. An 'oh my god I can't believe this really happening, this is the best day of my life' freak out. He's soon dipping his tongue back into Kurt's mouth, because sometimes he really feels like that's where it belongs. They share languid kisses, some more ardent, some sweeter.

Blaine's heart has just about returned to a semi-normal pace when Kurt pushes his shoulder a little bit and in swift movements shifts their positions. For the second time Blaine feels his smile, only it's different now, it's not an amused smile if that makes any sense. But hell, they're making out on a bed, Blaine doesn't care about things making sense.

Blaine cares about the fact that his hands are travelling up and down Kurt's back, and it's absolutely ok. He cares about the fact that Kurt's shirt rode up a little and he's touching the smallest most insignificant little stripe of skin between fabrics and it's the single hottest thing he's ever done, because when you stop and think about it, those are Kurt's hips he's touching. He cares about the fact that Kurt whined a little bit at that, arched his back too, and reinforced the kiss.

Blaine squeezes his hands gently, before letting them travel all the way up again (because, hot and heavy as this is for them, it's still new and he's kind of sure ass is not in his hand permit), feeling every muscle on Kurt's back as they flex and move. He breaks the kiss to trail his lips along Kurt's jaw and then pepper kisses down his neck and maybe the hottest thing about it is that Kurt actually throws his head back with a soft whine, offering Blaine all the access he could need for the slightly sloppier and open mouthed kisses he's evolved into.

Kurt lowers his head just enough to brush his lips against Blaine's ear and he even licks and sucks a little at ear lobe and what the fuck Alice has reached Wonderland, I repeat Alice has reached Wonderland. Blaine barely has time to register that feeling alone before Kurt's voice sounds, husky and whispered, right there next to his ear "this ok?"

Blaine wants to laugh and cry because of course it is. It's more ok than it should be. "You're kidding, right...?" he finally gasps out, only a little raspy and he's proud it didn't come out a strangled cry.

Kurt chuckles a little before capturing Blaine's lips in a fierce kiss.

Blaine has his hands carded through Kurt's hair, at some point, almost tugging as he sets a rhythm for their kiss and when Kurt sucks his lip and bites it and sucks it again and Blaine actually does moan and arch up and... yeah, you guessed it. It happened. There was no ignoring it. He pressed his erection right to Kurt's hip.

There it is. In all its glory.

Fuck.

He pulls away as fast as humanely possible, breaking the kiss and cringing "I'm sorry."

Kurt's face is flushed as he smiles shyly "It's fine."

"No-no-no.... I'm sorry, I really am, I just..."

"No, Blaine" Kurt says, putting a finger to Blaine's lips "It's *fine*."

Blaine frowns for a moment before looking between them and *ohhh*, it's fine. Well, at least he's not the only one.

Kurt's voice pulls his attention back "But maybe we should cool off." He says.

"Yeah..." Blaine sighs and Kurt rolls over to lay next to him.

"But this was really nice." He adds and Blaine can almost hear his smile.

"Yeah..."

"And we should do it again."

Blaine laces their fingers together and stares at the ceiling with a smile "Yeah."

Eventually, they throw some ideas around for the talent show. They agree that they should sing. Then, they agree that everyone will probably expect them to sing something awesome. So, they agree they should sing something stupid. Consequently, they agree it shouldn't be sex related, because that would be the obvious choice and just plain crass, even if the two of them singing Candy shop would've probably solved all that was wrong with the world. So, they agree on something rap related. Or hip hoppish. They, therefore, agree to steal Jon's iPod and browse through it, the best they can.

As the music downstairs gets progressively louder, they decide it's time to face the crowds once more and with one last kiss by the door (and a quick check up of hairs and clothes), they descend the stairs to the living room where music is blasting and every guy is making their best impersonation of a wild monkey with fleas.

They join in the dance quickly, and Blaine finds himself holding a beer before he can even think of wanting one. He watches Kurt's movements closely and it's not helping him forget their situation upstairs. Every two seconds he's wishing he could just throw caution to the wind and wrap his arms around Kurt's neck and slot their hips together and move in synchrony. But as much as he trusts every single guy in this room, it's not safe. He decides to forego beer for the week. It's hard enough keeping his hands to himself as it is, he doesn't need help.

"Say cheese!" Dom's voice says next to him and Blaine barely has time to register the thought before a flash blinds him.

"Wait, wait!" Blaine holds his arm and pulls him back, pushes their shoulders together and he takes the camera in his hand and holds it in front them. They smile and it flashes again "That is one nasty flash." Blaine laughs handing the camera back.

"I know I hate it." Dom rolls his eyes before he saunters off to photograph Jeff drinking from three cups of beers at a time.

At some point Blaine sees Kurt take a slim object to his hand, Jon's iPod, he realizes, and, still dancing, Kurt scrolls through it, brief smiles appearing here and there, and once or twice even a laugh. Blaine's itching to go and ask him about it when, for some only slightly bizarre reason (these are the warblers, after all, and as far as he can tell it's David's iPod connected to the stereo), Single Ladies comes on and Kurt all but throws the iPod away and gleefully announces he knows the choreography by heart. Well, of course after that the next hour is spent in a Single Ladies' dance workshop that includes "Comb through the hair, slap the butt."

Between laughing at the fact the Jon and Jeff, even plastered as they are, turn out to be the best Single Ladies dancers out of the bunch, and being mesmerized by Kurt's hips and legs and torso and everything Blaine is pretty hopeless, no matter how many times he might watch Kurt do it.

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Jon is a fantastic beat boxer. He really is.

And Jeff does a pretty mean standup comedy routine.

Dom's got the Julia Child impersonation up to perfection.

And Wes and David are frighteningly good with ninja-ish weapons.

But nothing. Nothing. Nothing would have prepared the group for this.

Kurt is proud of himself. For the first time in his life he is willingly looking like a fool and still enjoying his time. Not bad for someone so often described as anal (for more than one reason, granted). Kurt reaches for Blaine's collar and pops it a little higher.

They are dressed from head to toe in white, they have 'oh so fly' sunglasses on (ok, they're Wes' snow sunglasses, but they serve the purpose just right), they're wearing flip flops, and their collars are popped, their shirts open almost halfway to their chest (Blaine has chest hair. Blaine has chest hair. Blaine has chest hair.) and their trousers are halfway down their butts, their underwear showing way too much.

Upon Nick's calling (their host for the night) they step out to gasps of surprise and amazement and as they wordlessly press play on the playback version and the music starts there's laughter and thunderous clapping.

Blaine starts rapping without a flicker of hesitation and Kurt backs him up with the perfect harmonies, if he does say so himself. Their movements are wild and fierce, and every word punctuated with some sort of hand gesture.

(Blaine is bold, Kurt is italic, both are both: for a better visualization of the thing do watch [watch?v=avaSdC0QOUM](#))

Oh shit, get your towels ready

It's about to go down

Everybody in the place hit the fucking deck

But stay on your motherfucking toes

We running this, let's go

I'm on a boat, I'm on a boat

Everybody look at me

'Cause I'm sailing on a boat

I'm on a boat, I'm on a boat

Take a good hard look

At the motherfucking boat

I'm on a boat motherfucker, take a look at me

Straight flowing on a boat on the deep blue sea

Busting five knots, wind whipping out my coat

You can't stop me motherfucker, 'cause I'm on a boat

Take a picture, trick, I'm on a boat, bitch

We drinking Santana champ 'cause it's so crisp

I got my swim trunks and my flippie-floppies

I'm flipping burgers, you at Kinko's

Straight flipping copies

I'm riding on a dolphin, doing flips and shit

This dolphin's splashing, getting everybody all wet

But this ain't Seaworld, this is real as it gets

I'm on a boat, motherfucker, don't you ever forget

I'm on a boat *and* it's going fast *and*

I got a nautical themed, Pashmina *Afghan*

I'm the king of the world, *on a boat like Leo*

If you're on the shore, *then you're sure not me, oh*

Get the fuck up, this boat is real

*Fuck land, I'm on a boat, **motherfucker***

*Fuck trees, I climb buoys, **motherfucker***

*I'm on the deck with my boys, **motherfucker***

*This boat engine make noise, **motherfucker***

Hey ma, if you could see me now

Arms spread wide on the starboard bow

Gonna fly this boat to the moon somehow

Like Kevin Garnett, anything is possible

Yeah, never thought I'd be on a boat

It's a big blue watery road

Poseidon, look at me, oh, all hands on deck

Never thought I'd see the day

When a big boat coming my way

*Believe me when I say **I fucked a mermaid***

I'm on a boat, I'm on a boat

Everybody look at me

'Cause I'm sailing on a boat

I'm on a boat, I'm on a boat

Take a good hard look

At the motherfucking boat

With a performance that included a lot of over the top, all kinds of ridiculous, hand gestures and arm movements, and dance moves that neither one is sure how anyone ever thought were cool, they're not surprised when the applause is thunderous, and there are whistles and catcalls, and there's not a single soul not laughing.

So, by the end of the night, when everyone had already performed, and the clock hit ten to midnight, the award for best act falls to them and Kurt really does feel part of the Warblers now. It's silly, that winning a stupid contest is what turns him from expectant to actually feeling it and enjoying it. Maybe it's not the winning itself. Maybe it's knowing that he can look like a complete idiot, sing the stupidest song and dance in the stupidest way, and still be met with nothing but respect. He had that with the New Directions, but... it still wasn't the same. It came with hard work and sacrifice. This is effortless.

He hands Dom back his camera already deciding that he needs to frame that photo of Blaine and Kurt laughing as they're announced winners. It's amazing. It's one of his favorite photos *ever*. It doesn't matter that he's dressed like an idiot, or that his hair's a complete mess. He doesn't think he has a photo where he's quite so obviously happy – not since he was a child. And he's pretty sure neither does Blaine. Maybe he could get two copies and frame another for Blaine, too. Maybe for their first month anniversary.

"What's the prize?" he asks, after Jeff has opened and dumped a box of confetti on their heads, and he catches another camera flash and he knows that's another photo he'll be wanting.

"Eternal glory!" Jon announces dramatically and they all laugh.

It's five to midnight.

It's two to midnight.

It's one to midnight.

For the first time in his life, Kurt has someone to kiss at midnight. It doesn't really matter that they can't actually kiss on midnight. It's enough to know someone wants to, and that he wants that same someone as well.

It's midnight and a shared smile is enough to make his heart swell with happiness.

Chapter Ten

"Blaine! Jesus Christ! Are you trying to ruin my career?!" John Anderson yells.

Blaine merely sinks even lower in the couch, covering his face with his hands and choking back every tear threatening to spill out.

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"Thank you." The reporter says as he stands in a sea of cameras and tape recorders, of scribbling journalists and stressed out campaign staff "My question is regarding the recent polemic surrounding your son and Senator Anderson's son...? Do you have a statement about it? Do you think this will hurt your campaign?"

Burt sighs and rolls his eyes "I have no inclination to answer that question, but I figure I might as well, otherwise it's just going to keep popping up. My son's life and friendships don't have anything to do with my campaign, and they shouldn't! I'm not going to hold him back from a completely normal youth or whatever friends he wants to have. He comes first, and if he's happy, which he is, I'm happy. I've met Blaine Anderson a few times in the past and he's never been anything short of charming and polite. If that's the kind of people my son chooses to surround himself with, then I'm a sound sleeper at night." He takes another deep breath before saying "Next question."

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"Oh God, Blaine I'm so sorry!" Dom almost sobs on the other end of the line "It was my sister. I was showing my family a couple of photos and she figured she'd make a few bucks out of it. I'm so, so sorry. I don't even know how she figured out the password. I'm so, so sorry..."

"It's... It's fine, Dom." Blaine sighs, defeated "It's not like we can do much about it now. Don't... beat yourself up over it, ok? I gotta go... My dad's... I gotta go."

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'Are you grounded? – K'

'Are you? – K'

'You're not answering your phone. I suppose you are. – K'

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"It makes you look like one of them!" his grandfather yells as everyone on the living room flinches with the outburst "It makes you look like a fag, why can't you see that?!"

"I *AM* A FAG!"

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'I just need to know if you're ok. That's all. I hope you are. – K'

'I care about you. You're amazing. Whatever your parents say just remember that I think you're a dream come true, and I'm always right. – K'

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source: [www. people. com](http://www.people.com)

Happy New Year with a sprinkle of political gossip!

Remember [this](#) and [this](#)? Well, the plot thickens as both teenagers seem to grow increasingly close. I'm afraid I see myself forced to disbelief my very own theory of strategic, camera friendly faux cordiality.

Candid photos and videos of two first son hopefuls out on a week among friends and fellow classmates celebrating New Year's Eve have been released to the public eye. Between Blaine Anderson attentively watching and participating as Kurt Hummel teaches a whole group of boys how to do the Single Ladies, the two of them sharing a couch and talking seemingly cheerful, and a three minute performance of Lonely Island's *I'm On A Boat* (the not at all family friendly version), there is no space to doubt the friendship the two teens have developed and is nothing short of genuine.

After the more than dapper show choir performance they graced and amazed us with, barely a month ago, it's nothing if not surprising to see their encore. Check for yourself, in the link below, but be warned: the Dalton Academy blazers are not in sight and neither is the pristine posture that comes with it. Put 100 dollars in the swear jar, both of you!

But more important than figuring which of them had the most obscene dance moves, is trying to get my head around what this can mean to their parents' campaigns. While it was never a secret that Kurt Hummel is gay and his father has always preached acceptance for the situation, it's always a little bit of a shock to see him so intimately acquaintanced with hip movements that, no matter how well performed – we can't tell from the pictures-, belong to Beyonce's hips and hers alone.

But ok. We've always known the kid was gay, and now we know just *how* gay. The true surprise here is Blaine Anderson. Does his daddy know what he likes to do in his spare time? Did he know that when in his Happy Holiday's video he spoke of family values and spending Christmas as a family in perfect harmony? It's funny because Kurt and Blaine's harmonies with each other were actually quite good.

Being such close friends with Kurt Hummel, learning the Single Ladies, and rapping out Lonely Island, one has to question just how in synch Blaine Anderson is with his father.

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Kurt's staring at his computer screen listlessly. iPhone right next to his hand on the desk. Everything's just turned to crap so soon. One day. They had been back one day from Lake Tahoe and then, it was two in the morning when Dom had called, crying and sobbing, in a panic, because his sister had stolen his pictures and videos of their week and sold them. The very next day they were everywhere.

Kurt teaching the boys the Single Ladies choreography. Blaine falling on his ass in the snow. The two of them (and a couple of others, thank god) smiling and talking on the couch, right next to each other. The two of them posing stupidly, dressed in white with sunglasses perched on their noses, their backs pressed together and laughing like their lives were perfect – and no, Kurt, will never forgive the world for ruining that picture for him.

And then there was the video. Their whole performance, from beginning to end. The internet worked quickly. The first celebrity gossip website to post those had taken them off at once, probably under threat

of a lawsuit from the Anderson campaign office, but it was too late by then and the video was all over Youtube and tumblr, and the photos spread over every social network.

Kurt had never felt this exposed and stupid and humiliated. Everywhere he looked there were jokes being made at his expense, and more than once he'd found himself crying out of mortification. His twitter feed had never been this ridiculously big and definitely not in a good way. No matter how many times in his life he'd been called fag, queer or anything even worse than that, it would never stop stinging.

'O.M.G. LOL FAG!'

'This is a lot of gay.'

'AHAHA, jesus! I cant bearthe, this is 2 funny. Does he shit rainbows or smtg?!'

'this picture should be used to define the word fag on Oxford Dictionary. But if not possible, maybe urbandictionary!'

And the worst that really does bring Kurt to tears for longer than he thinks it should, and makes him curl up in his bed and pull his covers over himself and pretend like there's no world outside.

'It's people like these that ruin it for the rest of us! There's gay and there's fag and this is fag. Please don't mistake the two. I'd very much like to maintain my dignity and not be associated with this sorry excuse for a fucking pride parade.'

And then there were the comments about his father, and the effect this could have on his campaign was almost tangible to Kurt, and no matter how many times Burt would say it was not his fault and he wasn't mad, Kurt couldn't stop apologizing and promising he hadn't been drunk at all and it was all just a stupid joke.

But Burt doesn't even know the half of it, so how could he say it doesn't matter?

The moment Kurt had seen the first page of comments he'd called Jenna, his dad's campaign manager, and he made her promise not to show them to Burt. Not because he thinks Burt will be mad at Kurt for the damage to his campaign. But because he knows if Burt sees them he'll pull out of the campaign. And this is all so much bigger than Kurt and his hurt pride. If Burt wins he'll have a voice, and it'll be loud and

powerful against this. And most of all, because if Burt sees this he'll know just how bad it is, and he'll worry. And Kurt can't have that. His dad has enough on his plate.

So as soon as Jenna promises Burt won't see anything outside of the strictly necessary, Kurt feels just the tiniest weight lift off his shoulders. But it's not even enough to crack a small smile.

His dad's at the office, he had a press conference in the morning which apparently had been taken over by questions about this whole mess, so he's alone at home hugging his own pillow and sobbing uncontrollably into it. It's such a mess he doesn't even know where to start feeling the pain. It's not just him, and it's not just his dad, because every time he reads Blaine's name in the articles or the comments his heart tightens impossibly.

Not because they're particularly mean spirited or even humiliating. Sure, there's quite a few strong worded tweets directed to him about associating with fags, and, ironically, a small portion of people are suddenly going beyond friendship to relationship and saying they're together and he's obviously gay too (the fact that it's true doesn't make the speculations any less ridiculous). No. It makes Kurt's heart stop beating and sink to depths of hell because every single article or comment is bound to be having repercussions in the Anderson household this very minute. He wonders if there's a shouting match happening right now, or maybe it's a kind of cold and detached affair. He can't decide which scenario is worse.

He wonders if this is enough to make Blaine regret everything that happened in the last month and a half. But most of all he wonders if Blaine's feeling miserable right now and he wishes he could wrap his arms around him and make him feel the tiniest bit better.

He knows he would give anything to have Blaine's arms wrapped around him right now.

But Blaine's not even answering his phone. Dom said he talked to Blaine right after lunch, but other than that, Kurt knows absolutely nothing. He can only wait and hope that Blaine will come talk to him on twitter.

His phone rings and for a moment he feels better already at the hope that it's Blaine. It's not, though. It's Rachel.

He smiles to himself: it's not Blaine but, for completely different reasons, it's just as good.

"Hey...?" he answers.

"Kurt!" she gasps "Oh my god, Kurt! Are you ok? Of course you're not! This is crazy...!"

"I'm..." he almost says fine, but that would be a lie, and he doesn't want to lie to Rachel "I'm not that good, Rach..."

"Oh,... Do you wanna talk about it?"

"Yeah..." he sighs as he suddenly starts feeling all his emotions and tears coming back to him at once "This sucks!" he sobs out "All the c-comments!" he tries to take a deep breath but to no avail, and in the end he ends up not giving a damn and sobbing his heart out to a cooing, sympathetic Rachel. He just wishes she was here, able to hold him and tell him that everything would be better tomorrow, and choosing what song would better express his feelings about the whole ordeal. He misses her.

They talk for what feels like an eternity but is only an hour and half. She regretfully announces she can't stay on the phone because she has an appointment "But maybe I can cancel! If you need me to!"

"Don't be silly. I'm as calm as I can be today, and I'll be fine. Go. Really." He tells her sternly.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes!" he laughs, though there's not much amusement in his voice.

"Ok... alright. I'll call you later, or... tomorrow. But you can call me whenever you need to, ok?"

"Of course. Don't worry. I love you, Barbra." He sighs with a soft, mellow smile.

"I love you too, Patty. You're my soul mate and you're amazing."

They finally hung up, and Kurt takes a deep breath, actually feeling much better and returns to his waiting game. There's still a call he needs.

As he waits he contemplates the possibility of tweeting something about the whole thing. It's gotten to such proportions that the stupid thing to do would be not to say anything. But with how resentful he's feeling right now he's afraid he'll just say something stupid.

In the end, not doing anything makes him feel even worse than he imagines making a mistake will. One tweet is not enough.

'I hope all those comments and little jokes made you feel better about yourself.
#EasyToBeBraveOnTheInternet'

'Blaine and I are real people and, more important than who our fathers are, there's the fact we have feelings and a right to our privacy.'

'Criticizing someone for something that should be supported and celebrated, like friendship, shouldn't still be happening #TwentyFirstCentury'

He stops at those because it's enough to make him not feel like a potato. He's pretty sure if he doesn't stop now, he'll just really make matters worse for everyone involved. With a sigh he lets his head fall on the desk, forehead protesting a little in pain.

Kurt's about to curse every molecule in the world when the ringing tone from his Skype breaks out. He sits up at once and doesn't even think twice about his hair or clothes or anything of the sort before he takes the call.

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"Blaine!" Kurt gasps as his image appears, still somewhat blurry and pixilated "What-How... How's everything...?"

Blaine sighs, he almost wishes he could beg Kurt not to talk about it, but it'd be equal parts stupid and unrealistic "He was pissed, my grandfather was pissed, I got pissed, everyone was pissed. It was a pissing contest." He says tiredly.

As the image clears he can see Kurt's not in his usual pristine state. He's wearing a baggy sweater and his hair is all messed up, and there's something about his eyes that makes Blaine suspect he's been crying. It breaks his heart a little bit. Between the screaming match with his family and reading every article or comment his father shoved in front of his nose he didn't have much time to check any of the consequences this might have brought on for Kurt.

"I've been worried about you." Kurt says softly "Are you ok? Did you see my texts?"

"I did, just now."

"So you're not grounded?" Kurt smiles hopefully.

Blaine laughs bitterly "They couldn't if they tried."

"What do you mean?"

The words roll out of his mouth like nails against a blackboard "I blackmailed my dad." He tries to smile, but it comes off as a lousy grimace. There's not much to smile about when you say something like that. Parents aren't people you blackmail. Not when it's actual 'I'll ruin your life' blackmail.

"What?! How?!"

"I just... I'll just tell you my whole day..." Blaine took a deep breath, "I wake to four missed calls from Dom and my dad yanking me out of bed. He shoved the computer in front of my face, showed me everything. I barely had time to understand what was going on before the whole freaking family was up and asking questions. He kept asking me if I was just trying to ruin his career, if I had any idea what I'd done... he kept saying I was the biggest disappointment in his life and he didn't know how I got to be this irresponsible brat, and how he didn't raise me to have videos like that on-line..."

"Oh, Blaine..."

"Yeah... and then Grandpa joined the party and he went and pulled the..." he could feel his voice break and his throat burning but he might as well go on; this is one of two people Blaine is completely safe with, so it doesn't matter if he cries, just this once today "fag card... Kept saying I shouldn't be friends with fags, I shouldn't be seen with fags or even talk to them... said it made me look like a fag, and I just snapped. I came out to my grandparents." He pauses to swallow, because if he goes on he'll just start sobbing out nonsense. Kurt's biting his lip and Blaine knows he's itching to reach his hand out and take Blaine's. He wishes he could. "I thought for a moment there he was gonna have a heart attack and drop dead, Kurt... I really did. His face... He was just... disgusted." Blaine's openly crying now, every muscle in his body aching as he tries to relief the pent up tension from the day "He tried to kick me out of the house, he really did, and I think he was gonna hit me if my dad hadn't stopped the whole thing."

"Blaine... I wish I could make it better."

Blaine smiles weakly "You already do..." he sighs before hanging his head and wiping his eyes "And... huh... my dad he said they couldn't kick me out, because that would be all over the press and it would be an even bigger scandal."

"Oh..."

"Yeah..." Blaine laughs bitterly before it turns into a full sob "That's just every b-boy's dream...!" he cries "T-to have your da-ad say the only reason y-you're not kicked out of the house i-is because it looks b-*bad*."

"Blaine, no! Blaine! That's... I'm sure that's not the only reason, I'm sure he loves you."

Blaine rolls his eyes and shakes his head, the movement sending a couple more tears speeding down his cheeks "No, Kurt, it is... Love me or not, it's the only reason." He takes a few calming breaths before continuing "And then he started on how I'd live there but stop boarding at Dalton and he would actually hire a driver, and I'd come straight home after school, and have no phone and internet only on the weekends, and I was just... I can't live in this house. I may survive the weekends here, but... *not every* day. So... I just... I snapped and I picked up his laptop and I opened my tumblr,... I opened it, and I showed it to him."

"Are you crazy?!" Kurt gasps "Blaine, he's just gonna do worse!"

"No, he won't." Blaine shook his head "He won't, because if he so much as forbids me from taking a call during meal time I'll post my name on that blog, and *that* will be the end of his campaign."

"Oh... Jesus, Blaine..." Kurt gasps "I'm... I'm really sorry you had to do that."

"Yeah..." Blaine sighs "I guess I've got him on a tight leash..."

"Does he... Do they... Did you tell them about... us?"

"No." Blaine shakes his head "They don't deserve to know..." he says, feeling almost silly about how it sounds "And... And I don't... I don't deserve you, Kurt..."

It's been at the back of his head all day. Well, it had been at the forefront of his thoughts when they'd started things, but everything had felt so good, and Kurt had made him feel so good he'd forgotten all about it, but now it's back.

"Blaine..." Kurt sighed.

"No, it's true. I don't. You deserve someone who can be proud to tell the world he's with you."

"No..." Kurt sighs "I told you, that's crazy." He leans closer to the screen "I deserve someone who makes me happy, and so do you. You make me happy and I make you happy, and forget about everything else."

"Promise...?" Blaine smiles hopefully.

"I promise you make me happy." Kurt smiles back "And I listened to your CD."

"Oh."

"I love it, I'll never stop listening to it, Blaine. It's magic. I can't believe you did that for me." He beams
"Thank you."

Blaine blushes and feels his heart weight ten pounds less than it has all day. But as good as it feels to not think about it for a moment Blaine has to go back to it. He lets his smile fade before he looks at Kurt again
"How was *your* day?"

Kurt's smile falters entirely before he shrugs and says "Not as eventful."

"*Kurt.*"

It hurts him to think Kurt might be ignoring his own feelings because he thinks Blaine had it worse. Blaine knows what it's like to downplay your own problems because others have it worse. It's not healthy, and at some point it either explodes or implodes.

"I just... My dad's a bit hassled by it, but he's not letting me apologize anymore. And he says you have a mean rap. He knows nothing about hip hop, so don't flatter yourself." Kurt jokes and Blaine chuckles, but he'll be damned if he'll let Kurt shrug it off like that. If he had to tell the whole story so will Kurt.

"I'm glad your dad's a rational being."

"He wanted to sue Dom's family." Kurt sighs and then he grimaces slightly before adding "For a few moments there, so did I."

"Not the family." Blaine nods to himself "But the sister... Yeah, I can see the appeal."

"I know..." Kurt says tiredly "But in the end it'd just hurt Dom... wouldn't help all that much, would it?" he shrugs "So I'm just... trying to stay away from my twitter feed. There's only so many times a day I can read the word fag and take it with dignity."

"Oh... Kurt. I..."

"And maybe you should stay away from yours."

"They're calling me fag? They know?" Blaine frowns.

"No." Kurt shakes his head and he really looks exhausted "But I think they were worried you didn't know associating with fags was bad for your health."

"Fuck, Kurt..."

"It's fine..." Kurt waves it away "It's just... words."

"It's not..." Blaine sighs "You know I know it's not."

"Yes, well, what am I supposed to do, Blaine?!" Kurt snaps "I can't just go on a killing spree or sue each of them for ignorance and bigotry, can I?"

"I'm sorry... I just... It hurts, and I know it does. You shouldn't pretend it doesn't." Blaine wishes he could reach for Kurt's hand "Today was a lousy day... We should just admit that and move on."

"Ok." Kurt sighs with a small smile "I'll admit it. Today was horrible. There were some pretty awful comments around and it.... Just.... And then seeing the things they were saying to you, and most of it about me... It's kind of humiliating, Blaine. And it's bad, but it's... it's nothing I can't handle. Sure, there were moments when all I wanted to do was curl up and sleep for a week, but at the same time I can't sleep because I keep thinking and worrying about you and you're not even answering your phone and... I think I will sleep for a week now."

"We have classes..." Blaine sort of teases.

"I know... And it's the only way to see you anyway." Kurt says lazily "I kind of really want to hug you."

"Just hug?"

"And kiss, and hug, and maybe... huh... maybe fall asleep... listening to your heartbeat..."

This might be one of the worst days in Blaine's life, and nothing will ever be able to change it, but it doesn't stop this from being one of the happiest moments in his life. He's never considered it. That someone would want to fall asleep in his arms. For all the fantasies he's ever had about kisses and relationships and even sex, he's never thought about it, about just falling asleep. And yet, once he does... he's never felt anything so close to untainted affection and bliss.

"That would make me feel infinitely better." Blaine sighs and finds himself reaching for a pillow.

"It would?" Kurt smiles and he's blushing, even if it's hard to tell.

"Of course." Blaine tilts his head to the side and watches as Kurt blushes even more and chews adorably on his lips "Are you tired? Do you wanna go to sleep?" Blaine asks softly.

"Well, yeah... But if you need to talk..."

"Trust me, I'm all talked out for the day." He dismisses the offer "Just... lay down on your pillow and... I'll... I'll sing for you."

Kurt's face lights up at once "Like a lullaby?"

"Like a lullaby."

"You know I won't be able to actually fall asleep, right. I love your voice too much for that."

"That's ok... It's just a little something... To make up for the lack of heartbeat, I guess."

Kurt giggles as he stands and shuffles towards his bed, taking his laptop with him "That sounds so morbid."

"I'm actually a Cullen. I didn't tell you?!" Blaine jokes and Kurt laughs.

"Ok, I'm settled." He announces and he scoots a little in his bed.

"Hold on... I'll get my guitar." Blaine springs from his desk, and grabs his guitar, before sitting back down "I was... I was kind of thinking... I'd sing this to you on Monday... surprise you, and all... with some candles and flowers... but I kind of need it right now... It's definitely apropos."

"You were...? You were gonna surprise me with flowers and candles and music?!" Kurt props himself on his elbows and scoots closer "Blaine, how could I ever think you don't deserve me, you insane idiot?!"

Blaine laughs and shrugs guiltily "I just figured this could be my very feeble attempt at making up for the whole secrecy thing..."

"Blaine, you're crazy." Kurt says with conviction "You are."

"Well." He says helplessly "I just. I'll play now..."

"Ok..."

He starts thrumming the strings and it's already so soothing, the way they feel under his fingers.

There's a still in the street outside your window

You're keeping secrets on your pillow

Let me inside, no cause for alarm

I promise tonight not to do no harm

I promise you babe, I will do you no harm

Blaine knows he can promise all he wants, but life's always gonna throw curve ball after curve ball and promises, at the end of the day, are but words. His parents had promised to love him and cherish him forever, once. Look how that turned out. But the feelings behind those promises at the moment they are made, that's what counts, and if he's always going to live in the past or in the future he's bound to miss his life. So he means it when he sings about promises. He's promising, if not for years to come, or even tomorrow, for now.

And we're caught up in the crossfire of Heaven and Hell

And we're searchin' for shelter

Today... all day was like rain pouring down everywhere. Acid rain. He'd felt so lost and so alone. But he's pretty sure he knows he's not alone, not at all. Just like Kurt's not alone, as far as Blaine's concerned. He thinks... maybe... he's found his shelter. They both have. It's just as glorious to have a shelter as it is to be someone's shelter and Blaine's heart fills with warmth and his smile comes easier, and maybe the sun's shining somewhere, and he just can't see it for now – but he will, once the clouds part.

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

But while the rain's still pouring and the sun's still hiding Blaine needs his shelter, and he knows Kurt does too, so instead of pining and feeling terrible about the rain, they might as well make the most of it. They might as well use it to build solid foundations, to strengthen their walls, to light up the fireplace inside and wrap themselves up in blankets with hot chocolate and wait the rain out. They might as well make something they can love out of it.

Watching you dress as you turn down the lights

I forget all about the storm outside

Dark clouds roll their way over town

Heartache and pain came a-pouring down like hail, sleet and rain, yeah

They're handing it out

And his father... and his grandfather. They can go fuck themselves. He doesn't need them. He can be his own man, and he can be proud of himself even if they're not. He can accept himself even if they can't. Because there are good things in his life right now, he's not alone, and he's not pathetic and he's not lost. They can try to break him. But they won't.

And we're caught up in the crossfire of Heaven and Hell

And we're searching for shelter

This feels so infinitely better than just curling up in his bed, crying. For a moment there he thought it'd be what he'd end up doing tonight. When his grandfather had grabbed his collar and raised his fist aiming for the nose, he could see himself buried under blankets, drowning in a sea of his own tears. And it wasn't the fact that the punch had never come that made it possible for it not to happen. It was the realization that someone actually did care. That someone in his life was good. And it wasn't just Kurt, no. It was Wes, and Dom, and David, and all of the guys. They all cared. If Blaine got to school on Monday with a broken nose or a black eye they'd care. He has good things in his life. He does.

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

And what he needs to do is pretty simple. Learn to rely on those. Live his life with those in mind, and not in fear of whatever's wrong. Learn to accept those as something that he can have, as something that maybe – just maybe – he actually deserves.

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Because someone might actually be falling in love with him, and he can't just turn his back on that. That would be worse than anything his family could ever say or do to him. And that would be his fault and his fault alone. And he's so tired of feeling guilty for every single thing he's ever done or said in his life, and he's tired of feeling guilty for things that have nothing to do with guilt to begin with. So, he's not going to add another number to his list, he's gonna take this train and see where it goes, because from where he's sitting the scenery looks lovely.

And tell the Devil that he can go back from where he came

His fiery arrows drew their bead in vain

And when the hardest part is over, we'll be here

And our dreams will break the boundaries of our fear

The boundaries of our fear

He's going to let himself fall in love, and he's going to let himself deserve love. And he's going to do it because he needs it and because he wants it. But also because Kurt needs it. Needs him. And Blaine's never been needed and it's a responsibility he's strangely not afraid to take at all. He's eager to be there, to be that person for Kurt, to hold his hand when he needs it, to make him laugh when the tears in his eyes become too much, to make him dance when his legs are numb from sitting too long, to let him fall asleep in his arms... They can be that for each other. If they do that, everything will be so much easier. So, he'll fall in love. Eventually, he will, and he won't ever fight it.

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Not five minutes ago Blaine was thinking promises were just words, promises are only good for the here and now. Promises are meant to be broken. Five minutes ago he was wrong. Promises are meant to be kept, and if they're not kept they were never promises in the first place. They were wishes, they were hopes, they were dreams, but they weren't promises. Promises are meant to be forever. And Blaine promises himself, no matter what, he's going to choose love. Always. Because love is untainted bliss, the purest of happiness, the greatest of thrills, the biggest of adventures. He's always gonna choose love, because if he chooses anything else he won't be living life as he was meant to. Blaine's meant to love. He knows that now. Just like he knows that loving Kurt will be the greatest feeling he could hope for. So he hopes for it, and he can't wait.

Lay your body down

Lay your body down

Lay your body down... next to mine.

Chapter Eleven

Kurt spends all of Sunday wishing it was Monday already, and then proceeds to spend all of Monday wishing it was *after* school already. First he thought just being able to look at, talk to and touch Blaine would be enough. But apparently it's not when you can't look at him, talk to him or touch him the way you want to. It's not even in a 'we spent a few days apart and I missed you' kind of way – it wasn't all that much time, just a couple of days, really.

But with what happened in those two days...

It's a matter of actually feeling Blaine in his arms, solid and real and not at all broken like his father would have him, and it's a matter of kissing him with a promise of acceptance and belonging.

All day they exchange their usual small smiles and passing touches, but by the time Wes is wrapping up Warbler's practice Kurt can tell Blaine is just as antsy to get out of there as he is.

The gavel is finally banged and everyone's shuffling out. Kurt touches Blaine's arm lightly and lets his fingers graze and gently squeeze Blaine's hand before asking, as discreetly as possible "Can we go to my room?"

Blaine smiles at once and nods before reaching over to help Kurt put everything back in his bag. They keep the conversation and the body language light as they walk down the corridor – they weren't the last ones out today and David and Thad were bound to notice any hand holding or things alike.

Kurt opens the door, holds it for Blaine before following him inside and closing it with a sigh of relief. "I've wanted to get you alone forever, now!" he says, half teasing.

Blaine's smile is a little weak before he sits on the edge of Kurt's bed and he holds out a hand for Kurt. Although slightly confused at Blaine's apparent lack of enthusiasm, he approaches and takes the hand, lets himself be pulled down and is even surprised when Blaine pulls him to sit on his lap and not next to him. The way Blaine immediately moves to nuzzle his neck almost makes Kurt forget the frailty of Blaine's smile and how it definitely didn't reach his eyes.

Before he can say anything, though, Blaine's speaking "Why didn't you tell me?"

"What?"

"About the twitter feeds and the comments... You made it seem like they were just bad..." Blaine sighs "I looked through a lot of them yesterday, Kurt. They were *horrible*." Blaine's voice breaks a little "You let me complain and whine about my dad, when you had those... words thrown at you."

"They're just words..." Kurt shrugged dismissively.

"No. They're not." Blaine says matter-of-factly. It's true. They're not. And if anyone would know that it would be Blaine.

"Well..." Kurt sighs, shifting slightly so he can press his forehead against Blaine's "It's nothing I've never heard before. Just repeated a lot of times."

"I'm so sorry..."

"Not your fault."

"Still..." Kurt sees it in Blaine's eyes, the way it pains him – just like it pains Kurt that Blaine's family will never appreciate or treat him like he deserves. It makes his heart melt a little and he feels cared for, in a way only a handful of people have ever managed "You can be upset about it, Kurt. I don't need you to be strong for me, you know? You have a right to be upset." Blaine says gently. It's not condescending, it's not anything. It's just another one of those times Blaine inexplicably knows and reads Kurt better than anyone he's ever met.

"Mmm..." he sighs, sagging a little, draping his arms around Blaine's shoulders. He could give into it, start talking about how much it hurt – still does –, and not stop until it's dinner time. But he feels so safe in Blaine arms and it's so easy for him to put it behind him, now, that he really doesn't see the point of bringing it all back. "I don't want to, though... I don't wanna talk about it. And it's not because I'm ignoring it, or because I don't want you to know... I just... it doesn't matter as much... Not right now... I'm here, you're here, we're alone... we're on a bed..." he whispers, lips dangerously close to Blaine "I'm not upset right now. I don't want to be upset... Can't we just hold each other and forget all about those idiots?"

Kurt leans in and presses his lips to Blaine in slow, though firm movements. Blaine pulls back with a soft chuckle "When you put it that way..." he says before stretching his neck and capturing Kurt's lips again.

"But..." Blaine insists as he pulls back a little "You'll talk to me about it, if you need to, right?"

Kurt sighs with a smile "I promise."

"Thank you."

Their mouths move in perfect synchrony, slow and precise, at some point tongues enter the equation exploring increasingly familiar surroundings, but just as eager. Kurt pulls his hands back, settling them on Blaine's shoulders and pushing gently. He follows, never breaking contact, as Blaine gets the hint and starts lowering them towards the mattress. They scoot a little upwards, so they're not halfway out of the bed before Kurt lets himself drape completely over Blaine, their legs tangled a little bit together. He feels Blaine's hands coming round to his back, over his blazer, exploring. He feels them sliding back over and around his shoulders, coming to rest for a moment on his chest, slipping towards the center - the thin fabrics of shirt and undershirt not hiding his racing heart - and then sliding back to the sides, only this time slithering under the blazer, pushing it open and away as his hands start climbing back towards Kurt's shoulder. He gets the unvoiced request and lets the coat slide easily off his arms before unbuttoning Blaine's and doing the same.

The undressing stops there - it's merely a matter of comfort, not of progressive nakedness - as they continue to kiss and move gently against one another, no other clothing item comes off. They control themselves better too, balancing hot and cold (well, cooler) so they don't have to stop for... embarrassing reasons. Kurt has learnt that, no matter what, he cannot suck on Blaine's tongue, and Blaine, on the other hand, now knows better than to kiss Kurt's neck in any way, shape or form.

Kurt allows himself some fleeting thoughts, every once in a while, about how much they've improved since the last time they did this (which would be the morning on New Year's day, while everyone else was sleeping off their hangovers, and they had to stop after barely five minutes because things south of the equator got a little too hot).

They've shifted somewhere along the way, to lie on their sides, and Kurt finally interrupts their progressively lazier kisses - his lips swollen and almost kind of hurting - to suggest they watch a movie while having dinner. Blaine smiles, nuzzles Kurt's nose a little before nodding "Yeah, sounds great...!"

He springs from bed with a last peck "Check on my laptop what movies I have there... choose something."

Kurt opens his mini fridge and scans it for a moment before taking out a Tupperware with food he brings from home every weekend. He'd go to the cafeteria for dinner, but he's usually so settled into his dorm room after school, and tired from his day, that dragging himself back towards the main building for food is never actually an option, unless he has more than Blaine for company, and stopped being so two weeks into his stay at Dalton. He pulls two plates from the small cabinet and pops them into the microwave.

"Comedy? Drama? Action?"

"Not action." Kurt says as he leans against his desk, waiting for the microwave to beep.

"The Notebook?..."

"What?! No!" Kurt laughs.

"Why not?"

"Because, it's depressing!" He reasons "And it's a break up movie." When Blaine merely cocks an eyebrow he explains "It's the kind of movie you watch while eating comfort ice cream and liquor filled chocolates after a bad break up. It makes you feel like the other person's gonna come back and say 'It wasn't over! It's still not over!' and then kiss you senselessly under the rain."

Blaine's laughing on his bed now, as he continues to scroll through Kurt's movies "But it's still romantic, so it's not exclusively a break-up a movie. And it has a happy ending, so it's hardly depressing. But ok, not The Notebook. Ummm...." He hums as he reads titles, and Kurt's still smiling and watching Blaine's small frown of concentration, his hazel eyes fleeting from side to side, almost concealed with the screen's white reflection, when the microwave finally beeps.

"Little Miss Sunshine...? I've never seen it, but I've heard it's good..."

"Yeah, ok!" Kurt smiles "I like it." He settles the plates down on the bed (yes, on the bed – it's actually fine to eat on your bed when you lack an actual table and your desk is totally not the appropriate place to have a meal with your boyfriend. Unless, that is, you're a pig and have no manners – in that case the bed is off limits, well, the whole room is off limits.)

"It's a comedy right?" Blaine asks, as he starts opening the folder.

"Yes, just not romantic."

He doesn't voice it, but it's kind of a relief that they're not watching *The Notebook* or something equally epic in romance – or even just some random romantic comedy. He's not sure he could just watch the movie and not worry if Blaine's comparing their relationship to the one on screen, or imagining them in those scenarios, or if Blaine's wondering if Kurt's doing those things. It's just too early to acknowledge anyone else's romance but their own. He wants to watch the movie carelessly, and lean over and kiss Blaine because he wants to, and not because the main characters are kissing and it's so darn cute and romantic that it'll look like he doesn't like Blaine if he doesn't kiss him too. It's just too much pressure.

Little Miss Sunshine is cute.

xXxXx

They're halfway through the movie, Blaine's arm around Kurt's shoulder and heads resting together (every once in a while one of them will turn slightly and kiss the other's forehead, or cheek, or eye, or something disgustingly cute like that), when Kurt's phone starts ringing. Blaine suppresses his laughter when the ringtone is Teenage Dream (granted, the original and not Blaine's version), and he catches sight of Kurt's blush when he reaches for it. It makes his stomach feel so much lighter and fluttery, somehow.

He knows Kurt's listened to the CD – Kurt's even told him he'd listened to it multiple times already, though if he said that just to make Blaine happy, at the time, he couldn't know. But now he can, because apparently he's listened to it enough time to choose the first song as his ringtone. Blaine smiles to himself and takes Kurt's free hand in his.

"Hey dad" Kurt answers.

Quietly Blaine pauses the movie and rest his head carefully against Kurt's shoulder, patiently waiting for the call to be over.

"Everything's good..." Kurt is saying "No, no one... no... mm-mm... what did Jenna say exactly? Right. I guess."

Blaine looks quietly around the dorm. He notices all the photos up on Kurt's board, faces Blaine has never seen in real life but he kind of wishes he could, because they're making Kurt smile and Blaine will immediately like anyone who makes Kurt smile. He sees his textbooks and papers, all neatly stacked on his desk, a few scattered pens and pencils. He finds a copy of *Running with Scissors*, marked halfway through, on the nightstand. He frowns slightly at the small, feminine wrist watch laying where an actual digital alarm clock should be. And then he beams as he notices that the open and empty CD case on the nightstand is his Christmas gift.

"Dad – huh – I was just in the middle of watching a movie with – huh – Blaine... Could I just... like, call you back later?" Blaine turns his attention back around as hears his name mentioned and sends frantic glares towards Kurt.

What the hell is he thinking? His dad will kill them! He'll kill Blaine! It's past dinner time and they're alone in a room watching a movie? No adult is going to believe they're just watching a movie. And let's forget the irony of them actually doing just that. It's serious! It's no time for jokes.

Kurt dismisses Blaine's distress with a hand to his face, pushing it away and Blaine tries not to bite or lick it in retaliation – he fails at the latter. "What? Oh... right. Eww... Not, not you. Hum... I'll... I'll ask..." He's muttering, uncomfortably, not really able to decide between moving his hand away from Blaine's tongue, or keeping his face far "Right... ok. Ok. Bye. Love you, too."

"Why did you say that?!" Blaine launches at once while Kurt grimaces at his saliva-covered hand and wipes it on Blaine's shirt "He's gonna think we were having sex...!" he hisses that last part because saying out loud would feel incredibly crass.

"He will not!" Kurt rolls his eyes "He didn't." he repeats with conviction and Blaine gives him a small smile.

"I hope you're right."

"I told you. I' always right. And you're disgusting." Kurt says with a smirk and Blaine chuckles shuffling back closer and snuggling into Kurt "Blaine...?" Kurt stops Blaine's hand as he reaches to press play.

"Yeah?" he asks, looking up to Kurt, because suddenly his voice sounds kind of serious and hesitant.

"Would you be really mad if... anyone besides my dad... knew about us?"

Blaine frowns. They've talked about this. No one can know. "What do you mean?"

"I mean my family. Carole and Finn..."

"Oh... huh..." Blaine honestly doesn't know what to say or think. It's not like it's fifteen people. It's not like it's the Warblers. It's dangerous – for all he knows Finn can hold a secret just about as well Gretchen Wiener – but...

"I'd trust them with my life." Kurt answers the unvoiced thoughts swirling around Blaine's head "I would. Carole is amazing, and she's so understanding. She'll never say anything, I know she won't. And Finn... Finn's loyal. Really, he is. He won't say anything – he knows what's at stake. He's not *that* dumb. And for all that I complain about him, he's great, and he really cares and looks after me, in his own way. So. I'm pretty sure it's ok."

"Well..." Blaine sighs "You are always right..." he shrugs with a tentative smile and Kurt beams in response "And I guess I just... I wish I could tell everyone, you know? I want to." He says honestly.

Every moment he wants the world to know that he's somehow landed himself that wonderful, amazing boy, and it kills him that he can't.

"I know... I feel the same way..." Kurt blushes and then he giggles to himself "Did you know I talked to Wes about our first kiss...?"

"What?" Blaine frowns, a jolt of curiosity and amusement making him sit up straight.

"I did!" Kurt laughs, blushing even more "I had to tell someone, and he was the only person I could think of, besides you, so I texted him, and we just texted each other for a little while before he went back to your dorm room..."

"Was he mean to you? He was mean to me!"

"No... I mean, he was, but he wasn't." Kurt smiles "He was just... Wes."

"That's a great way to describe him." Blaine rolls his eyes "I'm sorry you had to talk to him... I wish you could have... your own person. You know...?"

"Because Wes is yours?" Kurt teases and Blaine almost blanches noticing how that had sounded.

"Oh! I didn't mean it like that! I don't own Wes, you can talk to him if y-"

"Blaine, relax! I know what you meant." Kurt rolls his eyes affectionately "I do have my own Wes, silly. Her name's Rachel. She lives back in Lima."

Blaine nods understandingly. It must be hard for Kurt to be so far away from his best friend. Kurt stretches over to his corkboard (and Blaine totally doesn't notice the way his Dalton trousers stretch over his ass or anything... or the way the shirt tightens around his... wow... broad shoulders revealing surprisingly taut muscles) and snatches one of the pictures from the corner nearest to the bed. It's a smiling Kurt and a laughing girl – she's got long and straight dark hair, with bangs, bright brown eyes and a peculiarly big nose. She looks nice.

"That's Rachel. She's her own brand of crazy." Kurt chuckles to himself "She's very intense and she takes some getting used to – she's... an acquired taste. But in a lot of ways, she's just like me, and back home she was the one person who understood me completely. Sometimes I think we're soul mates."

"Do you miss her?"

"A lot, actually." Kurt sighs "Our sleepovers, our duets alone in the auditorium, sneaking into the competition's rehearsals... Last year at Nationals, we went to New York and the both of us snuck into the Gershwin Theater, and we actually sang on that stage, Blaine... We sang on the Wicked stage!" he lays down the picture on his desk, before turning back to Blaine with a nostalgic smile "Like I said, she's my own Wes..."

"You should tell her." Blaine's surprised to hear those words come out of his own mouth, but he can't bring himself to take them back or even regret them "You need someone to talk about... things with. I won't always be enough. I mean... If there's something wrong with us, I would hope you'd come talk to me too, but... I'll understand if you also need someone else. We can't... we can't be each other's whole worlds, can we?" he asks, almost entirely to himself before shaking his head, as if answering his own question and turning back to Kurt "And I can't ask you to go to Wes, you barely know him, or god-forbid your dad..."

"Awkward..." Kurt agrees with an uneasy chuckle.

"Right." Blaine nods and laughs a little too "So... yeah... You should tell her. If you trust her."

"I do."

"Then tell her." He smiles.

"I will." Kurt returns it and leans in to capture Blaine's lips in a soft kiss pulling back with a grin "Thank you."

Blaine laughs "Don't even think about thanking me for this." He says moving a hand to cup Kurt's cheek with a soft, reverent hand "I should be the one thanking you every day for putting up with all of this crap situation."

Kurt gives him a soft smile "Stop it. I'm happy like this. And I told you, it works better for me too, anyway."

Blaine scrunches up his nose a little "Still."

"Ok!" Kurt says with a quick peck to Blaine lips "You wanna know how you can thank me?"

Blaine beams and scoots close, his face a mere inch from Kurt's "How?" he says teasingly.

"Come over for dinner with my family on Friday night."

Ok. So that's not what he was expecting at all.

"What?" he frowns, too taken aback to even so much as move.

Kurt closes his eyes, scrunches up his face and sighs before he says "My... My dad asked if you'd come. I promised him I'd ask you. I know... I know it's weird and awkward. But... Please?"

xXxXx

Kurt can't quite believe Blaine agreed to it. He barely had to ask twice and Blaine had already said a shaky yes. He was half hoping, half expecting Blaine to say no – simply because it was awkward and they'd been together for barely a month. But then again, Kurt swears Blaine came straight from the fifties with his gelled down hair, his parent-pleasing smile, and his dreamboat poise. Of course he'd never be rude enough to turn down an invitation, no matter how awkward it would be.

Kurt lunges forward and captures his lips, melting into Blaine and his hands.

With a deep sigh of happiness he pulls back and breathes out "Thank you, Blaine Warbler."

Blaine laughs and shakes his head "What's that supposed to mean? You're a warbler, too..."

Kurt shrugs as he presses play on the movie "You just embody the whole Warbler thing... All charm and manners, like a true gentleman... I'm surprised you're made in colors and not black and white. Do you even notice the trail of sighs and swoons you leave behind, Mr.?"

Blaine laughs again, shoves Kurt slightly and rolls his eyes "Shut up!"

Kurt chuckles to himself before wrapping his arms around Blaine, tucking his head into the crook of his neck and breathing in the warm, comforting smell of his boyfriend. Blaine stretches his neck slightly, adjusts them, so his chin rest on top of Kurt's head and his hand squeezes Kurt's shoulder and keeps him close.

The movie ends after a while, and at first they don't move – Kurt almost wonders if Blaine's asleep, but his breathing hasn't changed at all and his hand still squeezing every once in a while -, but as the second wave of credits starts rolling Blaine takes a deep breath, lowers his lips to Kurt's head and kisses his temple gently before saying "I like you so much."

Kurt melts a little, wraps his arms tighter and returns the kiss against Blaine's neck "I could stay like this forever..." he sighs against the skin and smiles at the goose bumps he sees rising.

Blaine chuckles quietly "You'd starve to death."

"Party pooper."

There's a hearty laugh before, in a swift movement, Blaine pushes them to an upright sitting position, presses their lips together and starts climbing off the bed.

"Tell Wes I'm sorry for stealing you." Kurt says, like he always does.

Blaine nods, kisses Kurt again and quickly grabs his stuff and leaves with one last glance and beam. Kurt watches him leave with the stupidest grin on his face, before he's overcome with a ridiculous need to

squeal and jump and dance. That's what Blaine can do to him – he can make him forget that not three days before he was practically dissolving in tears.

He finds his cell phone and dials Rachel's number.

"Hello?" she answers on the third ring "Kurt, hey, how are things? Has the storm let up?"

"Yes and no..." Kurt says, still beaming like an idiot "My twitter feed's still crazy, and I'm pretty sure the video just got a million hits on Youtube. But huh... I got something more important I need to tell you."

"Oh?"

"I huh... I have... a boyfriend." He says and he pulls the phone away: even like this the screaming "WHAT?!" still hurts his ears.

"You have a boyfriend?!"

"Yeah!" he beams "I do."

"Did you get your first kiss? Oh my god, I have to write this down on my calendar, and we'll celeb-"

"It wasn't today..." he says, his voice betraying the small amount of guilt tight around his gut.

"Oh... Yesterday?"

"No... No. I...We've been going out for... a month..."

"A month?!" she screams, almost as loudly as before "And you didn't tell me?!"

"I couldn't. We're not... We can't be public. No one can know, Rachel. I'm telling you, but no one else can know."

"What, next you'll be telling me it's Blaine Anderson."

"..."

"Kurt?!"

"Well..."

"Kurt?!"

"Actually..."

"KURT?!"

"He's so amazing, Rach."

"KURT!"

"He is... He just takes my breath away. He's out of this world. Everything's just been surreal since I met him, Rach. I've never... I've never felt like this."

"Kurt!"

"I can feel myself falling in love, Rachel, I can *feel* it."

"Kurt!"

"Rachel!"

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Give me a second." He hears as she probably puts her phone down. There are some muffled noises. Maybe even a scream into a pillow, some crashes, a squeaky mattress before she breathes "I'm back, ok... I'm back. You can talk now. Just... tell me e-ve-ry-thing."

Kurt throws his head back with laughter before taking a deep breath and actually telling e-ve-ry-thing. It feels great. It's not just about telling *someone*. It's telling his best friend. The one person who feels with just as much drama and theatricality – the only one who'll truly understand everything he's going through. They gush and squeal together, and it feels so perfect that he doesn't think twice before promising her that he'll go to Ohio at the first opportunity he gets, and he only thinks twice before promising her that he'll actually try to invite Blaine along.

xXxXx

"I said yes, Wes." Blaine gasps in horror as they lay down, lights already off. Wes merely scoffs and laughs a little in response "I said yes, and now I'm going to have dinner with his family."

Fast forward a week of recurrent waves of anxiety and Blaine is standing on Kurt's doorstep as he hears the keys sliding into place and unlocking the front door to the apartment. He steps in, carefully, after Kurt, barely registering Kurt's "I'm home, we're here!" holler. The entrance hall alone is big and airy, mostly white with a few things here and there. Unless Blaine's very much mistaken and they just haven't had the time to decorate properly (which, knowing Kurt, would be doubtful), the theme of the house is minimalism.

There are noises coming from their left as they reach the wide, sliding translucent doors that lead to the living room. It's spacious and filled with light, even now that it's night, and the large windows occupying an entire wall show the beauty of a city's night. The kitchen is contiguous to the living room and seems immaculate, even though a person could smell lasagna from a mile away, and through open doors he can spot a dining table.

Mrs. Hummel, the Senator and Finn were sitting on the couch and are now shuffling over to them, hands and arms outstretched. As the Senator hugs Kurt, Blaine's busied with an armful of Mrs. Hummel. She kisses his cheek affectionately and pulls back with a grin.

"It's so nice to see you again, Blaine!"

"It's very nice to see you again, too, Mrs. Hummel."

"Oh, please! Call me Carole." She beams, almost interrupted as Finn shoves his hand towards Blaine.

"Hey, man...!"

"Hey." Blaine nods with a soft smile as he clasps his hand with Finn's and they shake. Then he tries not to take a deep breath, because he's pretty sure that'd just make his awkwardness a lot more obvious, and turns towards the Senator holding out his hand.

He grips it firmly "Nice to see you, kid."

"Y-yeah, thanks for inviting me over, Sen-sir." Blaine says attempting graceful and coming out strangled.

The Senator gives a hearty laugh "Breathe, son... I didn't poison the atmosphere." He puts a kind hand on Blaine's shoulder, as the boy blushes to a deep crimson, and nudges him towards the dining room "Come, we thought you'd get here sooner, so dinner's ready and getting cold by the second."

Blaine follows him hesitantly. He feels a hand sliding into his own and squeezing and he looks to find Kurt walking next to him, smiling sweetly "There's not need to be that nervous." He whispers.

"Yes, well, come have dinner with my parents and get back to me on that."

"Touché."

"We have some news!" Burt says from a few feet ahead "Finn's transfer to Landley High is final."

"That's great." Kurt says and Blaine merely smiles.

"I didn't go to Dalton because you guys don't have a football team." Finn explains, even though Blaine had been much too shy to even think of asking "Well... Not a good one, anyway."

"Oh." Blaine nods "Yes, it's not the best" he agrees "I've heard Landley's is great though."

"I hope I make the team!" Finn says eagerly as he takes his place.

Kurt steers Blaine gently to his place. The Senator takes one head of the table, Mrs. Hummel takes the other, and Finn takes one side and Kurt and Blaine take the other. Thankfully, Blaine's closer to Mrs. Hummel.

Mrs. Hummel serves everyone. She must've warned Blaine to tell her when to stop, but he was so focused trying not to blush or shake with nerves that he only noticed when his plate was piled with food and he just gasped and stuttered and... blushed. Fail. Fail. Mega fail.

"So, Blaine, how's your father's campaign?" the Senator asks, and Blaine chokes on his water much to his amusement. After a hearty laugh the man grins "I'm just teasing you, son. No campaign talk on this table, that's the rule."

"Oh... huh... great." He mumbles.

He feels Kurt's hand squeeze his knee briefly before he speaks up "So, Finn, have you talked to Rachel lately? How is she?" Blaine knows Kurt knows how Rachel is. He'd smile if he could, but he only manages to make a mental note to thank him later.

"Oh, she's awesome. She says she misses you like crazy. She says she misses you so much she might actually agree to a makeover if that's what it'll take to get you to visit."

Kurt gasps next to Blaine "Oh, but that's new to me!" he breathes with some sort of manic gleam in his eyes, and Blaine actually forgets all about his nerves and that this is the first time he's ever shared a meal with a boyfriend's family, and how that family probably hates his family (and maybe – *though let's be reasonable, Blaine, it's unlikely* – himself); and instead he just stares at Kurt and the passion and life that take over him "She did not say that to me! That changes everything!"

Between having dinner with his boyfriend's family and actually trying to eat the ridiculously full plate of lasagna in front of him (it's bad manners to leave more than two bites on the plate), Blaine is lucky if he can form a sentence with more than four words at a time. He's more than relieved that Kurt's pretty much doing all the talking now. It seemed that the silence was really temporary, because he's pretty much launched into a near-monologue over skin tones and color palettes.

Blaine's able to relax a little, that way. It's progressive, and not 100%. But he can laugh at the jokes now without sounding like a whimpering puppy, and he can join in the conversation with one or two scarcely intelligent remarks (hey, he does read *vogue!*). He even shared in a few amused little glances and smirks with the Senator when Kurt made a particularly theatrical and exaggerated comment. And he even manages to remember to gush over Mrs. Hummel's lasagna plenty of times.

By the end he's pretty sure he's actually having a good time. The Senator has a good sense of humor and he hasn't once tried to intimidate Blaine in any way (a small voice in Blaine's head tells him about predators lulling their preys into a false sense of security), and he never ceases to be impressed at how intelligent and articulate the man always sounds. Mrs. Hummel is just about the nicest woman Blaine's met before, except for when she's scolding her son about eating like an animal. The guy that really does eat like an animal, Finn, is mostly quiet, either busy shoving food down his mouth, or watching whoever's talking attentively, but sometimes he does pipe up and it's always pretty much good natured (even if a little dumb), and Blaine figures he quite likes him.

And Kurt... Kurt is Kurt. This is Kurt's home and Kurt's family, and it's pretty damn obvious. He's just so free and careless here. Just like he is whenever the two of them are alone and talking. He doesn't have to look over his shoulder or censor himself. And it's truly a sight to behold. He's just so amazingly full of life, and everything about him and the way he talks and moves and thinks screams energy, drive, ambition and crazy focus.

Blaine's not quite like that. He has ambitions and hopes, like everybody else, but just... sometimes, he lacks the confidence and the drive to see things through and to believe they're possible. So, for all that he knows about Kurt for now (and he feels like Kurt's one of those people who you can know like the back of your hand and yet they will always manage to zig and you think they're gonna zag), that's his favorite, and that's the one he admires the most. Maybe he could teach Blaine how to reach higher.

His thoughts are interrupted when the Senator is holding a piece of chocolate cake towards him, and fuck, Blaine's pretty sure he was just caught staring at Kurt. The man's smiling at him, though, and it's something between a genuine smile and a teasing smirk, so maybe it's all good. He takes the dessert plate feeling his cheeks erupt into crimson fires.

"I used your recipe, Kurt, I hope it turns out just as good." Mrs. Hummel says. Blaine is the first to take a bite and he tries his best not to moan too obscenely, but it's hard. "Is it good?" Mrs. Hummel asks eagerly, her own fork halfway towards her mouth.

Blaine nods eagerly "The best I've ever had, Mrs. Hummel! Better than my grandma's, and, believe me, that's... that's hard."

"Oh, shush! You're just being nice!" She rolls her eyes with a giggle "And it's Carole."

"Sorry!" He laughs at once "But I'm not lying, I swear. Scout's honor!"

"Were you in the scouts?" Kurt frowns.

"Well, figure of speech..." Blaine shrugs and everyone laughs a little.

Yeah. He's having a good time alright.

Blaine's even a little sad when it's over and time to go. It's weird. He'd expected to feel relieved, but he's actually looking forward to any chance he might have to spend time with this family again. They feel so... safe to be around. Blaine feels safe here.

He bids everyone goodbye, and he's almost turning to leave when the Senator calls out.

"Oh, Blaine! I almost forgot! Let me just go grab the shotgun so I can give you the talk."

"The... what?!" Blaine gasps, feeling the blood drain completely from his face, and his knees were suddenly made of jelly.

For a moment the man just stares back at him dead serious, but then, in a split second, he bursts out laughing, with a hand clutching his stomach. "Oh, kid!" he gasps "You should have seen your face!" he's still laughing like he's never seen anything so funny "I'm just messin' with ya."

"Dad!" Kurt nearly screams and a pillow connects violently with his father's head.

"Sorry, Kurt. But did you see his face?! Priceless." He shakes his head, still chuckling to himself "Well" he offers Blaine a hand, and he extends his own shaky hand "Drive safe, kid, and feel free to come by whenever you want. We like the company."

"T-thanks, sir."

"I'd say 'give your parents my regards' but I'll go on a limb here and assume they don't even know you're here."

Blaine smiles guiltily, blushes and nods.

"Well... like I said, drive safe and come back whenever you want."

"Thank you, sir. I think I will." Blaine smiles, his breathing slowly returning to normal.

Kurt stands and walks Blaine to the door tangling their fingers together for the short distance "So that was nice. Up until now. I'm so sorry. He has this weird idea that he's so very funny. It's probably because Carole has the easiest sense of humor, so he gets a warped perspective of his jokes." Kurt rushes out.

Blaine laughs and squeezes his hand "Hey, it's fine. I guess looking back it was a little funny." Blaine shrugs "And I had a great time, Kurt. Really. You have a fantastic family."

"Like dad said – you're welcome here anytime." Blaine knows Kurt's saying more than just 'feel free to come over for dinner every once in a while', but now's not the time to talk about it, and it's not like there's much to talk about anyway. Things just are the way they are, and if Blaine's home life is disastrous and Kurt's isn't there's not much that Blaine can *say*.

So he smiles instead and when they're by the door he kisses Kurt's cheek. Kurt rolls his eyes, sighs and pulls him in for a real kiss, all lingering and eager.

"Let me know when you get home, ok?"

"Sure." Blaine nods closes the door behind him and allows himself a moment to lean against it and just sigh.

It's not a long drive to his house and it flies by particularly fast because he's just so distracted singing and smiling to himself he barely notices the time. The night was fantastic. He's shared a meal with his boyfriend's family and he's survived; despite his nerves he's pretty sure he charmed the pants off them – at least Mrs. Hummel's; and there had been no sort of awkward 'I'll break your legs if you break his heart' kind of talk, which he is oh so grateful about. Everything about it has gone better than expected, so he is actually beaming as he opens the front door to his house, says a cheerful 'hello' to everyone – even kisses his mom and grandma on the cheek – and skips his way upstairs, leaving behind four sets of mildly confused eyes.

He texts Kurt.

'Home safe! – B'

There is no answer and even though it seems a little weird he doesn't let it bother him and instead turns on his computer and logs on to tumblr. Since Kurt's tweet about it, his blog has gone practically viral and Blaine doesn't even need to think about which issue to tackle because his inbox is always flooded with questions and suggestions, so he just selects two or three every two days to work on.

He gets interrupted halfway through the first question when his dad comes in and tells him they have an important dinner tomorrow night. Blaine's in such a good mood he merely shrugs and says "Yeah, sure, might be fun." His dad leaves with a muttered 'Ok, great! I guess...' and Blaine goes back to his questions.

He's just finished the second when his cell finally beeps with a new text.

'O. M. G. You will not believe what just happened. – K'

'What? – B'

'I got the talk, Blaine. THE TALK – K'

'What talk? – B'

'The sex talk. The 'be safe and make sure you know what you're doing' talk. I can never unhear the things I've heard. It was just SO awkward. I was awkward, my dad was awkward. Everything was awkward. – K'

'What did he say? – B'

'That he knew how it was to be young and stuff, that with two guys things probably got sexual too easily... that I should use sex as a way to connect to another person, and I shouldn't throw myself around, and then he gave pamphlets. VERY GRAPHIC PAMPHLETS. On the bright side (for you, I guess) Carole's exact words when you left were 'I like him. We can keep him' – K'

'That's nice (the first part). The second part..... ahahahahahahahahahah. I guess I've just figured out the one advantage of having being my father's son. The third part makes me so happy you have no idea. I liked her too, she's such a nice woman! – B'

'Don't you dare laugh, Blaine Warbler! It's NOT funny. – K'

'It's a little bit funny. – B'

'I'm withdrawing making out privileges for a week. – K'

'It's not funny at all. It's ridiculous and completely not funny. It's insulting because of just how much not funny it is. – B'

'Atta boy. – K'

Blaine smiles as he clicks to open a new text. And then a thought occurs to him

Kurt had a sex talk. Kurt. Had. A. Sex. Talk.

They're *dating*.

There *is* reason for a sex talk.

Why was this only now occurring to Blaine? Was it occurring to Kurt too?

That, eventually, they would probably have sex?

Not make out fully clothed on their bed for almost an hour trying to avoid getting hard. No. Actual sex. Actual naked sex. They would. Probably.

And before that. Before that... they'll experiment. Maybe lose a shirt or two... maybe grab an ass... there's a world of possibilities that Blaine feels stupid for never considering on a realistic scale. Sure he thinks about it late at night when he gets himself off, he fantasizes about Kurt's hands, Kurt's lips, Kurt's everything... But... he's never actually realized that at some point he's really going to start having access to those things.

As pictures of bodies and sounds of gasps start invading Blaine's mind the only coherent thought he can gather is *How soon is too soon?*

xXxXx

Kurt arches into Blaine. His hips press against Blaine's stomach as he mouths hotly over Kurt's collar bone, shirt open halfway through his torso. With breathy moans, Kurt paws at Blaine's back, trying to get a hold of anything that might ground him to reality, but his hands can only catch fabric and more fabric that twists in hands too easily. Blaine's tongue flicks over his pulse point and Kurt bucks again.

"God, Kurt..." Blaine mutters, lips moving against Kurt's skin and his voice clouded with want, so deep, so throaty, unlike anything Kurt's ever heard. Blaine's hands travel down his body, from his shoulders to his

hips, passing through his chest and stomach and waist, pressing and grabbing as if to make sure Kurt was real and solid.

His hands grab Kurt's hips tightly, they keep them in place as Blaine's comes up to press his lips in wet, open mouthed kisses and practically shoving his desperate tongue against Kurt's. Before Kurt can get his head around it Blaine has pushed their hips together and he can feel Blaine against him, and he can feel him move and thrust, again and again, and he wants to reach down and take Blaine's ass in his hands, bury his hands in it as he sets the perfect rhythm, but Blaine takes his wrists and pins them above Kurt's head, just as he pushes his hips so deep Kurt can't do anything but scream and open his legs, take as much friction as he can.

"Like this?" Blaine huffs against his ear, ripping his lips from Kurt's to lick all over the shell of his ear, hot breath ghosting over wet skin.

"Yeah!" Kurt gasps as another thrust tightens the heat.

He wraps his legs around Blaine's hips firmly and tries to deepen the thrust impossibly. If only Blaine could go deeper, and deeper and deeper. If only they could get rid of all these ridiculous, useless clothes, if only Kurt's alarm clock could stop ringing. If onl- wait what.

Kurt's eyes snap open and he finds himself panting, gasping for air as he stares into the ceiling. He doesn't even need to look to know he's never been this hard before in his life.

It goes on like this for the rest of the weekend and Monday. It's highly probable it's now going to be part of his daily routine.

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Blaine lets the hot water crash against his back, steam gathering around him and he's completely alone and apart from everything else. All he can feel is the burning in his belly and he takes a deep, careful breath before he lets his hand trail down to his cock. He wraps it around himself, and closes his eyes. He moves it slowly at first. He needs time to imagine that it's Kurt's soft, gentle hand around him. He tries to ignore the callous on his fingers from his guitar, or the way he sometimes, involuntarily, squeezes a little too tight. This time it's Kurt. Kurt's standing right there with Blaine's cock in his hand and he's pumping,

every moment a fraction of a second faster than the previous. And it's Kurt's thumb grazing over the head, over the slid, gathering pre-come, and holy shit is this all progressing pretty quickly.

He tries to imagine it's Kurt's cock in his hand, but it's two seconds before he realizes that's too much and too easy for the illusion to shatter, so he settles back for only Kurt's hands. He knows those hands by heart, every line and every dip, and he can actually feel it, as he fists over the head, runs a finger through the slit again, before going back down in a swirling movement, and then up and then down, and then up, and then down, and it's going fast, and faster and faster, And fuck, Kurt's hand will probably be even better than this, but this is already so good, and the mere thought that one day this won't be just a fantasy makes Blaine groan in the back of his throat and spill all over himself, as white dots cover the blackness and force his eyes open. He clasps a hand to the wall as he shudders, riding out his orgasm, knees faltering more than he even expected.

He stands there gasping and trying to wrap his head around what just happened.

He's just come, and he's come hard, imagining Kurt's hand around him. He can even begin to know what it'll be like when it's the real thing. He takes a final deep breath and almost laughs to himself before he lets the water run through his body for a few last moments, and closes the tap, wrapping a towel around himself as he steps out of the shower.

When he leaves the bathroom fully dressed and hair styled Wes just eyes him and says "I don't even wanna know why you took so long."

Blaine laughs and doesn't say anything. What would he say anyway? That 'I don't know why you're only saying that now, seen as it's part of my morning ritual, only today I tried to pay special attention and not be half asleep because I had a really good, really vivid dream I wish I could've stayed through to the end that's probably just the first of many, so get used to the idea?'

He leaves for breakfast and when he meets Kurt it's hard not to blush. And it's hard not to stare at his hands and his fingers, and the way he holds his water bottle and tips it against his lips, the way those lips wrap around the bottle top. The way – *No. That's enough. Get a grip, Blaine.*

xXxXx

"I think that might be a little too much." Blaine says with a wary smile and cringe as they round the corner towards the choir room.

"But, but, but!" Kurt whines. He really thinks if they could pull it off they'd have Regionals in the bag.

Blaine chuckles at Kurt's semi-pout "Just pitch the idea. Got nothing to lose, right?"

"Right..." Kurt says halfheartedly. He'd feel better about it if he had Blaine on his side, but he was nothing if not persistent (no, let's leave stubbornness out of it). He feels Blaine's hand rubbing his back for a moment before he notices Wes talking to an unfamiliar boy up ahead "Who's that?"

Blaine squints and shakes his head "I dunno. Never seen him."

They reach the pair and Wes turns to them with a quick smile to the unknown boy "Oh, here, you can already meet our shining stars." He says before putting a hand on Blaine's shoulder "This is Blaine, and this is Kurt." The boy smiles and extends a hand which they both take "And this is Sebastian, who'll be auditioning for the Warblers just now."

Sebastian is a little bit taller than Kurt, has chestnut brown hair, a leering face and steely grey eyes that are taking Kurt's whole body in, inch by inch.

"Oh!" Kurt smiles at once, trying to ignore the discomfort of having a stranger so obviously checking him out "Good luck!"

The boy – Sebastian – smirks and nods "Thanks. Not that I need it, but."

Kurt tries not to look affected in the least by the cockiness in the boy's voice and the arrogant gleam in his eyes.

"I saw your performance for sectionals." He says "You were terrific, Kurt." He adds, completely ignoring Blaine "We should duet, some time..."

God, did it really sound that cheesy when I said it?, Kurt thinks, too taken aback by the whole forwardness to think of something smart to say. Instead he just stutters out a "R-right... huh... maybe." He smiles briefly and shoots a questioning glance towards Blaine, who's scowling.

If he's jealous, it's kind of cute.

"We'll be inside." Blaine says without a trace of warmth and placing his hand softly on Kurt's shoulder blade steers him around. The frown on his face doesn't let out in the slightest.

"Are you jealous?" Kurt teases under his breath, leaning closer just so.

Blaine looks at him through squinted eyes and just purses his lips slightly. Kurt lets out tingling laughter as he drops his bag to the couch and only just resists the urge to capture Blaine's lips in his, to kiss him senseless, push him against the couch and shove his pants down, wrap his hand around Blaine – and whoa! Kurt! Keep those to when you're alone, will you?!

He tries to stifle the groan on the back of his throat as Blaine sits next to him and simple wave of his scent has Kurt crossing his legs.

Chapter Twelve

"I don't like him, Wes." Blaine says for the fourth time. He's sitting on his bed toying with his newly broken guitar string.

"You don't like him because he hit on Kurt." Wes rolls his eyes, from where he's trying to read (and soon to give up) his History notes.

"It's not just that!" Blaine sighs, "He seems freakishly arrogant."

"I'll give you that. But I can't deny him access to the Warblers because his personality sucks." Wes says simply "His audition was really good, Blaine. I can't just say no."

"He sang his entire song looking at Kurt." Blaine mutters, more to himself than to Wes "And there were pelvic thrusts. Could he be any more... crass? The Warblers are good because they're classy. None of that was classy."

Wes snorts and shakes his head "Can't say no for that, either." He finally spins around in his chair "I would if I could, man, I would, but..." he gives a half hearted smile "Tell you what, first strike and he's out. No second chances. And I'm pretty sure he'll strike out pretty damn fast."

Blaine huffs out a laugh, though it doesn't sound the least bit amused "What if I punch him? Does that count as a strike to me? How many strikes can I have?"

"Naa, man, he provoked you with his stupid face."

"Awesome."

Wes chuckles but his smile fades quickly and he chews on his cheek before he looks up and hesitantly speaks "You know..." he starts "I'm actually a little worried.... With his timing and all the things that have been going on... I can't help but wonder if... maybe he's just... fishing."

"Fishing?"

"For his fifteen minutes of fame." Wes explains "It just seems a little suspicious that he should go out of his way to audition for the Warbler's on the first day he's even in the school – and then he just pounces on Kurt like there's not tomorrow. Or maybe he's just looking for a story, I don't know, I saw him looking at you, too."

"Oh?"

"I think you need to be careful, Blaine. The way you were looking during the whole performance was kind of obvious. If you're gonna look that pissed every time someone comes on to Kurt, everyone's gonna know sooner or later. If the guy's as smart as he thinks he is, all he needs is a rumor. That's all it takes to start a fire and make some big bucks out of it."

"You really think so?" Blaine blanches slightly.

He feels kind of dumb right now. How had he not even thought of it?! He wants to slap himself. Of course Sebastian's just looking to take advantage of Kurt. Why else would he be there now, of all times? I mean, sure the Warblers are pretty cool, and hell yeah Kurt's hot and worth hitting on, but between his speed and intensity, it's pretty much clear Sebastian's on a mission and he doesn't take it exactly lightly.

There's a soft knock on their door and Blaine's thoughts are interrupted. Wes springs from his desk to open the door and Kurt bounces in with a wide, excited grin.

"I have found the book!" He announces proudly "Now I can get started on the European History project."

Blaine returns his beam "Great!" he pats the place next to him on his bed and Kurt climbs in, already opening the book and trailing a long, slender, agi- *stop it, Blaine!* – finger over the index.

"I really need to get started on this one."

Blaine nods and wraps an arm around Kurt's shoulders and they lean against the wall, making his eyes look anywhere else other than Kurt's fingers. Ok, so maybe his legs aren't all that better. Or his pursed lips. Maybe he shouldn't look at Kurt altogether.

"It's actually pretty interesting, so I wanna make sure it's perfect, and I just know that if I leave it be, I'll end up doing it in one night... I just need to have some time to focus on this." Kurt explains as he starts flipping toward specific pages.

"And you're sure you won't get distracted by Sebastian serenading you if he gets in the Warblers?" Blaine asks, trying to keep the acid off his words, but pretty much failing entirely.

Kurt blushes at once and rolls his eyes "He was not serenading me."

"Oh please!" Blaine says, voice dripping with resentment "The guy was hitting on you like you were gourmet chocolate and he was a 50 year old divorcée alone on Valentine's day."

Wes splutters with ill-conceived laughter while Kurt gives him a stern glare.

"What?!" He asks defensively "It's true! There were pelvic thrusts, Kurt! While looking right at you!"

"Don't be silly, Blaine, even if he *is* hitting on me, I've got better things to think about."

"Yeah, but what if he's... huh... trying to take advantage of you?" Blaine's never worded things so carefully. One wrong word and he'll sound like he thinks no one would ever hit on Kurt. Which is ridiculous, coming from him, but... "His timing's suspicious, to say the least, and he'd have a lot to gain from... being seen with you."

Kurt stares back at Blaine with a small, teasing smile "And if you continue to be that obviously jealous what he'll get instead is a pretty little story to sell the papers about how Anderson's son is involved with Hummel's."

"I know..." Blaine mumbles, scratching the back of his neck guiltily.

Kurt chuckles lightly, squeezing Blaine's knee "I'm not that oblivious, Blaine. I know what he's after, but I also know better than to give it."

"I know..."

Kurt leans down and presses his lips to Blaine's with a smile and Blaine is only vaguely aware of Wes sighing and turning back to his notes before he wraps his arms around Kurt and increases the pressure on their kiss.

"I like you." Kurt whispers when they pull apart "Only you."

Blaine feels his heart fluttering, like always, because this will never get old and immediately captures Kurt's lips in yet another kiss.

"And as much as the jealousy is both flattering and kind of cute, it's also dangerous, so..." Kurt gives him a meaningful look and Blaine sighs.

"I'll do my best."

"Good boy!" Kurt beams at once, snuggles closer to Blaine and opens his book again.

The next day he has to repeat Kurt's words in his head, like a mantra, when he spots Kurt standing in front of his locker and Sebastian leaning next to it, smirk in place. He almost goes out of his way to interrupt them, meet Kurt before they walk to class together. But with a deep breath he walks right by them, with just a simple smile and a "Morning, Kurt. Sebastian."

He barely catches their greetings as he continues to walk. He spots Wes a few feet ahead, waiting for him by his own locker with a proud papa smile on his face. Blaine merely shakes his head, rolls his eyes and mutters "Shut up."

Wes laughs and they take off together towards the classroom.

His phone buzzes with a new text.

'Atta boy. – K'

'Shut up – B'

'Aha...! Sebastian was asking me out, btw. Lol – K'

'I don't see what's so funny about that. – B'

'Don't be like that. You know I said no. You know I would've said no regardless of his intentions. I'm not going to tattoo 'I only like Blaine' on my forehead for your benefit, so if you could just commit it to your memory so I won't have to say it every day... - K'

'I'm sorry. Of course I know that. I'm sorry. – B'

'That's good. Can we go to the library for free period? I need to check a book for my English Lit paper, and we could get started with your French...? – K'

'Sure. :) – B'

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They're sitting next to each other (which means Kurt's half paying attention to his work, half paying attention to the way Blaine smells and moves and breathes, and god, he's so sexy and when will the dreams stop?, except no don't stop, they're soooo good they should be real, can they be real? when will they be real?, ok no. stop it. Focus Kurt), working in silence when Blaine's cell starts buzzing. Kurt tries to remain just as focused when Blaine answers with a "Dad?" but it's pretty much useless. Blaine's frowning in confusion and listening without saying a word.

"I don't-..." he tries to get across eventually, but Kurt's pretty sure he was mindlessly interrupted.

He tries not to stare, looks around them at the practically empty library – its intimidating and completely stacked bookcases, the endless rows of desks with mostly empty chairs and unlit lamps, the wide windows that let the cold January sun shine through. But in the end Blaine's subdued hums of agreement still grasp his attention.

"No, fine." He says with a tone of finality "Yes. Fine. Ok. Bye."

He puts his cell phone down and turns to Kurt, already guessing his curiosity "It was my dad." He shrugs "I'll have to spend my entire Saturday with them at the country club. I think we're going golfing, or something."

"Sounds... thrilling."

"He's meeting with a potential campaign sponsor." He explains "It's a business meeting disguised as family time." Blaine rolls his eyes "Fun."

Kurt cringes slightly, wishing he could offer something a little more useful than a small smile and a 'I'm sorry...'.

"Can't you just... you know, *blow it off*?"

Blaine huffs bitterly "I'm trying not play that card too many times. It might lose the effect." He explains and Kurt nods in understanding, reaching out to squeeze his hand discreetly "And I just know there'll be a girl there." Blaine mutters after a pause "I can feel it..."

Kurt smiles sympathetically and tries to diffuse the tension with a small joke "My turn to be jealous, huh?"

Blaine gives a small chuckle "Oh yes, I'll be all over that!" he says "Imma tap dat ass, fo'sho"

"That's disgusting, Blaine." Kurt dead pans "Don't ever try to sound gangsta again – not even as a joke." they giggle after a moment of silence. Kurt kicks Blaine's foot under the table and shakes his head before returning his eyes to his notes as Blaine does the same.

He's just managed to refocus when a leering voice interrupts them both.

"Still haven't reconsidered, Kurt?" He looks up to find Sebastian casually leaning against their table, hands in his pockets and smirking. Next to him he can feel Blaine tensing "My offer still stands."

"And my answer stands just as well. But thank you."

"Kurt, come on." He leans closer "It'll be fun. I know this great sushi place. You look like the kind of guy who likes some sushi...? Sophisticated and sexy, I mean."

There's a sigh next to Kurt and before he can reiterate his answer Blaine's voice is low and slightly annoyed "We were kind of studying..." What is he doing? Trying to hand their heads over on a plate?! Kurt tries to be as discreet as he can as he kicks Blaine's foot.

"I'll be quick..." Sebastian says with an amused frown towards Blaine, turning back to Kurt with a growing smirk "Are you with someone?"

"No...!"

"You know it doesn't bother me, if it doesn't bother you." He says.

"No. I don't have a boyfriend, and it *would* bother me, actually." Kurt frowns, annoyed at both Sebastian and Blaine "The fact that it wouldn't bother you, though, just makes for an easier no."

"Shame." Sebastian sighs "Oh well, like I said, you're always in time to reconsider. See you around, guys. Kurt." He adds with one last sultry gaze at Kurt before he turns to leave.

"Blaine..." Kurt nearly growls, while Blaine lets out a long breath and hangs his head in both surrender and apology. Kurt tries not to find his neck attractive.

Kurt fails.

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She's doing it on purpose. She is. No one who actually owns their own equipment can be that bad at squash.

"Oh, shoot!" she says as she misses the ball entirely.

Blaine doesn't see how this is supposed to help seduce him. Are guys supposed to fall for girls who outright suck at sports? Joke's on her though, because Blaine legitimately sucks at it.

"I think you might be holding that thing too tight..." he says half-distracted by the two women sporting a terrible and leathery fake tan and the most ridiculous bleached hair passing by their room dripping in sweat and flaunting their bright pink tracksuits that cling all too much to their bodies, revealing every line of underwear. Is anyone supposed to find them attractive?

"Mind showing me?" She teases, voice picture of faux innocence.

Blaine shrugs, smiles and steps to her side. He doesn't wrap his arms around her. He just reaches for her hand on the racket and loosens her grip slightly before throwing the ball against the wall again and letting her go for it "Now, I'm not expert, obviously, but I do remember as much from the one class I took like ten years ago."

"Oh..." she says, concealing her disappointment "Thanks."

"No problem." He nods, stepping away again. He looks as, on the room opposite theirs, his father stands with her father. The *wives* stayed at the lounge. Blaine envies them. He watches as a third, slightly familiar man approaches and knocks on the door. Blaine frowns, trying to recognize him, but gives up soon enough.

"So..." she – Marley? Marla? Mara? – starts with a soft, flirtatious tone "How does it feel to be your father's son?"

"Huh..." he thinks of saying something like 'it feels like being a son.' but the girl's not the one who dragged him out of his comfortable bedroom to a Gold Country Club to play *squash*. It's not really her fault he's stuck with her. "Well... it's... ok. Mostly." He says as he hits the ball with not even a little bit of energy.

"Oh?" She quirks an eyebrow completely dismissing it as it bounces right by her "And aren't you like famous now? Is that cool?"

"Not really. I still can't do most things I couldn't do before, with the aggravate that now if I do them I'll have my picture in the papers." He answers with the politest smile he can muster as he bends and picks up the ball.

"Oh, yeah!" she muses "I saw *that*." She smirks "Wild, huh?"

He scrunches up his nose and shrugs because that's as far as he can go in search of an answer to that. He hits the ball again.

"Is it true that you and Hummel are like friends now?" she says after – hallelujah – she hits it back.

Blaine nods "Yeah," hit "very good friends, actually."

"Isn't he like gay," hit "though?"

Miss. Ok, she is to blame for *that*! "I didn't know being gay impaired someone to be a good friend." He says as lightly as he can, as he swings the ball with a grunt and too much force, though exactly in which direction he's not entirely sure.

She giggles and ducks away from it, shielding herself with the racket before peeking back out again "I just thought since your dad is... like republican and stuff..."

"So is yours. Would you stop yourself from befriending someone if they were gay just because daddy said so?"

"I don't know. I've never met anyone gay." She shrugs "But isn't it a little bit gross. Like, two guys kissing? Doe he kiss his boyfriend in front of you?" she wrinkles her nose with a giggle.

Blaine's all but prepared to ignore that question and shoot the ball as strongly as he can when a voice startles them from behind and a slightly older, but very similar looking girl approaches "Kurt Hummel doesn't have a boyfriend, Ally..." *Ally!* That's right! "Didn't you read all about that in your magazines?" Blaine frowns just enough that the girl gets the hint and extends a hand "Ashley."

"Blaine."

"I know." She says simply "And please excuse my sister. She forgot her brain at school when she was about five and I'm afraid we never did manage to get it back. Maybe some kid thought it was theirs."

"Oh." He says dumbly.

She laughs lightly "That was a mean duet you guys did. I thought it was cool."

"Huh... thanks." He frowns slightly.

"I hate it when the world expects us republicans to have sticks up our asses. It's pretty ironic, actually." She shrugs "Anyway, what I meant is – thanks for owning up to the truth that we do know how to have some fun that doesn't include humiliating gays or black people."

"Huh..." he feels the heat spreading across his face "I didn't." he manages to say as his brain finally starts catching "That video was leaked without consent, and illegally."

She smirks, as if acknowledging his comeback before shrugging "Regardless, I shudder to think what idiots like my sister make us look like."

"Us?"

"Republicans, I mean. Not us three particularly." She clears, missing the fact that Blaine never misunderstood it in the first place "Have you met Hummel, though? The candidate, not the son, I mean."

"Huh, yeah, actually I have. More than once."

"I did, too, once." She nods "He'd be cool if he wasn't such a commie. I don't mind his social views so much, gay marriage and stuff like that, but economically speaking he doesn't do much for me." She says and even though Blaine wants to argue the second part he settles for nodding in agreement towards the first (if she interprets that as a nod for both, that's her business) "He's too much of a commie. State would go bankrupt in a month, I suppose."

He hums nondescriptly.

"Oh, I almost forgot. Mom sent me down here to say that playtime's over, buddies. We should start getting all pretty and nice-smelling for dinner." She smiles.

He nods and starts collecting his things. She takes it as a cue to continue her lecture about the disadvantages of a democrat president. Blaine's surely not gonna intervene with his own opinion. Well, it's not like she's completely wrong – there are flaws in both the democrat system in general as in Burt Hummel's program in particular – but, as far as Blaine's concerned, the pros far outweigh the cons, and in a lot of the issues she rants about it's just a matter of principle and one is not inherently wrong or right, but Blaine just can't get behind *her* principles.

He is glad, though, that at least she's articulate and intelligent, and backs up her opinions. He's mad enough at his dad to even consider her better suited for politician than him, and then laughs quietly to himself.

Ally, on the other hand, couldn't look more bored as she stuffs her towel and sports accessories in her bag, and fixes a death glare on her sister. Blaine finds himself agreeing with Ashley when it comes to misrepresentation of Republicans – even if he doesn't identify as one – and he wishes people like her would get more spotlight. At least then when Democrats won it wouldn't be just because Republicans are seen as stupid and outdated.

He's hoisting his bag up to his shoulder and they turn to leave when she gasps "Oh! Is that Arthur Motts?" she asks, looking at the man that's joined their fathers, standing at the door of their court. They've apparently stopped playing the moment he got there and have been talking for as long. "Ugh, he gives me the creeps."

Blaine can see it now. That's definitely him. He can't believe he didn't recognize him before.

Suddenly his stomach is in revolt, and he almost wants to throw up. That's Arthur Motts. That's *Tea Party* – not overtly, no, but everyone with internet access can easily find out he practically owns the thing. Tea Party!

Blaine wants to take a picture, go home and post it on his blog. Because his dad negotiating sponsorships, donations and campaign financing with the *fucking TEA PARTY*. Of course Blaine knew there would be Tea Party involvement, sooner or later. But he'd always figured it'd be later. Much, much later, when his dad would be desperate enough to hang on to whatever help those lunatics could give him.

It frightens him that it's this soon, when his dad is still somewhat shaping his campaign. The influence they can still have on him is, to say the least, dangerous.

He can't talk about it on his blog, though. Not yet.

It's incredibly private information for now, and if he did, the risk of the blog being traced back to him would be much too high.

He refrains from groaning to himself, nods towards Ashley with a mumble of "Yeah, me too." And shoots Wes a text.

'Jesus christ wes. Dad's negotiating with the tea party. The tea party. (he's meeting w Arthur Motts) – B'

'! – W'

xXxXx

"Of course I won't tell anyone..." Kurt rolls his eyes, as he cards his fingers gently through Blaine's hair (he's just come back from a late soccer practice – there is no gel – praise Jesus!).

Blaine shifts slightly, tightening his arms around Kurt's torso as they cuddle on Blaine's bed "Thank you... I shouldn't even have said anything, of course you won't tell."

"I understand. It's not like I'd feel completely ok telling you who my dad's been meeting for support." He sighs.

Blaine nods almost imperceptibly against Kurt's chest. He lets out a deep breath and Kurt can sense some of Blaine's stress leaving his shoulders. "It's just hitting me, you know? How much I will hate my dad's campaign."

"I think there won't be a single thing you'll agree with..." Wes says with an amused frown turning from his desk for a moment "That has got be some kind of accomplishment."

"The accomplishment of him being an ass." Blaine mumbles, and Kurt chuckles.

He bends down and showers Blaine's forehead with little butterfly kisses "Poor you!"

"I know right?!" Blaine pouts, and they both dissolve into giggles in a matter of seconds. Blaine sits straighter afterwards and, slightly less put off, shrugs "I think I need a pick me up..." he teases.

"Oh you definitely do!" Kurt agrees at once with a laugh, running a hand down Blaine's back and ignoring the feeling of hot muscles beneath his hands. What would it be like to have his hand directly on Blaine's skin? No. Kurt. You said you ignored it. So don't think about it.

"I have just the right thing in mind." Blaine nods, leaning over to plant a solid sounding kiss on Kurt's lips.

Wes coughs from the desk and they break apart laughing. They have long ago stopped apologizing. There would be too much apologizing if they did. "Do you want us to go to my room?" He asks.

Wes shakes his head from the desk and doesn't even bother turning around as he says "No, no need." He sighs and then adds "Unless *you* need to."

At first they would stick with Kurt's dorm room – it was easier to be alone. But Blaine started feeling guilty about leaving Wes alone so much, so now they alternated between both. In the end, it turned out perfectly: Kurt's room is for couple-y time (they watch movies while cuddling and ignore movies while making out) and Blaine's room is for studying and the occasional cuddle when they've finished all their homework. Wes isn't as much of a pain in the ass as they thought he would be. He doesn't bat an eyelash as they lay on Blaine's bed, arms and legs tangled together, and he never even teases them about it. He just coughs a lot when the kissing starts. That's as far as he goes about commenting on their relationship.

It's perfect. Kurt never thought he'd have that. Not this easily, anyway. Sure, if it was Rachel, Tina or even Mercedes he's pretty sure there would get to a point when they'd stop squealing and blushing and

smirking about it, and if it was Finn, Sam, Artie or even Puck, there would be a time where they would stop staring for the first five minutes of every conversation. Mike. Maybe Mike would be like Wes. Completely indifferent to it all. Like this was just... *normal*.

Sometimes Kurt's so overwhelmed by this (fake, he knows) sense of security and normalcy that Wes gives him – them – that all he wants to do is leap from his bed and hug the poor guy. But he refrains, because he's Wes and Kurt's pretty sure only Blaine is allowed to hug Wes (and even then, only on special occasions). But one day, sooner rather than later, he should probably find the words to thank him for not making a big deal out of it, and for treating them as if they were nothing but normal.

"Actually, though..." Wes interrupts Kurt's thoughts "I was thinking of going for dinner. Do you guys wanna come?"

"Huh, yeah, sure." Blaine shrugs.

"Might as well..." Kurt sighs, even though he has his own dinner back in his dorm room. He's not gonna eat alone now, is he?

They wait until Wes has put his things neatly away (another thing Kurt likes about Wes, the guy sure knows how to keep his things tidy) and head out towards the cafeteria together.

They've been eating while discussing pros and cons of a quiz test, when compared to an essay, as a means of evaluation, when a presence makes itself known with a light cough. They look up to find Sebastian.

"Hi."

"Hey." Kurt says politely.

"Hey there, Sebastian." Wes nods.

Blaine says nothing.

There's a small heat crawling up Kurt's neck, even before the conversation starts. "So, Kurt, I'm dying to try out that sushi place. Please, man, don't leave me hanging."

Kurt tries his hardest not to sigh or roll his eyes as he smiles, maybe a little too acidly, and says "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you're still hanging. I hope the rope's not around your neck."

"If you keep saying no, it will be!" Sebastian teases.

"I can only point you towards Trevor Project, then." Kurt says lightly.

"It will be hopeless!"

"Jesus..." Kurt hears Blaine mumble next to him and he elbows him as discreetly as possible. He's pretty sure Wes has just done exactly the same. Blaine, however, just rolls his eyes and sighs, like the immature five year old that he is.

"I'll be sure to make an appearance at the funeral, then. If it's all I can do." Kurt says swiftly, trying his best not to look affected by Blaine's outright display of annoyance.

"You're still not changing your mind? Are you sure?" Sebastian insists and when he goes to say something and Blaine drops his glass a little too carelessly, effectively interrupting him, Sebastian looks right at him, frowns a little and then he laughs to himself. He pretends to take a deep breath and waves his head in mock surrender "Ok, I can't, I'm sorry. I can't ignore it. Are you two... like... together?" he leans in, as if he's sharing the latest gossip.

Kurt starts to feel his skin catching fire but he tries to remain as stoically poised as possible as he says "No. We're just friends."

"Oh... I guess Blaine here just doesn't like *me*."

"Guess so." Blaine shrugs, mumbling like he's a child and his parents have just grounded him, trying to look as unaffected as he can.

"I suppose it definitely has nothing to do with the fact that I'm asking Kurt out, then."

Kurt wants to find a deep dark cave and bury himself in it, and he's pretty sure Wes has stopped breathing too "I just don't like the fact that you don't seem to understand the word no." Blaine says holing his chin higher and Kurt wants to punch him "Kurt's not an ameba, you know? He can make his own decisions, and it would be real cute if you'd respect them. He said no, so it's no."

Sebastian's smirk grows wider and he squints "And you're sure you two are not together, then?"

"I'm sure." Blaine says and at least there's the fact that his voice doesn't waver one bit, and it would actually be very believable, if it weren't for the display earlier "We're just friends."

"Mmm..." Sebastian tilts his head, appraising Blaine "Shame, I wouldn't mind having a little... get together with the two of you."

Kurt let's his mouth fly open "Jesus!"

Sebastian chuckles and stands to his full height, brushing invisible lint off his jacket "Well, I guess I'll see you guys at rehearsal tomorrow..." he smiles before adding "And Kurt, there's always time to reconsider." He leaves.

There's silence for a long time between the three of them before Kurt turns to Blaine and glares "I could kill you right now."

xXxXx

Blaine has apologized in every way possible. He's given long speeches, he's kissed every inch of Kurt's face with mumbles of 'I'm sorry' and 'I promise it won't happen again', he's left the largest bouquet of flowers he could get his hands on in Kurt's dorm room, he's begged Wes for help...

And yet, whenever it's time to choose the movie Kurt still says "My turn to choose" and if Blaine protests he'll say "When I give Sebastian Smythe reasonable suspicion that we're together, it will be your turn to pick the movie."

It doesn't matter that Blaine's pretty sure Kurt would be just as annoyed at Sebastian as he was, were the tables reversed. He's still in the doghouse and saying *that* won't help his case. Two months into their relationship and Blaine's learnt his first lesson (which granted, he could've learnt long before, - Kurt did say so, after all): Kurt Hummel is always right. And if he isn't..... Well, he still is.

That sounds horrible, I know! But Blaine has a theory and a plan. He's still testing it, but if it works, he's sure he'll have world peace in his reach. Blaine's theory is that Kurt Hummel is only always right (even when he isn't - and especially when he isn't) while the topic's still hot. As such, he has devised a plan that

will grant him full forgiveness: in time. He will let Kurt think Blaine feels absolutely and thoroughly guilty. He'll let him think Blaine thinks he deserves to be in the doghouse.

And when things blow over. *Then* Blaine will present his case, and Kurt will have no choice but to admit Blaine's right, or at least grant him full forgiveness.

His plan will be completed on Valentine's Day. In a week's time.

"Kurt...?" he says.

"Mmm?" Kurt hums, from where his face is buried in the crook of Blaine's neck.

Blaine chuckles "Did you just fall asleep?"

"No...." he lies.

"You did, too." Blaine laughs "'Oh, Blaine, please...! I'm sure it won't be boring at all! Just because it's French!'" he mimics.

Kurt is silent for a moment and Blaine starts to panic. *Bad Blaine! Bad Blaine! That was not in the plan! That is the **opposite** of the plan!*

"Fine!" Kurt rolls his eyes "I fell asleep! But I was tired, I went to bed late last night, I stayed up till two. The movie was *not* boring."

Blaine chuckles to himself "Whatever you say, sweetiepie."

"Don't condescend me!" Kurt warns as he pulls away and gives Blaine his patented death glare.

"I apologize profusely." Blaine says, though he's smiling.

Kurt throws a leg over Blaine's and straddles him, as he grabs the collar of his shirt "You should!" He leans down and presses a slightly hard kiss on Blaine's mouth, but by the end Blaine can feel him smiling against it.

"Ever so sorry..." Blaine mumbles as they part.

"You're forgiven!" Kurt sighs and leans back down towards another, gentler kiss.

Blaine lets himself be pushed back into the mattress and relaxes as Kurt drapes himself over him. Trailing his hands lazily across Kurt's back he fuzzily remembers his plan.

"Kurt...?"

"Hmmm?"

"I was... huh... I was thinking... about Valentine's Day..." he says and Kurt halts in his kisses pulls away and looks at Blaine before ducking down for a quick peck.

"Go on." He says once he's pulled completely away, straightening up and now sitting on Blaine's hips.

"We should do something." He says, suddenly shy. This seemed a lot easier in his head "It falls on a week day, so... But... huh. I was thinking I could throw Wes out, and kind of... prepare you a real date. Not like last time. A proper one, with actual food and stuff..."

Kurt smiles – no, beams "That sounds lovely, Blaine, I'd love to!"

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. But... Why throw Wes out? My room's available. Always." He tilts his head slightly and then blushes a little "Besides, you did it last time. Let me do it this time. I'd like to do something for you, too."

Blaine's a little lost now. He was gonna charm the pants off Kurt and make him forget he was mad in the first place and then gently guide him towards reason. Now he's gonna have his own pants charmed off, and he's gonna forget his plan and that's going to open a dangerous precedent in their relationship of Kurt winning their fights even when he's not entirely right – he knows it.

"Weren't you still mad at me? Aren't I supposed to be in the doghouse?" Blaine asks.

Kurt laughs "Honestly Blaine!" he says "If you think I'm still mad at you, you've never seen me truly mad." He leans down and pecks him quickly "I've been teasing you for like a week now, silly."

"You have?"

"The thing is..." Kurt starts with a sheepish smile and a light roll of his eyes "Kurt Hummel is always right... *especially* when he isn't."

"What...?" Blaine feels like he's walking into a trap because this sounds exactly like the beginning of his theory.

"I know I'm stubborn, and I'll never admit I'm wrong. But give me enough time and I'll see reason." Kurt's blushing slightly as he chuckles guiltily and scrunches up his nose adorably.

"Are you saying you were wrong?" Blaine asks skeptically; a smile forming, though.

"No..." Kurt laughs "I maintain I'm right in saying you were an ass and completely gave yourself away to the worst person imaginable and we're lucky that the rumors haven't started yet." He leans down and kisses Blaine's nose "*But!* I will give you that if I were you I *might* have done something similar."

"Thank you!" Blaine gasps "That's all I'm saying!"

Kurt chuckles "And I also maintain that the movie was most definitely not boring."

"Ha!" Blaine throws his head back in laughter and Kurt slaps gently at his chest.

"Blaine Anderson, I will withhold Valentine's Day from you!"

"The movie was totally not boring." Blaine says at once "It was truly captivating."

Kurt smiles smugly before letting himself rest atop Blaine again, and resuming to slow, deep kisses. At some point they shift, so they're laying side by side, and the fact that they're keeping their hips apart is very present in Blaine's mind. Something's changed, he thinks. They'd mastered this – they knew how not to get carried away and go on for hours without problems. And yet, as careful as they always are, Blaine's pants feel too tight.

Ok, so maybe he's not fooling anyone (or himself at least). He knows why this is, and it's very simple.

He wants more.

(and, judging by the way Kurt's being just as careful with his own hips, so does he)

xXxXx

They're lying, side by side, on Kurt's bed. A movie's playing but they stopped paying attention like ten minutes into it. The candles are still burning around them, casting a flickering golden light around the room, and filling it with a warm, cinnamon scent, all the dishes and bowls lay forgotten and empty on the floor, where they had a delicious dinner, sitting on the softest blanket and pillows Kurt could find, and the remaining ice cream has long melted, having been forgotten on Kurt's nightstand from when they were still actually watching the movie. Kurt's got his arms wrapped around Blaine's waist, holding him close and they're sharing long, languid kisses.

"I'm glad you're not mad at me anymore..." Blaine mumbles into the kiss.

"Mmm?"

"I couldn't live without this..." Blaine says as he moves his lips to Kurt's jaw.

"You've lived almost 18 years without it so far..." Kurt teases feeling a small shiver as Blaine runs his tongue along the edge of Kurt's jaw – and it feels dangerously close to his pulse point so dangerously so that he does feel a little heat in his groin, but it's manageable so far.

"Yeah... had a taste of it and now I'm stuck..." Blaine actually flat out kisses Kurt's neck, and it shoots a thrill of heat down his body.

Kurt sucks Blaine's bottom lip between his and nibs on it, just so he gets the point "That's so..." he whispers, pausing to ravish Blaine's lips for a moment "unfortunate for me." He grasps Blaine's waist a little tighter and kisses him hard again "Poor me."

He feels Blaine's smirk against his own lips and as Blaine pulls away and makes his way back towards Kurt's neck. Between kisses he mutters "Ever" kiss "so" kiss "sorry" open mouthed kiss, and dear god this is hot, Blaine's wet, warm, twisting tongue feels so good against his skin.

His pants are becoming tighter and tighter, by the second.

"Blaine..." Kurt whines, cursing his voice for coming out so obviously strangled "I'll... if you keep doing that.... I'm... I'm getting... you know *that*, Blaine."

Blaine stops and looks up at Kurt through ridiculously long lashes, and his eyes look so dark it's sinful "Kurt.... I don't... *I don't want to stop*. Please? I..." he sighs and lays his head on the pillow as close to Kurt's as he can "I want to make you feel good..." he says, his hand sliding from Kurt's shoulder to his waist in a purposeful movement.

Is Blaine implying what Kurt thinks he's implying. *Oh god, please let me be right...!* "I... huh... yeah... ok..."

"Ok?" Blaine asks, actually looking surprised.

Kurt nods once before he leans forward and captures Blaine's lips with his own. At once everything about their hold on each other become tighter, more committed, with a purpose. Kurt's arms around Blaine's waist tighten and he lets a hand slide downwards and only stops when his fingertips brush the edge of Blaine's jeans. Blaine's hand on Kurt's waist moves to his hip at one and grips it instead of holding, and his thumb is pressing circular movements on Kurt's hipbone, directly on his skin and leaving a blaze of heat behind.

And if Blaine has a green light to kiss Kurt's neck, then so does Kurt to pull Blaine's tongue into his mouth and suck on it, making Blaine moan and buck and Kurt can feel him now, half hard against his leg. Without letting himself think too much, or anything at all about it Kurt slips his thigh between Blaine's and presses it against Blaine's groin, and suddenly their kiss is sloppier because Blaine's having a hard time controlling his breathing – it comes out in short whimpering gasps every time Kurt moves his leg. Blaine's fully hard now; it's impossible to miss.

Kurt feels himself get unbelievably harder when, suddenly, Blaine's hand slides from his hip to his ass and he just grabs and squeezes for a moment, making Kurt shiver and moan, pressing his own erection to Blaine's hip for some heavenly friction. He's not sure anything's ever felt so good in his life, and that's saying something because, believe it or not, Kurt has gotten pretty good at masturbation over the years (well... year. Really...).

Blaine rips his lips away from Kurt's and moves them to his pulse point. His tongue is barely concealed under the disguise of sloppy kisses and licks and moves freely across Kurt's skin, leaving a blazingly hot trail of saliva behind.

"God!" Kurt gasps as Blaine hooks a leg tightly over Kurt's and shifts them pulling Kurt on top of him and – *jesusfuckingchristthisishotbeyondanyfantasykurthaseverhad* – opening his legs impossibly wide so that

Kurt's hips slip perfectly between them, pelvis smashing against pelvis, groin pressing against groin, before he hooks his feet on the back of Kurt's knees and just thrust his hips upwards. That's the moment Kurt realizes just how sexual this has become in barely a minute. I mean. Come on. He has Blaine under him, legs wide open and wrapped around him, groins pressed together, thrusting against one another. Kurt could cry at how perfect it feels, and the fact that he's suddenly having a flash forward to a day when they're doing exactly this, only without any clothes on, doesn't help in controlling the fire deep within his belly.

Blaine's hands – both of them, this time – come to grip at Kurt's ass again, and after just a moment they're even helping him find exactly the right movement for his hips as he moves against Blaine, and despite the layers of clothing he can still feel Blaine's cock, hard and thick rubbing against his. He could've jerked off as many times as he would've liked before, but nothing could've prepared him for the feeling of someone else's arousal right there, next to his and inexplicably because of *him*.

The thought makes him thrust harder and deeper and Blaine nearly cries out "Jesus! Kurt... I... God..."

Kurt swallows Blaine's increasingly loud moans with a deep, full of tongue, full of teeth kiss. One hand coming to rest on Blaine's chest and another slipping beneath his shirt to grasp at the hot, slightly sweaty skin of his waist. Blaine's tongue follows Kurt's back to his mouth and Kurt tightens his lips around it, biting softly before sucking harder than he's ever done before and Blaine's moaning and writhing beneath him, hands grabbing Kurt's ass like it's his lifeline, and hips thrusting manically against Kurt's. "So close!" he gasps once Kurt's released his mouth, and at once, without waiting for a response or reaction from Kurt, lunges towards his collarbone, placing sloppy wet kisses all over, and sucking while he flicks his tongue over abused skin and yeah, that's gonna leave a mark but fuck it, because the fire in Kurt's belly is roaring now and he can feel the explosion coming, any second now.

And when he thrusts his hips again in a particularly deep and strong movement and Blaine cries and arches off the bed, pushing himself completely against Kurt, his hands shaking against Kurt's flesh, he feels it, and he dives to bury his face on the crook of Blaine's neck, half kissing it, as he gasps shallowly, and thrusts his hips erratically, riding it out as he feels himself spilling in his pants.

They stay like that, panting tangled in each other.

"Holy shit..." He hears Blaine's voice, only slightly above his ear, but he can't bring himself to pull back from where the crook of Blaine's neck feels so warm, and perfect, and it smells like heaven and a whole new world.

"I know..." he says.

"I could... I could die a happy man right now."

"Don't you dare." Kurt warns, letting his weight rest fully on Blaine with a soft grunt and feeling as Blaine's legs relax and drop a little around his thighs and he could almost get hard again just as he thinks how this whole thing must've looked like, how he had a boy under him, legs wide open, inviting and wrapped around him, hip to hip, how he had hands on his ass, grabbing it like it was a lifeline, how they'd moaned and squirmed and panted through irrational words and how he made that boy come and that boy made him come, too "I need to do this again. I need to do this a lot of times."

"Oh..." Blaine says, and his chest shakes beneath Kurt's with quiet chuckles "When you put it that way..."

Kurt laughs a little to himself and he shifts his face just so he can press his lips lazily against Blaine's neck, feeling the pair of hands still on his ass squeeze softly in response before sliding upwards, to wrap themselves around Kurt's waist and hold tightly.

He kind of wants to tell Blaine how important this was. He wants to tell him he'll never forget this, not just because it was his first orgasm with someone else, but mostly because it was his first orgasm with Blaine. Between first date, first kiss, first boyfriend, first Valentine's Day with one and now first dry-humped (jesus, that sounds so dirty) orgasm, Kurt finds himself hoping that Blaine will be his first everything.

Instead he pulls up and stares at Blaine for a moment – his hazel eyes are shining bright and he's smiling that dazzling, perfect smile of his – and he ducks down for a quick, simple kiss before saying "For the first time in my life, I wish tomorrow wasn't Friday."

Blaine grins and his hand comes up to stroke a finger through Kurt's cheek "Me neither. But we have all the time in the world, Kurt. I'm not planning on going anywhere."

"Good." *Because I think I want it all with you.*

Chapter Thirteen

Source: [www. people. com](http://www.people.com)

The Fox and the Hound

Remember that Disney movie (link to Fox and the Hound IMdB page) that made everyone, from child to old man, sob into their pillows at night? 'But they were best friends!' we cried as the two cute little besties are forced to be enemies as they grow up. An inside source from Dalton Academy tells us that our dear Kurt Hummel and Blaine Anderson may be dangerously stepping into Fox and the Hound territory.

Reports let us know the two of them are as thick as thieves and rarely seen apart (and after the whole New Year's Eve debacle it isn't that hard to believe they have indeed become best friends in the last couple of months). Need we remind you of tweets like: *Not a ploy at all! Lol! KurtHummel Pleasure singing with you today, Mr. You were great! #NotEverythingIsACompetition* or more recently '*Criticizing someone for something that should be supported and celebrated, like friendship, shouldn't still be happening #TwentyFirstCentury*' followed closely with '*Blaine and I are real people and, more important than who our fathers are, there's the fact we have feelings and a right to our privacy.*' (the latter of which was soon retweeted by the Anderson boy).

The question, though, remains. Will their friendship survive the rapidly inflating campaigns from both their fathers as they run for office? Will the hound be forced to chase the fox, or will they keep their friendship intact?

I'm afraid I'm a sucker for happy endings, and if I have my way this will be an ending just as good as the Disney classic, if not better! Comment below and tell us what you think!

(a few selected comments)

Comments:

Funkyfifi:

Who's the fox and who's the hound? Kurt's pretty foxy and Blaine kinda looks like a puppy in some of those NYE photos!

DrizzleSnow:

I ship it! Lol! Fox and The Hound? More like Romeo and Juliet (Julio version)!

MrsNessa91:

*DrizzleSnow Someone needs to write it. *rushes over to tumblr!**

Notthetoothfairy:

It's ridiculous that anyone should even try to say who they can or can't be friends with. Jeez!

GreatPretending:

HOT

xXxXx

There's a knock at the door and it's opened so quickly that they barely manage to disentangle their legs before Thad's head peaks in. Kurt and Blaine are sitting on Blaine's bed, each has their own book open on their lap as they read silently. Wes is scribbling down some notes on his own bed.

"Blaine!" Thad calls "Oh, Kurt! You're here, too!" he gasps "Great!"

"Hi Thad." Kurt smiles, trying to keep the panic off his voice as he recoils his feet even further under the pretense of straightening up. They'd been reading with their legs completely tangled, as feet massaged calves or even thighs every once in a while. Kurt's legs felt a little cold as crossed them in front of himself.

"Hey!"

Blaine sits up straighter as well "What's up?"

"Oh, I need to ask you a favor. Both of you, actually." He starts shyly, squirming in his place and rubbing his hands uneasily "It's, huh, it's... it's kind of ok if you say no... but I'd really appreciated if you could help out. But I'll understand if you can't, and..."

"Thad, man, just spill it out!" Blaine chuckles.

"Well, it's, huh, for the journalism club..." he scratches the back of his neck "You know how we have a monthly interview for the website?"

"You want to interview us?" Blaine smiles, putting Thad out of his squirming misery.

"Well, yeah. I had someone else lined up, and alumni, but he had to cancel, and we need to tape it next week, like... on Monday, or something, so we can edit it and have it online like... on Wednesday. And please say you'll do it, because otherwise I'll just have to ask the Principal, and you know..."

Blaine and Wes both laugh, and Kurt cracks a smile. He might not know Thad as well as the other two, but he has a feeling about just how shy he actually is. "I'll do it." Kurt smiles warmly. It's not even like Kurt's going to pass up an opportunity to be interviewed by someone who isn't Jacob Ben Israel and is, therefore, not trying to shove a camera up his nose at all the most unfortunate angles.

"Really?" Thad gasps with relief.

Kurt nods "Cameras and I, we get along." Kurt winks.

Blaine chuckles before turning back to Thad "I'll do it too, just let us know time and day."

"Great!" the boy beams "Thank you! You just saved my life, guys! Thank you!" he turns to leave but jumps and turns back around "Oh! Is there anything you want me to stay clear of? I promise I won't ask about it if you need..."

"Huh..." Kurt considers saying something like 'the single ladies pictures', but it'll be a controlled environment and if the question's too much or he ends up saying something he regrets he can always ask Thad to edit it out. It's not like it's live. So he just shakes his head "No... Knock yourself out."

Blaine nods in agreement "Yeah, go ahead and ask whatever you want."

Thad nods gratefully before waving and saying a quick "Thanks so much guys, I'll text you with details later. Bye!" He closes the door behind him and Blaine turns to Kurt with a playful smirk "So you get along with cameras?"

"Yes, they love me!" Kurt says matter-of-factly.

Blaine moves to hover over Kurt, straddling Kurt's knees "Because you're just so gorgeous?" he teases, leaning in close, eyes flicking towards Kurt's lips, and, because he loves the way Blaine's eyes darken when he does it, Kurt licks them, slowly.

"Yes, and you'll need to keep your eyes off my lips, by the way." He smirks as he lets his hands drop his book to wrap around Blaine's hips, pulling him closer and settling them on his ass.

"And you'll need to keep those off my ass..." Blaine quirks an eyebrow.

"Well, aren't we screwed."

"Not yet, we're not." Blaine drawls, voice husky and gaze hot as he leans down with a sultry smile and presses their lips together. At once Kurt's grip on his ass tightens and he pulls him clo-

"Guys. Really?" Wes drawls from his bed, and Kurt looks up, face suddenly burning, in time to see him look up from his notes with a scowl "At least let me go get my popcorn." He sighs.

Blaine closes his eyes and takes a deep breath before turning towards Wes with his most charming and apologetic smile "Ever so sorry." He climbs, awkwardly, off Kurt and returns to his previous position.

Kurt leans closer and whispers "You know, we could go to my room...?"

Blaine smirks at once "As soon as I finish this." He gestures towards his algebra homework.

Kurt curses Blaine for his spotless sense of responsibility as he returns to his own book. They're back to silent work – now only Kurt and Blaine's feet interlaced for a quicker escape in case of emergency – with relative ease. The three of them work well together – neither is overly distracted or distracting, but they're also not so uptight that if one of them needs a moment to chill or crack a joke he's immediately scolded.

Sometimes David joins them, but David leans a little too far into the easily distracted category, and therefore is kept at bay unless they either need his help (he's abnormally good with Math and company) or he needs theirs (Blaine covers History and Sociology, Kurt has English Lit and French, and Wes has Biology and Geology and affairs as such). So mostly he just joins them for dinner, and the four of them always hang out over dinner at Blaine and Wes' room, and sometimes watch a movie, or an episode of whatever TV show they can consensually agree on.

Kurt's just read the same sentence four times – because Blaine is rubbing his foot up and down his calf, and Kurt's about to scold him for it – when his phone rings. Happily noticing that it's Rachel he jumps off the bed and goes outside to take the call.

"Heya!" he smiles.

"Hi there, stranger!" she says, voice chirpy.

"How's everything in Medieval land?"

"Oh, ha ha." She answers and he can see her eye roll "All is fine. You know Coach Sylvester has officially stopped trying to destroy the glee club... and sometimes she even helps Mr. Schue out."

"These are the end times." He sighs and she chuckles.

"Quite possibly." She agrees "But that's not why I called."

"Then pray, do tell!"

"As much as I adore receiving your daily fashion advice and all, I'm afraid you haven't said anything about coming over...?"

"Oh!" his brain goes into overdrive trying to come up with a million excuses "You know, Rachel, I can't just leave everything behind and go to Ohio!"

"It's just one weekend, Kurt." She rolls her eyes.

"Still."

"I bet you haven't even asked Blaine about it." She accuses.

"Well."

"Ok. I'm gonna make a suggestion – how abou-"

"We can't this weekend, and you should know." Kurt interrupts, already guessing "It's the first big debate and I'm not gonna go to Ohio to watch it. I've already made plans with Blaine to watch it at my place."

"I know!" she sighs exasperated "Can you let me finish? Well, *next* weekend, there's a carnival over in Westerville, and I'm sure it'll be lovely, and the weather's getting better each day, I'm sure we could have a marvelous time on Saturday. Finn's already agreed to come, too. We could double date."

"Yes, the paparazzi will love it."

"Kurt, please!" she sighs, half annoyed "Like they'll expect you two to show up at a carnival in the middle of *Ohio*!"

"Rach... Huh, I... I'll ask." He sighs "I promise I'll ask. I'll tell you... Monday...? At the latest."

"Ok." She concedes "But you have to come!" she says "Blaine's optional, even if I really want to meet him, but it's ok if he can't come. Now... *you* have to come! I'm serious, I miss you like crazy, Kurt. And I need to hug you, and show you the new Wicked recording my dad got me – it's a-ma-zing!"

"Oh, just for that, I promise I'll go."

"Thank you! You know no one here can appreciate it like us two." She sighs.

"I know." He shakes his head "So, I'll call you when I know. I'll try, I promise."

"It'll be so much fun!" she squeals and he pulls the phone away with a laugh.

"Ok, Barbra, I'll go now and preserve my ears."

"Ok, Patty, call me soon! I love you!"

"Love you, too." He smiles and hangs up. As he enters the room again, Blaine looks up with a smile of mild curiosity "Rachel." Kurt explains holding his cell for illustration.

Blaine nods "News from Ohio?"

"Among other things." Kurt shrugs as he sits back down and pulls Blaine's legs to his lap "I miss her."

Blaine smiles sympathetically "She is you best friend." He justifies.

"Somehow!" Kurt gasps theatrically "She's absolutely insane."

"I'd like to meet her and see for myself, one day."

Kurt bites his lips and eyes him carefully. On the one hand, going around in a double date is probably the worst idea they could ever have. But then again, it's the middle of Ohio. No one would be looking for them. And it's a chance to spend a day with three of the best people in the world. And it's his first chance at an actual date. A chance to get to share some cotton candy, ride the Ferris wheel together, maybe win some stuffed animal for Blaine (if there is some kind of miracle and he manages to shoot at the cans properly, that is).

What's the harm in asking, really?

"How about next weekend?" he offers shyly.

"What?"

"You said you'd like to meet Rachel. I'm asking if you're free next weekend?"

"Oh. Is she coming over?"

"No... I'm... huh, I promised her I'd go down to Ohio next weekend. I'd like to hang out with everyone anyway, and Finn's coming too. Maybe you could tag along...? She said there'll be a carnival in Westerville that weekend... we could... huh... we could double date."

Blaine stares at him confused for a moment before stuttering out "Like... in public?"

"Bad idea." Wes coughs from his place and Kurt spares him a pained glance.

"I know... it's stupid. Forget I mentioned it." He sighs "It's just... it's not like anyone will be looking out for us in the middle of Ohio, and I thought we could have a little bit of... *normal*. But it's stupid, it's silly... forget it."

"It's not stupid." Blaine rolls his eyes and smiles a little, scrunching up his nose adorably "A little crazy perhaps, but not stupid." Kurt just stares at him, daring him to come up with an explanation as to how it isn't stupid "I guess if we were careful and didn't... maybe... well, what are the chances of them finding us in Ohio, right?"

Kurt frowns but it's Wes who asks "Wait, you're actually considering it?"

"Well, why not?"

"Do you really need me to answer that question?" Wes cocks an eyebrow and stares sternly at his best friend. Kurt's torn between being reasonable like Wes, and admiring Blaine's hopeful eyes.

"No, Wes, think about it. They expect us to be here, not in Ohio. And if anyone recognizes us, we'll just be friends out on the town... We won't... like... hold hands or anything." He rolls his eyes, but Kurt thinks he can hear a hint of disappointment and he smiles sadly to himself because he feels it too.

"Yes, but why go all the way to Ohio just to hang out? People aren't stupid, Blaine! They know how to connect the dots, and your friendship alone is already raising enough eyebrows."

"Why are you being so difficult?!"

"Why are you being so reckless?!" Wes counters "I love you, man, but you're not thinking, right now. Are you even considering your parents? What're you gonna tell them, huh?"

"That... huh... I'm spending the weekend at your place."

Wes rolls his eyes and laughs "Like that's so much better, they hate me." He sighs all impatience and annoyed resignation "Look, fine, go. But please, guys, be careful. This isn't a game."

"Maybe he's right, Blaine..." Kurt mutters, suddenly feeling so stupid, his face burning with embarrassment.

"No, he's not." Blaine says with conviction "You're right Wes, this isn't a game. This is life. *My* life. Our life... I... there are limits to what I won't do." He sighs "And getting one weekend to meet my boyfriend's best friend and having one lousy date at a carnival isn't asking for much, Wes. I really don't think it is."

Wes looks at Blaine with too much concern and affection for a teenaged best friend and Kurt almost feels like he's intruding on a private moment between two grown brothers. He averts his eyes and only listens as Wes sighs and shrugs.

"I appreciate the concern, Wes, I do." Blaine says in a tired tone "And I know what you're trying to say, and you're right. But I'm right, too."

xXxXx

Blaine watches his father chew his food. He studies him carefully, waits for a good opportunity.

"How are you feeling about tomorrow's debate?" Blaine asks, finally as his father lowers the wine glass and dabs at his lips.

"Good." He shrugs "I would've still preferred to have flown in today, but I'm sure it'll be fine."

"Yes, I don't think an hour long flight will give you jet lag." Blaine smiles briefly. He can feel everyone else's curious eyes on him. This is the first time he's initiated conversation with any of them in weeks.

"Yeah, and I can always use the time to make sure I got everything down." He nods "Be sure to watch your old man, heh?"

"Yeah, I've already made some plans with a couple of friends." Blaine beams. This is his cue. He couldn't have asked for a better one "Oh, by the way, speaking of plans with friends, Wesley's invited me to go with him next weekend. He's gonna visit his cousin John, in Columbus. I was hoping I could tag along...? Haven't seen John in ages."

His father frowns at once, and every stare in the room turns from curious to annoyed. He lets it slide off his back like water in the shower. "I don't know, Blaine. We have an important dinner on Saturday, and I was counting on you being there, and you know-"

"Dad, don't answer right away. Think about it, let me know on Monday." He says quietly, stopping his father before he could actually say no – and Blaine knows he was going to say no. Blaine's well aware he's never been this cold and calculating, and he doesn't exactly like this version of himself, but he hasn't forgotten the promise he's made to himself, of being his own person and setting his own limits.

So, the very next day as he's sitting on Kurt's couch, next to him, bowl of popcorn in his lap, Finn, Puck – a friend of Finn's that came up to see him for the weekend –, Wes, David and Thad still running around the house collecting snacks while the debate doesn't start, he holds his phone in front of them, camera turned towards them, leans his shoulder against Kurt's and says "say cheese!"

"What?" Kurt asks before hastily smiling and Blaine snaps the picture "What's that for?" he asks.

"Mmm..." Blaine sighs as he types away "Just to... wait..." he mutters distracted, trying to type and speak at the same time "You'll... huh... you'll see."

Kurt shifts slightly in his seat to stare at Blaine, but he ignores him until he's finished with his terrific work. Almost at once Kurt's phone rings, and Kurt side eyes him, suspicious, as he picks it up.

Open unlocking it he reads "new tweet... from – *Blaine!*" he gasps.

Blaine beams as he looks at his tweet on Kurt's phone: 'Ready to watch the debate with the best company! (link to picture of the two of them – luckily Finn and Puck are standing in the background, distractedly talking so it doesn't look like they're *completely* alone) #Presidentials #1stDebate'

"Are you insane?"

"No." Blaine shakes his head calmly but before he can explain Wes' voice rings loudly.

"BLAINE!"

Blaine takes a deep breath as he hears Wes' fuming figure approaching.

"What's wrong, dude?" Finn asks from the kitchen doorway.

"Nothing..." Wes shoots before he moves to stand in front of Blaine and trying to keep his voice as calm as possible "Tell me, on a scale of one to ten, how crazy are you exactly? Do you have any idea what you're doing you, idiot?! You're....! Gahhh! You're like a child!"

"Wes, relax... I'm just... casually reminding my father that he doesn't really have a say in what I do or don't do, anymore."

"Casu- BLAINE, you're playing with fire and you're gonna get burned!" he hisses.

"Blaine, I'm with Wes on this one." Kurt says, though his tone is completely calm now and he even lands a careful hand on Blaine's knee.

He doesn't get it, Wes spends years telling him he should stand up to his father, and now that he does he's getting nothing but grief for it? "Wes, come on." He pleads "Put yourself in my shoes. I asked him about next weekend, told him I was going with you to Columbus to see John. He was already saying no. He didn't even *think* about it."

"And so you take a picture with Kurt and practically out your relationship?"

"I didn't out anything!" Blaine rolls his eyes "Everyone knows we're friends already, what's the deal in pretending we're not?" he shrugs "Honestly, it's just a picture of a couple of friends. We're on a couch, there are other people around, we're dressed and we're barely touching. I'm pretty sure no one would jump to the conclusion we're dating. And you don't know what it's like living in that house. You have no idea, Wes, no fucking idea. If I had to go there for any more time than the weekends I'd go mental, Wes. I need to have some control over it, can you let me do that?!"

"Blaine..."

"Wes, please... I'm just so tired of them... of him. I can't do this anymore if I don't ever get a say in it."

"It's just..."

"I *know* you know what it's like. I'm sorry I said you didn't. I know you do. But your dad is not running for President, so you don't know what *that's* like. So please, can you trust me that I'm doing what I need to do

to survive that house?" he sighs, trying to blink back the tears in his eyes, mostly because he's well aware of the voices in the kitchen "You think I like blackmailing my dad? You think I like telling him I could ruin his whole career with one single post on a blog? And you think I like these... these *games* I'm playing? I hate it. I hate every minute of it. But I'd rather do this and hate it, than sit back and choke on whatever bullshit he's willing to give me. It's suffocating and I won't go back to it."

"I... huh..." Wes takes a deep breath and exhales loudly through his nose before shaking his head "Ok... ok... Never mind... I'll... I'm here for you. I'm on your side, man."

"Thank you." He sighs and smiles with relief and peace. But as he reaches for Kurt's hand, which is still resting on his knee, to squeeze it and hold it for as long as the guys keep busy in the kitchen, Kurt pulls it away – too quickly to be a coincidence or unnoticed – and calls out a slightly frantic "Come on guys! It's almost starting and you'll miss the start and then I know you'll be confused!"

Blaine frowns at him, thoughts suddenly jumbled together in a mess, but Kurt's eyes never meet his and his cheeks are a bright shade of red so Blaine knows he's aware of what he's doing. As a small sense of panic rises within him he exchanges a glance with Wes and no, it's definitely not his imagination because Wes is frowning too and he mouths "What?" to which Blaine can only shrug and shake his head as Finn, Puck and David come striding in, talking loudly about winning football games with Beyoncé, and Thad's munching quietly behind them on the still warm bowl of popcorn he's holding close to his chest.

Blaine's too distracted for the most part of the debate. It's clear that between the republicans his father's holding his own disturbingly well, and Kurt's dad's the equivalent to the democrats. That's pretty much all that Blaine can discern from it – and he's already clearing his schedule tomorrow to re-watch the whole thing and actually pay attention – because all he can actually focus on right now is the fact that Kurt hasn't spoken or even looked at him through the whole thing, and from the way his eyes are entirely unfocused he's pretty sure Kurt's not watching the debate at all either.

Puck and Finn have grown completely impatient and lost all interest on the debate and are instead just making fun of everyone that the camera's pointing at. They say that Blaine's father must've had a cactus for lunch and the thing must be coming out of his ass right now, and Blaine would've laughed and thought it was funny if he wasn't so completely and cluelessly preoccupied.

He barely registers the closing statements and the journalists wrapping it up before Finn and Puck are slapping his shoulder and saying "Later, dude!" and "No offense, but your old man sucks...", respectively, and grabbing their coats before heading out the door.

Blaine snaps out of his almost trance to wave them off – he didn't even realize they'd made plans to go out for dinner, but apparently they had somewhere along the first half of the debate – and just in time to send Wes a pleading look for privacy. He didn't even need to, though. Wes was already shoving jackets over at Thad and David.

"Come on guys, I need to run some ideas for Regional's with you, before Monday. Might as well do it now."

"But it's just rude to leave all this stuff here for Kurt to clean..." Thad says meekly.

"I'll help, don't worry." Blaine smiles, trying his best to look unaffected.

"You sure?"

"Yeah, we'll put on some music and maybe even practice a little bit. Who knows, maybe we'll strike gold for Regionals."

"Yeah, man!" David beams "You two better start thinking about it. We start auditioning songs for regionals this week. Well, see you on Monday, guys."

"See you."

"I'll walk you out." Kurt finally intervenes and he sounds like he just woke up. Blaine watches him stand and walk with the three of them, hug them briefly before he closes the door and turns back around, his eyes on the floor and arms around himself.

"Kurt...?" Blaine tries "Are you mad at me? What... What did I even do?"

Kurt's silent for a while – to such an extent that Blaine considers stepping closer and asking it all again, but just as he's about to do, Kurt finally lifts his eyes to Blaine. "Am I just a piece of a game to you, Blaine? Is that all that I am? A tool so you can mess around with your dad's head? Just something to annoy him with?"

The whole thing comes as such a shock to Blaine and it makes so little sense that all he manages is a stuttered "W-what?!"

"You wanna make your dad mad so you take a picture with me...?! You wanna rile him up so you say we're friends? You wanna put him in his place so you tweet about me?!..."

"Kurt – what? That's not – That's completely – That's – What?!"

"I need to have some control of it. That's what you said. That's... What the fuck am I in all of this? Leverage against your dad?!"

"Kurt, that's insane!" Blaine blanches.

"I am not a tool you can use against your dad! I am not a means to a statement! I am not a fucking toy in the middle your little war with your dad!"

"I never said you were!"

"I-"

"Hear me out, Kurt!" he hurries, not even caring that he's interrupted Kurt, and he's pretty certain that's a capital offense, but he's afraid Kurt's going to say something really stupid and then Blaine will be mad and then he'll say something even more stupid and Kurt will get madder and then everything will fall to shit over miscommunication "I never said that. You're taking it out of context and you're twisting it and I'm not even sure why or how you even got to thinking that, but it's absurd!"

"You-"

"Hear me out." He repeats and Kurt crosses his arms and lets him talk, which in itself is neither a good nor a bad sign "My dad doesn't even know about us. You know that." He tries to get his voice back to normal, back to smooth and affectionate, he needs it to come out soothing rather than accusatory or defensive "I don't want him to, because I don't want to taint what we have with their reactions and their bigotry."

"But-"

"Still speaking." He warns, though careful to keep his voice just as calm "I don't know why you suddenly thought that I was saying that or using you like that, but it's not true."

"You said you needed your dad to know you had the upper hand. And you used me to show him that. How is that supposed to make me feel? It feels like you're with me *just* to challenge him."

"That's ridiculous." He says with what he hopes is a fond tone "I'm challenging him *because* I'm with you, Kurt. Because you showed me it was worth it to live my own life. If it weren't for you I'd never been that brave in the first place, Kurt."

"That's... not true."

Blaine laughs and everything suddenly clicks into place and he gets it now, so he can smile and laugh and Kurt's looking at him like he's crazy "Kurt..." he sighs, holding back every single endearment that's just begging to roll off his tongue, stepping close and taking Kurt's hands – he doesn't move away, so it's a good sign "I need you to promise me one thing."

Kurt eyes him warily, Blaine lets him search his own eyes for any hint of lies or omissions. "What...?"

"Promise me you'll stop trying to sabotage yourself...? I like you. *So much*. You need to get that into your head, Kurt, or you're just gonna keep trying to find reasons for me to not like you, or us, and they'll be ridiculous and completely not true, but they'll get the better of us if they're always there."

"That's... That's.... ridiculous."

Blaine scrunches up his nose and smiles "Is it?"

Kurt purses his lips and nods tersely.

"Life's not always gonna suck for you, Kurt. I know it has before. But at least where I'm concerned, it won't. And you need to realize that, and to realize that you can be happy too, Kurt, and you deserve it. Stop thinking I'm going somewhere. Stop thinking I'm going to realize I don't really like you, and, seriously, don't ever even think I don't right now. That's not true. I do, I like you a whole lot." Blaine laughs and shakes his head "Come on, Kurt, say it with me. Blaine, you're right."

"Stop it..." Kurt whines "I'm serious!"

"So am I!" Blaine moves even closer and squeezes Kurt's hands "Between our parents and the whole world, things are hard enough without you joining the party, don't you think?" he asks sweetly "I did it for myself, I stood up to my dad for myself, but it was you who inspired me for it. It was because I liked the person I saw myself as next to you, it was because I wanted to deserve someone as open and brave as you, and it was because I deserved to be that person too." He pauses to disentangle one hand from Kurt's and brushes reverent and careful fingers through his hair "I was in awe of you from the very beginning, Kurt, and I still am. And I need you to believe that, ok? You'll never be just a... tool against my dad! That's unthinkable."

"It is?" Kurt finally cracks a hopeful, though insecure smile.

"Of course it is." He smiles back "Kurt, come on, every day that goes by I'm falling harder and harder for you." Blaine rests their foreheads together as Kurt's small smile starts growing "I'm falling in love with you, Kurt Hummel, and there's nothing you can do to stop it."

Kurt beams and reaches for Blaine's neck as he mutters "Will you let me know when you're done falling...?"

Blaine huffs out a soft chuckle "I promise." He nods, foreheads still pressed together "You'll be the first to know."

Kurt buries his musical laughter in a kiss as his hand pulls Blaine to him. Blaine welcomes the gesture, parting his lips, letting Kurt in as his hand cards through thick chestnut hair. They pull each other close, arms wrapping and holding, knees bumping and feet stepping clumsily over more feet. The giggle into their kisses as they move. Kurt pushes Blaine so he's moving backwards, and he can't exactly see where he's going, as his arms and shoulders and hips collide against walls and furniture and door handles. Once he hisses in pain and Kurt buries it with kisses of "I'msorryimsorryimsorry" and Blaine just keeps walking – his back to their destination.

Kurt reaches behind Blaine awkwardly to push his bedroom door open and they shuffle inside Kurt finally flipping them and pulling Blaine by his collar. They fall onto the bed quite ungracefully but neither one cares. Their mouths continue to work together in perfect harmony – no. Not harmony. There's teeth and tongue and spit now. It's become messy, between pants and gasps and moans. Blaine has a hard time not crying out as Kurt's hands suddenly come to grab his ass and pull his hips flush against his own.

As one hand keeps a firm hold of Blaine's ass the other slips under his shirt, and Kurt's palm and fingers are pressing over his back, over his waist, against his stomach, against his chest, and Blaine's skin has trail of fire burning fiercely. There's a fleeting thought of 'this is ridiculous' and 'what's the big difference anyway', but he's definitely moving on instinct as he pulls away and sits up to tug his shirt over his head and throw it carelessly away.

The cool air hits his heated flesh like a gush of reality and suddenly his head catches up with him and he realizes what he just did as he sits shirtless, straddling Kurt's hips, cock straining impossibly against his jeans. He's about to apologize when Kurt's hand returns to his skin. It touches his chest, lightly at first, like a feather, grazing against the almost scarce layer of hair there. Blaine's torn between looking at Kurt's hand right there against his bare skin, fingers splaying trying to take in as much as they can, and looking at his face, flushed and amazed and wow Kurt's eyes are dark and completely out of this world... Blaine's trying to get his words back, maybe ask if Kurt can take his own shirt off, when the hand on his chest presses harder and moves, sliding towards his neck and pulling him down, so their lips crash together.

Blaine dissolves into it and instead of asking just starts fumbling with the buttons of Kurt's shirt, undoing them clumsily, and he's even more amazed when Kurt's hands leave his body only to join the efforts and together they practically rip apart the shirt and Blaine's scrambling, pulling him – them – up so they can pull it off his arms and shoulders, and when it's finally on the floor – maybe next to Blaine's, who knows? Certainly not them – his hands fly towards Kurt's back and, fingers spread apart, so he can touch as much as possible all at once, he pulls Kurt flush against him.

Hell. If this is what it feels like to have someone half-naked pressed against you, then Blaine can't begin to imagine how anyone ever manages not to come the second they're fully naked against each other.

Kurt's smooth lean torso presses against his and as they lower themselves back to the bed, and they can feel each other's ragged breaths, their chest heaving, practically glued to each other. Their nipples brush and it sends a spark of electricity through his body that makes Blaine's hips buck. Blaine's doing his best not to be reduced to "ohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygod ". But it proves even harder when Kurt's fingers slip under Blaine's jeans' waistband, and they're one thin cotton layer apart from Blaine's ass – granted it's just the fingertips, and it's not actual contact, but it's pretty damn hot, and considering the recent developments it's more than Blaine ever expected and it fee-

"I want to touch you..."

Blaine stops altogether because he's pretty sure his brain has just short-circuited and his hearing things. "What?" he gasps, voice several octaves above normal, pulling back to make sure he's not misunderstanding anything.

Kurt's the definition of disheveled. His hair is completely ruined, shooting up in all directions (and Blaine barely even remembers doing that!). His cheeks are flushed, either from heat or embarrassment it's hard to tell. His lips are blood red and swollen, and they're still wet and shiny so they look about as delicious as they are.

Blaine's never seen anything so hot in his life.

"I want to t-touch you." Kurt repeats, breathy and hesitant but holding Blaine's gaze with an intensity that burns.

"I... huh... we...I... you... huh..." Blaine swallows because word vomit is so not sexy. And he needs sexy. "Ok." Or that. That can work too.

Kurt's eyes shift nervously between Blaine's lips, eyes, lips, eyes and then crotch barely visible between them, and then eyes again before he surges and takes Blaine's lips in his. In the midst of the kiss and the way that soft lips and gentle, careful teeth wrap around his tongue and another presses against it, tastes it, and there's suction pulling it deeper and deeper into warmth and wetness, Blaine almost forgets the whole purpose of the kiss. But he soon remembers as Kurt's fingers trail from his back to the front of his jeans. Kurt's nervous – Blaine can tell. His fingers fumble with the button and it takes a few tries before it finally pops open. Blaine pulls away from the kiss, lands another quick one on the corner of Kurt's mouth before he sits up. If they're gonna do it, it's probably best to keep weird adventurous methods of undressing out of the equation.

He sits up, back to straddling Kurt and unzips it, but Kurt puts a hand on his and stops him. Slowly he sits as well and gently pushes Blaine, maneuvering him and whispering "Lie down...".

Blaine smiles nervously as he finds himself lying down on his back, Kurt kneeling next to him. It's kind of awkward having him there, undressing him, and he almost wants to ask if they can at least turn off the lights because... well, he's going to be naked in less than a minute and he's never done that. It's pretty terrifying, but so amazing all together. It's like the best rollercoaster ride anyone could come up with.

He watches with wide eyes as Kurt's shaking hands take to edge of his jeans and start tugging them down, and Blaine tries to help, pulling his legs to himself. There's the (even more) awkward moment when the jeans get stuck because they forgot to take their shoes off and Blaine goes to toe them off at the same time as Kurt reaches to unlace them and he almost kicks his hand. They giggle because it's that ridiculous, and Blaine just shakes his head and mumbles "I'm not gonna make you take my shoes off" before he half sits up and yanks them off, practically throws them away, and then, as an afterthought, takes his socks off too, and they laugh again.

Kurt bites his lip, still smiling before settling back next to Blaine, shifting and throwing a leg over Blaine's. His hands come to reverently run up the naked thighs and it's so soft and so careful.

"It tickles..." Blaine says with a smile, breath hitching.

"Sorry!" Kurt takes his hands off at once, but Blaine holds them and guides them back to where they were.

"No, no, no. It's ok. Good tickle." He smiles and then his words register and he grimaces "Oh god, that sounded ridiculous. Good tickle...? Who says that?!"

Kurt throws his head back with a laugh and squeezes Blaine's thighs affectionately "You're adorable."

In that moment Blaine forgets he's lying there practically naked (because, well, his briefs, even if they are black, don't leave much the imagination at this point, tented as they are) and his heart just bursts with warmth and his face splits into a shit eating grin and he both launches himself and reaches for Kurt, joining them in an eager kiss, and Kurt startles at first, nearly topples them over, but he finds his footing, laughing into the kiss, as he shifts, moves his hips higher up Blaine's legs, to sit hip to hip and like that the laughter eases off until Blaine's leaving a trail of open mouthed kisses down Kurt's throat and Kurt's gasping and moving so he *lays* on top of Blaine, and as Blaine shifts a leg between Kurt's – pressing it against his groin and regretting the thick layer of denim still between them –, there are fingers hooking around his brief's elastic waistband. He barely thinks before his hands leave Kurt's hair and arm to hold his wrists.

"Wait... I... huh... you two." He bites his lip as he finds Kurt's belt buckle and let's his hand stay there, heavy and meaningful "Please...?"

"Oh! Huh... right." Kurt gasps and scratches the back of his neck and mutters "Only fair... right...?" he takes a deep breath and his hands move over Blaine's.

"Wait!" Blaine says at once "Only if you want!"

Kurt lets out the breath he was holding and smiles "I do... Don't worry."

They both unfasten his belt eagerly – maybe even a little overeagerly, and maybe that's more on Blaine's side of things.

The pants are open and Blaine can't believe he's actually allowed to see the tight indigo blue briefs underneath. But what's even more flabbergasting is the fact that he'll get to see what's underneath *that*. He's already catching a glimpse of the outline of Kurt's cock straining against the fabric. He swallows loudly before holding his breath and reaching to tug them down.

"Wait, wait!" Kurt halts him "My boots!" he informs Blaine, moving at a strange angle to illustrate his point and Blaine presses his lips together trying to suppress his laughter as Kurt dismounts and sits himself on the edge of the bed. "Damned boots..." he mutters under his breath as he struggles to pull them off.

"Let me help" Blaine smiles and Kurt tries a few more pulls before, defeated, sighing and, turning around, offering his foot to Blaine.

"So sexy..." Kurt mutters bitterly and Blaine laughs as he takes a firm grasp of the leather.

"Stop it, you *are*!" he warns, beaming, before starting to pull. It's a few tugs before it does come off, and the process is the same for the other boot, and Kurt even falls backwards from the tug and lays there, on his back, covering his face with his hands.

"Oh my god..." he groans "I can't believe this just happened."

Blaine laughs and crawls to hover over Kurt, ducks his head to pepper the backs of his hands with little butterfly kisses, hands coming to tickle slightly at Kurt's sides. Underneath him Kurt squirms and giggles.

"Stop it!" face still hidden.

"Only if you say you're perfect." Blaine commands, intensifying his tickles.

"You're perfect!" Kurt cries out with a laugh, voice muffled behind his hands.

"Cheater!" He accuses but relents as Kurt finally moves his hands away and let's Blaine's kisses fall on his nose and eyes and mouth.

"Am not." He mumbles against Blaine's lips "I speak the truth." His arms wrap around Blaine's torso and pull him flush against him as he arches his back. Blaine moans deep as their cocks connect and there's so little fabric between them it's almost like the real deal. Except it's not, he knows it's not, but it feels like it is, because it's just *that* good. He moves his hands down and starts tugging Kurt's pants down. They can't help laughing as between their hands and arms and legs and feet Kurt's jeans are awkwardly pushed down and pulled off.

He's sitting with his back against the head of the bed, Kurt's jeans in his hand, by Kurt's feet and he's lying there looking expectantly at Blaine. But even throwing the jeans away is too much for Blaine. Because these are Kurt's long, toned legs spreading in front of him, and that's his cock straining against the blue briefs, and Blaine can clearly see it's outline, can almost tell its shape – it looks thinner than Blaine's, but longer, and Blaine knows it'll be just as elegant as everything else in Kurt. That's Kurt's stomach, flat and almost toned, rising and falling with his chest, a chest that is definitely toned and the smoothest expanse of skin Blaine's ever seen or touched. And those are Kurt's adorably nervous eyes, so beautifully vulnerable as they lock with Blaine and he huffs out a nervous chuckle "How did you do this?" he breathes out "How did you just lie there and let me look at you like this... this is terrifying!"

Blaine smiles and discards the jeans before he runs his hands smoothly over Kurt's legs as he moves in closer "You've nothing to be afraid of, Kurt. You're perfect." Kurt ducks his head, eyes fleeing from Blaine's gaze, but Blaine holds his chin, turns his face back around and places a gentle kiss on him "Trust me. You are."

"Ok..." he nods, maybe more to himself than Blaine "I... I trust you."

Blaine beams and kisses him again as he guides Kurt's hands to his own hips, hooking their fingers under the fabric "You can take them off, if you want. I trust you, too." He says and Kurt deepens the kiss before he does just that and Blaine's shivers as his cock springs free, fabric releasing its hold.

"Oh my god..." Kurt breathed out as they break the kiss and Blaine's underwear is halfway down his thighs and Kurt's just staring at him. Blaine swallows down his insecurities and pushes his briefs all the way off

before kneeling back between Kurt's legs and smiling hopefully, resting his hands on Kurt's hips "Can I...? yours too...?"

Kurt just swallows and nods, his eyes finally leaving Blaine's cock. Blaine squeezes his hips affectionately, ducking for a quick kiss on Kurt's stomach before hooking his fingers over the elastic and pulling the briefs down. The moment Kurt's cock is uncovered and springs to rest against his stomach, looking just like Blaine imagined, long and perfect and flushed pink and god, it's leaking already, he gasps.

He forces his eyes away, because as much as he'd love to just stare the last thing he wants is to make Kurt uncomfortable. Their eyes meet and lock and Kurt scrambles up, to sit and meet Blaine for long, deep kiss. Blaine loses himself in it, because just an hour ago the last thing he imagined he'd be doing now was kissing Kurt, naked, legs wrapping around him, closing the distance between them.

He's so lost in it, it completely takes him by surprise when Kurt breaks the kiss, drops his forehead to rest against the crook of his neck, just as his hand tentatively reaches for Blaine's cock. "You're perfect, too, by the way... in every single way." Kurt mutters as his hand trails up Blaine's inner thigh. It's barely more than fingertips, grazing softly along his length but Blaine's breath is already a mess, because he's pretty sure Kurt's worshipping his body, and nobody ever told him that was possible. To have someone touch him like that, like he's some kind of priceless art piece, and he deserves adoration and revering. And as hesitant, nervous and self-conscious as the whole thing is, it's still the best thing Blaine's ever experienced.

"Does it... is this good? Is this ok...?" Kurt whispers, shifting his head just slightly to nuzzle Blaine's skin and kiss his collarbone.

"I..." he breathes, but he has no words left in him, only emotions and sensations, and he barely even notices that his eyes are starting to burn with cathartic tears "God yes." He manages, burying his nose in Kurt's hair, a hand coming to grasp it, fingers carding through thick, smooth richness.

Kurt's fingertips are slowly turning into whole fingers and then there's a whole hand wrapping around Blaine's cock, and it's moving up and then back down and he moans at the back of his throat and bites his lip to keep from crying. Kurt keeps up a few more experimental tugs before he pulls away and brings his hand up to his mouth and gives a long lick and Blaine gasps and gapes at him and then Kurt's turning red and sputtering and grimacing.

"Oh my god!" he gasps "That looked like something out of a bad porno!"

Blaine laughs and the movements make his tears roll down his cheeks in a free fall, he wipes them quickly before surging forward and grabbing his face to capture Kurt in an open mouth kiss, drowning and silencing his panic with his lips. Kurt relents and relaxes back into the kiss and Blaine gasps as he feels his hand back around his cock, now slicker and tighter and moving in long, drawn out strokes, the grasp tighter. He doesn't break the kiss as one of his hand leaves Kurt's neck to travel down to his own cock. Kurt moans right into Blaine's mouth as his fingers and palm warp around his length.

Their kiss turns into a mess of teeth and lips and hot breaths as they're just panting into each other's mouths, their hands pumping each other, pace increasing with each movement. Blaine needs to bury his face in the crook of Kurt's neck, and he catches himself practically biting into his shoulder because there's a scream building up inside of him. The fire in the pit of his stomach is burning and burning and coming to a roaring climax, and when Kurt twists his hand and runs his thumb over the head of Blaine's cock, slipping it between the slit, Blaine does cry, his voice high and breathy and choked and every color bursts before his eyes before it all gathers into a mass of white dots of heat and he feels himself coming over Kurt's fist, as it tightens around Blaine's cock and that's the only warning he gets before Kurt throws his head back with a keening gasp as there's warm come spreading over Blaine's hand, he keeps pumping, as Kurt does, while they both ride out their orgasms, until oversensitivity kicks in and they both pull away.

Blaine's head's still resting against Kurt's shoulder as he pants and tries to regain some sort of brain function.

"Were... were you crying?" Kurt's voice sounds, mumbling against Blaine's hair and his clean hand comes up, sliding against Blaine's naked back, to cradle the back of his neck.

"Yeah..." he sighs.

"Why?"

Blaine huffs a laugh "I've never felt like that..."

"Like what?"

"Like I'm... beautiful... I don't know." He pulls back and looks for Kurt's eyes "Like I'm living in a love song, I guess..." Kurt smiles at once and there are tears shining in *his* eyes so Blaine figures he's said the right thing and smiles back and mutters a "thank you" before leaning over to kiss him softly.

xXxXx

I touched him and it was ok. It was more than ok. He didn't just let me touch him, he wanted me to. And it made him feel beautiful, it made him feel precious. He is beautiful and he is precious. I made him feel like that. He welcomed my hands and my kisses and my touch. He made me trust him and he trusted me too, to show him how much I care because he likes it that I care. I like trusting him. I think it's ok. I think I can do that. I trust him, and I trust my feelings for him, and I trust his feelings for me. Maybe I can stop looking for the cracks, maybe I don't need to expect the worst – maybe the walls won't come caving in after all. Maybe I really am safe with him. No. Not maybe, Kurt. You are safe with him.

Kurt smiles to himself, putting the pen down, and folding the paper into a tiny square, tucking it underneath his pillow, because there are things he needs to say, but not to anyone, just himself, and he likes to have them close to him when he most needs them.

Chapter Fourteen

"You can go with Wes."

Blaine lifts his eyes from his plate, concealing his satisfaction with polite surprise.

"Oh?"

"Next weekend." His father grunts "You can go."

"Oh! Great! Thanks, dad."

xXxXx

"How does it feel like to have the opportunity to vote for your own father on the very first time that you can vote at all?"

Thad's persona as he interviews them is entirely different from his normal ultra-shy self. It took Kurt all of five minutes to stop himself from staring and giggling and actually pay attention at the question. Blaine shoots him a knowing smirk every once in a while.

He clears his throat and shrugs "It feels great. It feels like I get to vote and help my father achieve something great at the same time."

"So you will be voting for him?"

He rolls his eyes – although inside his stomach starts to twist in anticipation for the moment the same question will be directed at Blaine "Unless Oprah announces she's running too. In that case, I'll have to plea secret ballot!"

Blaine laughs next to him, sounding so calm and relaxed that it makes Kurt feel a little less nervous for him. Even if Thad is turning towards him with a quirked eyebrow "What about you?"

"Oh me?" Blaine smiles and then shrugs and teasingly says "I don't know, I haven't read everyone's program just yet."

Both Thad and Kurt laugh. Kurt laughs not because Blaine's joke was that good – though it kind of was – but because he's afraid if he won't, people won't see as the joke it's really not. "Have you read your father's, though?"

"Oh yes!"

"Thoughts?"

"It's very coherent." He answers as if the 'compliment' comes easily and truthfully "And raises some very interesting questions and ideas." He nods.

"What about Burt Hummel's, did you read that one?" Thad asks in a slightly amused tone.

Blaine chuckles and cocks his head "Yes."

Upon Thad's silence egging him on and Kurt knowing Blaine was looking for a way not to actually have to lie – damn him and his principles and fuck it all – his anticipation takes the better of him, and sighs airily and fakes his way through the lie just as well as Blaine. "Oh he's just quiet because he knows it's so much better." He just couldn't take this whole hide and seek game.

Blaine chuckles and rolls his eyes "Oh, and you're *always* right!"

"What can I say? I'm *that* good."

"Oh, then why aren't you the one running for President, Mr. Hummel?"

"Because I'm not old enough." Kurt said haughtily.

"Let's thank god for that, shall we?"

"Guys, guys, guys!" Thad calls for their attention and they look back, still smirking and shifting smugly in their chairs.

xXxXx

Source: www.tumblr.com

'what? what? what? is this... is this sexual tension...? What?' (*link to the interview on the Dalton Journalism Club website*)

xXxXx

"I want to ask you about the New Year's Eve Train-wreck Extravaganza, as the Warbler's have dubbed it." Thad announces solemnly "Now I know that it raised some issues with your father's campaign, Blaine didn't it?"

Blaine shrugs "If people can't understand something as simple as friendship and mutual respect then it's their problem. My friendship to Kurt, or his to me, has nothing to do with our parents and we like to keep it that way. Politics isn't some petty subject where it matters whose friends with whom, it's a serious grown-up issue and we should trust the grown-ups to do their jobs regardless of who sings a silly duet together."

He takes a deep breath, running the words back in his head. He doesn't think there was anything even remotely bad about it, no words they can twist around or play with. With a glance towards Kurt and once he receives a reassuring smile he eases back into his chair, as Thad turns to Kurt.

"As I understand you experienced another altogether different kind of backlash. It wasn't so much on your dad's campaign, but a lot more focused on you. Care to elaborate?"

Blaine watches as Kurt's smile falters for a moment and he wants to snap at Thad and ask him what the hell is he thinking bringing up things like this!

"I... I wouldn't say it didn't have implications on my dad's campaign. I mean, there was an article saying something like 'we all knew his son was gay, and now we know just how much', so I'm sorry, but it did affect his campaign, and the fact alone that he had questions about it directed at him the same day the pictures came out is solid proof." Kurt says and Blaine feels a little more appeased at how well he can handle himself "But if you're asking about the thousands of hateful comments and tweets that I got because of it..." he sighs and shrugs and gives a bitter smile "They're not words I never heard before, I just... never had so much all at once I guess."

Blaine's heart tightens and he fights the urge to wrap his arms around Kurt, swallow him in the tightest embrace and never let the world get to him again.

"If you could tell those people anything...?"

"I already did, but, huh, I guess I would just... remind them that... they're talking about human beings, and that there's a person here. I'd say 'man up and say it to my face' but I've experienced that too, back at my old high school, and the bruises didn't really go with my skin color."

Blaine clenches his jaw, doing his best to remain expressionless, but well aware that he wasn't. He wants to drive to Ohio this very minute and beat people to bloody pulps. He stays put instead and stares at a spot on the wall, because it's better than looking at Kurt and needing to shower him with kisses and affection.

"But I wanna make one thing clear." Kurt says and Blaine looks because he thinks he hears a genuine smile in his voice. "Not everyone was a class A douche." He points out "The positive messages I've been getting have been wonderful. There has been tons of supportive stuff sent to me, too. Like, my fashion blog has been flooded with comments and messages that, even if they have little or nothing to do with fashion I could never delete or complain about them because they just made me feel so... cared for."

"You have a fashion blog?!" Blaine frowns and Kurt just looks at him like he's asked if the sky is blue.

"Obviously." Kurt says with a look that means 'I've talked about it 100 times, idiot' and Blaine blushes and looks away.

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'(Gif of Blaine blushing, biting his lip and looking away guiltily) Did you see that? Someone's not getting any tonight. Ahah, ups! He was probably too busy staring at Kurt's lips to pay attention.'

'Ok ok, but did ANYone else notice just how angry Blaine was when Kurt talked about the bullying?! Yes! He looked murderous! Here, have a gif (*gif of Blaine clenching his jaw and staring ahead*) Holy shit.'

'I ship it.'

'I ship it like the motherfucking titanic.'

'I hereby dub Kurt Hummel + Blaine Anderson = Klaine. Reblog if you ship it. FUCK! the notes!'

'gottriplets Klaine4Prez'

xXxXx

"Alright" Thad says with a professional looking smile "Thank you both for joining us, it was a pleasure, and I wish both of you good luck with everything."

Kurt nods and takes Thad's outstretched hand, shakes it firmly and stands while Blaine does the same. Somewhere in the room someone calls out "Cut!" and studio lights start turning off. "I didn't know Dalton had an actual TV studio. God, Artie would orgasm over this..." he sighs.

"With the amount of money you pay to go here..." Blaine shrugs as he checks his wristwatch "We're late for glee practice. Have you thought about auditioning any songs?"

"I told you my idea already, Blaine. You didn't like it." Kurt rolls his eyes.

Blaine smiles playfully "Healthy competition? Audition your idea, I'll audition mine."

"You have one?"

He laughs and shakes his head "No, not really. I mean, I have a list of possibilities, but I haven't settled on one yet."

"Mmm," Kurt hums, before sighing, "You really think full a capella is a bad idea?"

"I mean..." Blaine exhales "If someone's gonna pull it off it should be you... You have the best voice for it... it's unique and gorgeous and all of that. So, if anyone's gonna stand alone on that stage and just sing his heart out my vote's on you. But – and I'm not saying you wouldn't sound amazing and maybe we'd even win – I think it's a big risk. It's one of those things that the judges either love or hate."

"Yes!" Kurt concedes impatiently "But when I got into the Warblers you said it was because my voice allowed you to go places and take chances you couldn't before."

"Yeah, well, let's not push the envelope too far, shall we?"

"Blaine!" Kurt argues "Where's your ambition?! Where's your sense of adventure?" he teases and bumps their shoulders together "Locked into that gel helmet of yours?"

"Excuse me?" Blaine gasps in indignation, though most of it is amused "Are we talking about the same person taking a nine hour road trip on Friday, consequently skipping classes, so he can spend *one* Saturday in the middle of Ohio with his boyfriend and therefore risking the absolutely necessary secrecy of their relationship, because he wants the opportunity to have a real date and meet one famous Rachel Berry?" he pauses for effect to which Kurt can only try not to laugh too hard "I didn't think we were."

Kurt does laugh and resists the urge to lace their hands together, because he can hear Thad jogging up to catch up with them. "Sorry we ran a little overtime there." Thad sighs as he reaches them, stepping right into the middle. Kurt steps aside a little to give him some space and only smiles to himself over the fact that Thad's so unaware of how much of a third wheel he's being. He supposes that's a good thing.

Back at Warbler's rehearsal room everyone's already sat and Wes is talking. He interrupts himself as they open the door and rolls his eyes "Oh, how nice of you to join us."

Thad blushes "My fault, the interview ran a little late."

Wes merely nods "Like I was saying. I'm real sorry about all of those that already had audition ideas, but unless it fits there's not really a point in putting those forth."

"Fit what?" Kurt asks as he pointedly ignores Sebastian's gestured invitation to join him on the couch. Instead he sits next to Dom on the back corner table, while Blaine takes the arm of the *other* couch. They've been careful lately.

"We've just received a letter from the Show Choir Competition committee, and it so happens that the Regional's theme this year is 'Inspirational'. So unless the song you were thinking of auditioning falls into this category there's really no point in singing it..."

"Oh, huh, I hadn't really thought of a song yet, so..." Kurt shrugs and then bites his lips. Well... why not? "I did have an idea I'd like to pitch... If I may..."

"Sure." Wes shrugs and gestures for him to take the floor.

"Back in the New Directions we used to start most competition set lists with a ballad - a really powerful one, usually show tunes or something like that. Now, I know that'd be kind of hard translating into... the warblers' style. But you know, it might make for an interesting start, like really capture their attention. But, huh, given that you can't really turn those into... eight part harmonies or whatever, I was thinking... maybe... a solo. Like real, real solo. Just one person out there, singing his heart out, no back up whatsoever. If we could pull that off, I think we'd have a real shot at winning. No one's gonna do that."

Wes looks almost stiff as his eyebrows rise and he takes a moment to consider. Kurt's fingers tingle with anticipation.

"There's a good reason no one will do that..." Wes says, slowly "It's not a bad idea, Kurt, but it's incredibly risky. Every waver of the singer's voice would be too noticeable, and there's really no room for mistakes..." He sighs and shakes his head "I mean, if it worked, yes, it would be amazing, but if it doesn't it'll be disastrous. I... I don't know, Kurt."

Kurt feels his stomach dropping a little. Well, it's not like Blaine hadn't warned him.

"Tell you what!" David perks up "Think of a song and audition the idea again when you have it. We'll see about it. As it is you'd already be the obvious choice for a solo like that, so..."

Kurt smiles at once, hope renewed – if he can show them how awesome it could be he's sure they'll buy it "Thanks! I will"

He smirks smugly towards Blaine who merely shrugs and smiles with a silent chuckle. Before they can get into a whole silent conversation with eyes and body language Kurt's careful enough to notice Sebastian staring and instead returns his gaze with the least acid smile he can manage, while Wes continues about Regionals and song pre-requisites.

There's been more articles about Kurt and Blaine lately – they don't have much to go on, but each time there's a new one they seem to be getting closer and closer to hinting at a relationship between Kurt and Blaine. Every single time that the articles cite 'inside sources' Kurt can't help but think Sebastian. It's a no-brainer, really.

The guy's been consistent in hitting on Kurt this whole time, sure, but one too many times he's also been caught staring at Blaine. And after the incident over dinner a couple of weeks ago, the articles have definitely taken a turn for the strongly implied. It's nothing to fuss about, for now.

It's mostly small articles. Half a page. A question mark at the end of a dubious and frankly too-vague report. There are still no headlines, and Sebastian or no Sebastian Kurt's pretty sure most of them read the first one and ran with it. It's pretty clear they're mostly fishing out there. How could they not? Between the New Year's Eve photos and video, the tweet at the debate and a couple more public interactions they really have absolutely nothing but a very suspicious case of 'inside informer' to go on. Outside of tumblr no one really buys anything, so Kurt's not too worried yet. Besides, tumblr, it's mostly amusing (granted, he stays away from the porn). He finds it easier to be amused rather than annoyed at the tens of asks and comments he gets every week, on his fashion blog, asking him if they're an item.

Both of their parents' campaign have bigger fishes to fry, so not even Blaine's been getting any grief whatsoever over it. Then again, the articles are so irrelevant it's dubious if anyone on the campaign staffs ever even read them (ok, though, logically they probably have).

They'll just have to make sure that this weekend is no different. If they're seen outside, they were seen outside, but there needs to be a plausible lie already ready. Kurt's talked to Rachel and she suggested that they, in case it's needed, make it look like it's Rachel who's on a date with Blaine. Kurt thinks it's a ridiculous notion – Rachel and Blaine?! Say what? – but he goes along with it, since he has no better of his own.

He explains the plan to Blaine as they load up the car on Friday – six in the morning because it's a 9 hour drive and they still have to drive by Kurt's to pick Finn up – Blaine laughs and says it's not a new thing for him, to pretend he's on dates with girls, so it shouldn't be hard.

They're still mostly monosyllabic by the time Finn grunts his way into the car and they set forth. Kurt's driving for the first three hours, and then it's Blaine, and then Finn. They'll be staying at Rachel's because their house in Lima had been sold less than a week after Finn and Carole moved to DC, and also because her dads aren't home – on one of their all too frequent cruises. With a daughter like that Kurt thinks they might need just as many vacations. Kurt plays soft music as he rides, sings along with most of it, while Finn and Blaine drift in and out of sleep. Well... Blaine drifts. Finn snores.

He resents them a little, and promises to sleep on their turns to drive, too. Blaine makes up a little for it every time he opens his eyes a little, looks at Kurt, smiles, sighs and says "Your voice is too pretty..." before snuggling back in the front seat and sleeping some more.

Kurt smiles, rolls his eyes and takes a firmer grip on the steering wheel as he continues singing softly. The road is practically empty and he's actually making good time.

He's been driving for an hour when Blaine stirs and yawns and stretches his arms and slurs "Whetime'sit?"

Kurt smiles to himself "Ten past eight..."

"Oh..." Blaine mumbles "I've been sleepin' for an hour?" he rubs his eyes "And you let me?!"

"What should I do? Yell at you?" he shrugs.

"I dunno... but I feel bad about leaving you alone..." He yawns again and then shakes his head and his hands and rolls his shoulders and says "Ok, I'm awake now, I'll keep you company."

Kurt smiles, shooting him a tender glance before turning back to watch the road. "Let's play a game. Word association. I say a word and you respond with the first that comes to your mind, and I'll do the same..."

"Ok, go." Blaine said mid-yawn, toeing his shoes off and pulling his legs to his chest.

"Mmm... Road."

"Car."

"Drive."

"Wheel."

"Cartwheel."

"Gymnastics."

"Cheerleading."

"Need-to-see-it."

Kurt laughs "Not a word, try again."

"Hot."

"Coffee."

"Sleepy."

"No."

Blaine laughs "Sorry."

"Forgiveness."

"Flowers."

"Colors."

"Orgasm."

"What?!" Kurt turns to Blaine "How does one go from colors to orgasm?!"

"Orgasms are like explosions of colors before everything turns into white." Blaine shrugs "Your turn. *Orgasm.*" He repeats.

Kurt's so taken aback by the whole thing his mind is completely blank except for one word he's sure it's stupid "Blaine." He cringes as he says it.

He can hear Blaine's smug smile. That bastard. "Tonight."

"That's in response to Orgasm, not Blaine." Kurt says with attitude, even though his face is on fire "Try again. *Blaine.*"

"Me."

Kurt rolls his eyes and sighs "Kurt."

"Orgasm..." Blaine teases.

"Blaiiine!" He whines, but he can't help laughing.

"That's what *you* said."

Kurt shoots him a half-glare, but ends up shaking his head and chuckling quietly to himself. "You're impossible."

"You lo-like me anyway...." Kurt catches the minor stutter and he knows what Blaine only barely managed not to say. He's glad Blaine caught it in time. Because Kurt's not ready to say that word yet, but he's also kind of past the point of denying it.

"That I do." He nods and glances towards Blaine to find him genuinely smiling, any trace of teasing or smirkness gone from his face – only his honest eyes shining with nervous affection and tenderness. Kurt makes himself look back to the road but he can't help but sigh "You do have the most amazing eyes..."

A breath hitches and there's a sigh before Blaine speaks softly "You have the most amazing everything."

"Let's not go down that road, shall we?" Kurt chuckles "We'll just agree to like each other and be adorable and all of that... My stepbrother's snoring in the backseat."

"Exactly, it cuts off some of the cheesiness, so we don't have to take it easy on the romance. We can knock ourselves out."

Kurt snorts and rolls his eyes and they have a moment of comfortable silence, before Blaine's voice, now calm but far from teasing, sounds.

"You know..." he says "I'm really grateful you came into my life when you did. With everything that's been going on lately, I don't know how I would've handled it if it hadn't been for you."

The thought sparks something in Kurt's mind and he can't stop himself "Blaine, can I ask you something?"

"Of course."

"Your grandfather... How's... how's he been? You know, after you came out. You said he almost hit you and he wanted you out of the house..."

"Well..." Blaine sighs "I just... He never speaks to me now, and I think the only two times he even acknowledged my existence since then was to try to kill me with his eyes." He laughs bitterly "I think he's counting the days until I leave for college and start my own life so he can pretend I don't exist."

"That's... I'm so sorry, Blaine."

"Not your fault." Kurt looks to see him smile fondly.

He chuckles "I know, I know! I hate it when people say that about my mom, too... But... there's just nothing else to say. Just... He doesn't deserve you."

"I think I know that now." Blaine says, hugging his knees closer to his chest.

"And neither do your parents if they don't put a stop to that stupidity."

"Ha..." he almost sounds honest as he laughs "The day that my dad stands up to his dad..." he trails off "Let's just say I'm sort of breaking the cycle here, standing up to my dad like I am... It's not like my parents are in love with me being gay, anyway. They'd just learned to live with it. I never expected them to stand up for me, so I'm not even... disappointed. I guess."

"You shouldn't... not expect that. You have a right to be disappointed, at the very least. They're your parents, they're supposed to back you up."

"They're supposed to do a lot of things, Kurt. They don't. I'm used to it." Blaine shrugs.

"I admire you." Kurt says finally "The way you're dealing with this." He explains when he glances and sees Blaine's frown "I admire how you're not a fucked up little shit like most of them are. I admire the way you still have faith in people even if the ones that were least supposed to failed you like that."

"Well..." Blaine sighs "I've got Wes to thank for that... and he's got me. We owe each other our sanities."

"He's got problems with his parents, too?"

"Mostly his dad, but yeah."

Kurt doesn't feel comfortable asking anything more than that because it's Wes' life and it's probably private.

They talk the rest of Kurt's 'shift'. Blaine tells Kurt a lot more about his family – aunts and uncles, and how he only really likes one of his aunts and her two sons who are all kinds of *adorbs*. He tells Kurt about how he never actually did like his granddad all that much, because the man was always a little too pushy and never satisfied with anything anyone ever did, and how, for the most part, he even pitied his father from growing up with someone so demanding and superimposing. At least his father didn't ask things of Blaine he couldn't ever give – well, before the campaign, that is.

It wasn't exactly a sad conversation, as one would think it would be. Kurt was surprised at how Blaine couldn't talk about it so easily – but then again, this is Kurt. He guesses Blaine's probably not about to spill this out just to anyone who'll listen.

xXxXx

They're snuggling in the backseat. Blaine sitting with his back pressed to Kurt's chest, arms wrapped around him as he plays with Kurt's long fingers (he can play with them now, look at them, feel them and know what they can do and worship them as they should be worshipped without feeling self conscious or pushy for doing so. Kurt likes using those fingers on Blaine, and he likes Blaine's too. And that's a good thing), when Kurt straightens "Oh, we're in Lima!"

"Yep!" Finn says from the front. "And in time for Glee club, too."

Blaine sits up to look out the windows and the houses and buildings around him let him know they're *somewhere*. After nearly 9 hours driving on highways and alikes, this feels like a snail's pace, and then Finn stops at a red light and Blaine had almost forgotten that red lights were a thing. Clearly 9 hours is too long for a road trip.

He stretches his arms and torso out, but his legs have to wait as not even Blaine is short enough for that "Thank god!" he groans.

They drive around for another twenty minutes before Finn is finally pulling into a parking lot. Blaine looks curiously out the window the find McKinley High School standing there completely unimpressive to someone used to the tall, beautiful Dalton buildings.

"Won't they notice Blaine hanging with us?" Finn asks as the three of them climb out of the car.

Kurt rolls his eyes, but Blaine answers at once "I'll just tell them I'm visiting a friend in Westerville and hitched a ride with you guys. Don't worry, Finn."

"Oh, ok, cool."

"Come on." Kurt urged them. They jogged towards the front door. There were some students at the far end of the corridor, but mostly the school looked empty.

A short guy with a really bad jewfro appeared at the end of the corridor holding a microphone and followed by another taller guy with a camera, and before Blaine could see that they were stopping and noticing them he'd been shoved to a broom closet. Outside he could hear Kurt say something to Finn in a intimidating, hissing tone, but he couldn't tell the words.

"Kurt Hummel, and Finn Hudson!" a voice said – high and almost childish, but clearly male – like the guy hadn't quite mastered puberty "Could that really be the most famous stepbrothers of McKinley?"

"Jacob, get that camera out of my face!" Kurt snaps.

"How does it feel coming back to where you're now celebrities and legends, though not necessarily in a good way, and knowing the only two reasons people still remember your names is either because they loved the sight of your faces covered in slushies everyday for the last two years, or because of Burt Hummel's campaign and has therefore nothing whatsoever to do with your own merit?"

"Jacob!" Kurt hisses "I'm warning you to get that camera off my face."

"And how does it feel to know 50% of the comments and tweets wrote to you after the New Year's Eve debacle were sent by people at this school?"

"Hey, dude!" Finn warned.

"Finn, how does it feel to know Rachel Berry will probably forget about you in two weeks leaving her perfect boobs free to be truly appreciated and valued by any other member of the male population at this school?"

"Seriously dude, you want a punch?" There are some shuffling noises, something crashed against Blaine's door and he hears a small whimper of pain and a gasp of "Not the camera, not the camera!"

After a few moments of actual silence the door is opened and a red faced Kurt tells him "You can come out now."

"Who was *that*?" he gasps horrified.

Kurt rolls his eyes and sighs "Jacob Israel. He likes to pretend he's McKinley's field reporter or something. I hate him. It's not even like we need him to record the glee club performances or anything – the AV club already does that."

"The things he said... he's horrible."

"You have no idea." Kurt says "Come on, the choir room's this way."

Finn follows them lost in his own thoughts before he pipes up "Kurt, you think Rachel would really leave me?"

Next to Blaine Kurt rubs a hand over his face and shakes his head minutely "I don't know, Finn, I can't predict the future, but she loves you."

"I know. But... all her drive and ambition, you know?" Finn says, his voice small and scared, and Blaine's own insides tug with not just sympathy for also empathy – because sometimes even he feels Kurt's ambition as too much of challenge "I feel so small in comparison."

"That's stupid, Finn." Kurt smiles and Blaine sees the change from annoyed to sympathetic "You're the tallest guy I know."

Finn huffs a laugh.

"Besides..." Kurt adds shooting Blaine a sort of nervous smile "If she loves you, you should trust her feelings for you, accept it as the blessing it is and not question it every moment of your life. It'd be a disservice to her and to you if you lived your days questioning her love for you – at the end of the day you're not trusting her and you're not trusting your relationship. That's just asking for trouble, Finn, and that's not how you love someone."

Blaine presses his lips together to keep himself from smiling too wide, and from jumping forward and wrapping his arms around Kurt and showering him with kisses. So what Kurt challenges him with his focus and his big dreams? – maybe Blaine challenges him with other things like faith and love. It's just hard to see it because he admires Kurt so much, but maybe Kurt admires Blaine too – no, not maybe. He does. He'd said so back in the car. And if he's asking Kurt to believe in his feelings for him, then Blaine needs to believe in Kurt's too.

He has things to show and teach Kurt, too, and Kurt wants to see them, learn about what Blaine has to offer him. It's not a one-way street in any way, shape or form.

They are a couple.

The realization hits him like a speeding train, and he all but wants to throw caution to the wind and scream out "I love you!". But there are words and feelings that are worth more than a spontaneous moment in the heat of passion, and he reserves those for when he's absolutely sure and not just absolutely happy.

Finn smiles to himself, oblivious to both the way Blaine's heart has just gone off in a RedBull air race and is currently performing all kinds of dangerous acrobatics, and the way Kurt's cheeks had become red and he was chewing his lip and was searching for Blaine's eyes. Blaine reaches and squeezes his hand.

"Thanks Kurt." Finn says as he starts walking again, and Blaine wakes up from his little trance of loosing himself in Kurt and Kurt's eyes. He pulls his hand away, instantly feeling it cold and empty, and follows Finn down the corridor.

The loud voices announce it as the choir room even before they're so much as ten feet from the door.

When they do open it, the mess of teenagers inside stop their attempt at choreography to look at them. First there's silence and then deafening shrieks and gasps of surprise as everyone comes tumbling forward, rushing to hug Kurt and Finn.

Blaine watches and smiles as he sidesteps to stand a little farther to the side.

After the excitement dies down a little he's introduced (and when they ask he lies with practiced ease about his friend in Westerville and hitching a ride). Blaine finally gets to see Ms. Berry in person and he's amused at her being such a small thing for someone so... big.

She looks in his direction a lot more than everyone else as he sits coolly, a little further from everyone else than Kurt and Finn, while the group asks twenty thousand questions in eager voices and pleased smiles. After the third time it happens he stops feeling self-conscious and embarrassed and instead of blushing and looking away he smiles and nods and she beams back, before raising two fingers to her eyes and then pointing them towards Blaine with a teasing smirk. 'I'm watching you' she says.

He laughs – he likes her already – and shrugs with playful innocence.

She draws a heart on the air and points to Kurt with a quirked eyebrow.

He shrugs again with a bashful smile as his cheeks burn up.

She presses her lips together to contain her smile and shakes a little in her seat.

He laughs and shakes his head, before turning his attention away to watch as Kurt explains all about the Warblers and the three-manned council.

The way the group laughs and talks together, like they're family and truly love each other, even though each and every one of them is completely different from the other is what surprises Blaine the most.

He hasn't seen them perform yet, but he can tell this: the Dalton Warblers work as a team because everyone is noticeably working towards the same goal in the same way – to present a united, seamless front. The New Directions are a completely different kind of team. Whereas they also (obviously, since they went to Nationals last year) work, they do it through their differences. They do it through their diversity. They're twelve completely different people all bringing something new to the table, and therefore creating a richer team in the process.

He doesn't know what he likes more, the Warblers philosophy of teamwork, or the New Direction's idea of true identity.

Actually he does. With a stab to his pride he admits to himself he'd love the chance to be up on a stage and wear himself rather than a blazer.

But the Warblers are a family too, outside of the stage, and no family is better than the other, so there's that.

"Song?!" The one person Blaine had met before – Puck – says with a bright beam.

"Song!" Rachel squeals in agreement, jumping up from her place under Finn's arm.

"Easy there, Streisand, no show tunes! Only you know the words to *that*." Puck warns.

"Ahem." Kurt looks pointedly at Puck who shrugs and sighs.

"And you, whatever. No! Something everybody knows, dude."

"Oh, and you know the perfect song, I presume?" Kurt asks coolly.

"Of course I do – follow me to the auditorium." Puck says rising from his seat and towards the door "After knowing from Finn and his big mouth that you two would be coming down this weekend I decided to plan a little something for the long awaited reunion. We might have won sectionals this year, but it wasn't the same without you two, we're all a team, whether we're on that stage as one or not."

"Ok..." Kurt starts smiling suspiciously and Blaine can see the curiosity growing not just in Kurt's face, but everyone's as they walk through the corridors.

"Now – and I'll deny this if you tell anyone - I was watching my all time favorite movie for the twentieth time the other day, and we should really declare it our movie, by the way" he says as he hold the auditorium door open for everyone. Blaine takes a seat at the fourth row, fairly separated from everyone else "And I was thinking how much that movie reminded me of what we do in this place and why we do it, which is why I'd also like to say this is officially my suggestion for our Regional's group number" he pull his electric guitar over his neck and places his fingers ready to start "So I called in a couple of favors and come up with this – feel free to join in."

The opening chords sound and everyone gasps in recognition. The blond one (Sam), Finn and the Asian guy (Mike) are the first up there, but they're followed closely by everyone (except, of course, Blaine, who's more than happy to just watch).

"Hey, hey, hey, hey!" Puck sings.

And suddenly there's a picture projected on the stage wall. The New Directions stand on a stage with a first place Regional's trophy in their hands and they're all beaming and celebrating. Everyone stares and gasps, and Puck just continues 'uhhhh'ing and whoooow'ing.

'Won't you... come see about me, I'll be alone dancing, you know it baby...' he sings as the picture starts changing and it's obvious the whole thing is a slideshow as it goes from one to another – though quicker now, from picture to picture, from performances to green rooms to rehearsals to even what Blaine assumes is the cafeteria. Sometimes the picture shows all or most of them, sometimes it's of pairs or trios, like the three cheerleaders, or Kurt and Rachel, Finn and Puck, Puck, Sam, Mike, Finn and Artie in football gear.

'Tell me your troubles and doubts, Giving me everything inside and out and...' Finn and the guys have joined in trying to sing and still pay attention to the slide show that now includes small bits of videos from performances and parties *'Love's strange so real in the dark, Think of the tender things that we were working on...'*

Puck points towards the girls who smile sweetly and don't even miss a beat *'Slow change may pull us apart, When the light gets into your heart, baby'*

'Don't You Forget About Me

Don't Don't Don't Don't

Don't You Forget About Me'

As Blaine watches all of them dancing up on that stage, singing, laughing and hugging, each new picture or video calling for renewed surprise. They're clearly reliving every moment of their journey together. He thinks he should probably organize something like that for the Warblers before he graduates – they've given him so much, it'd be a shame to leave without an honest thank you. But he puts those thoughts away for now, because it'd be a disservice to the true spectacle of love and friendship happening up on that

stage. Finn and Puck sing to each other, Mike had hopped onto Sam's back and they're hugging Quinn and Brittany with too much enthusiasm, Santana as a flailing Kurt under a headlock and she's messing his hair up but shockingly he's actually laughing, Rachel is singing with Mercedes, and Tina and Sugar are bumping their butts together...

He knows the lyrics aren't even particularly happy, and he knows they know too, but he thinks that it doesn't matter – it's what they're asking for that they're celebrating. It doesn't matter if in ten years they'll actually still be close friends, what matters to them is that right now they believe they will, and they believe that that's something they can ask of each other, that they've earned the right to turn around and say "don't you dare forget me, don't you dare get so caught up in your new life that you forget to think about me and us and the times we had together at least once a day."

He exchanges glances and smiles with Kurt who more than once gestures for him to join them up there but he smilingly refuses. It's not about the two of them, it's about Kurt and his friends, and he should let them have their intimate moments too.

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Kurt shuts the guest bedroom door with a sigh. "God, I'm so, so tired." He moans. Blaine's chuckle from where's he's sitting on the bed taking his shoes off sounds like agreement. Kurt toes his boots off as he walks and lets himself fall face forward on the bed. "This is pathetic." He grunts against the mattress "it's not even ten and I feel like I could sleep for a week."

He feels Blaine's hands travelling up his back to settle on his shoulders and squeeze gently and he moans. Blaine chuckles again, and kneads on Kurt's shoulders and neck a little before saying "I can't do this properly with so many layers on you, and I don't think you should fall asleep just now anyway..."

"Mmm why not? Feels perfect." He mumbles.

"Because you should probably get ready for bed...? Are you going to sleep in skinny jeans?" Blaine teases, squeezing one last time before Kurt feels the bed shift and assumes Blaine has gotten up.

"Party pooper!" he calls before he grunts and pushes himself to stand, too.

"Dibs on the bathroom." Blaine calls cheerfully as he slips through the door with a smirk.

Kurt shoots him a glare he doesn't mean, before he turns to look around himself. He grabs his bag and takes out his pajamas and his toiletries, puts it in a tidy little pile, takes off a couple of layers until he's just in his jeans and undershirt.

He walks awkwardly around the room for a minute or two, knowing too well that if he lays down waiting for Blaine he'll just fall asleep. Well... hell with it. He climbs up to the bed, curls a little bit on himself as he holds the pillow close and settles himself comfortably.

He decides to close his eyes, and if he falls asleep, then he falls asleep, and Blaine can wake him up when he returns. He inhales the clean smell of the pillow – the fabric softener the Berries use is practically familiar by now and it feels a little like home – or at least like the old home. As he smiles and snuggles closer a thought occurs to him that he doesn't exactly know what Blaine's smell is like. Not his aftershave or his perfume – *that* he knows. But the scent he leaves behind – the trail of life he leaves on his pillow, on his bed, his sheets, his clothes.

For all the times Kurt's been on Blaine's bed (and, ha, you saucy minx, they were now plenty), he never actually took notice of that because he never stayed afterwards. Maybe it's a strange thought to be having, but he suddenly needs to know that smell – maybe after tonight he will.

Oh.

That's right.

They're about to share a bed. For a whole night.

Kurt inhales deeply again, holds the pillow even tighter and smiles to himself, already imagining that it's Blaine's chest his head is resting on, and that he can hear his heartbeat and feel the rise and fall of his breathing.

He's awoken by a gentle hand to his shoulder, nudging him carefully. "Kurt, hey? You can use the bathroom, now." Blaine says quietly.

"Mmm..."

"Come on, Kurt..." Blaine smiles – or at least it sounds like he does "You can sleep afterwards." There's a soft kiss to Kurt's cheek and he smiles and buries his nose into the heat of the pillow "Come on, Kurt"

another kiss and a nuzzling nose to the crook of his neck "you'll be upset in the morning if you don't at least brush your teeth..." when Kurt refuses to move, Blaine's hands come to the sides of his waist and start tickling gently. Kurt can't help the small cry of laughter that erupts from him as he squirms away. Blaine laughs.

He whines but pushes himself off the bed nonetheless. "Fine." Half asleep he collects his things and heads for the bathroom. However relaxed he was already, and however relaxing a nightly shower may be, Kurt comes out of the bathroom feeling revitalized. He knows it's an illusion – it happens often enough, and every time it happens he still wipes out the moment his head hits the pillow. However the thought of being alone in a bedroom with Blaine is more than enough to make him want to stay awake. At least ten more minutes.

He pushes the door open carefully wondering if maybe Blaine doesn't have the same idea as him and is already fast asleep – it wouldn't be surprising, exhausted as they both were.

But Blaine's awake, distracted typing away on his phone, his back to the door as he lies on his side.

Kurt smiles. At least they won't put the reputation of teenaged boys all around the world at stake. He climbs into bed slowly, wrapping an arm around Blaine's waist, spreading his fingers over his chest, feeling Blaine's sudden increase in heartbeat as he startles. "Kurt!"

"Watchadoin?" Kurt asks, voice low as he drags his lips across the crook of Blaine's neck.

"N-nothing... Just... huh... just finished the... huh new post for the blog..."

"Did you post it yet?" Kurt drawls, as one hand maneuvers Blaine to his back and the other cups his cheek.

"Yeah..." Blaine breathes.

"That's good..." Kurt smiles dipping down to place a soft, languid kiss on Blaine and takes Blaine's phone away.

"I thought you were exhausted..." Blaine mumbles once Kurt's kisses start deviating elsewhere. His voice sounds surprised but hopeful.

"Funny thing, showers." Kurt smirks against Blaine's jawline "Truly invigorating."

Blaine chuckles, his hands coming to hold Kurt's waist and pull him closer "That they are..."

Kurt throws one leg over Blaine's hips, straddling him, as he lowers back down for a deeper, thorough kiss that makes him moan. Blaine's hands squeeze tighter at the sound and pull him closer, so that their half hard cocks connect, only thin layers of cotton between them, and they both gasp into the kiss. He wastes no time before thrusting his tongue into Blaine's mouth in long, rhythmic movements. When he pulls back, and nips on Blaine's bottom lip, before licking the tender skin and biting it, softly, again, Blaine's bucks his hips and rasps out "Kurt..."

Hearing his name coming out of Blaine's mouth like that... it does things to Kurt's body, namely to his cock, as it's completely hard right now, and the friction that Blaine's hip gives feels so, so good, and almost enough for now.

As he drags his teeth through Blaine's outstretched throat, slowly, almost teasing, his tongue peeking out, warm and wet against the offered skin every once in a while, one of Blaine's hands shoots down from his waist to his ass, slipping under pants and briefs and taking the full flesh of Kurt's cheek into its palm grabbing with want and desperation, crashing their hips just that much closer.

Kurt has to bury his groan into Blaine's neck as their cocks connect again and the friction is purely delicious. Blaine's other hand comes down to join the previous and this time it's Kurt who brokenly whines "Blaine!"

"I wanna try something..." Blaine mutters against Kurt's neck, his lips catching against his skin in the hottest way and his hands leaving Kurt's ass to pull at his shirt.

"A-anything...!" Kurt finds himself breathing out, as they both tug his shirt over his head, and Kurt pulls Blaine's away too "Anything." He breathes against Blaine's chest as he mouths at it.

With that Blaine's hands come to his waist again and he pushes and flips them over, and Kurt finds himself sprawled on his back, hands pinned above his head and Blaine's hips between his spread legs, as Blaine ravishes his neck and returns to the rhythmic movement of their hips. Heat is coursing through Kurt's body, everything is hot and burning – it's the most delicious burn and he can barely breathe on cause of how good it feels.

One of Kurt's hands is released, and it immediately finds its way to Blaine's hair – fingers drowning in a sea of thick, dark curls –, when Blaine's hand comes to press against Kurt's stomach, moving lower and lower, feeling its path as if it was trying to commit it to memory.

"Feel so good..." Blaine murmurs against Kurt's ear, breath hot and tongue and teeth suddenly wrap around the lobe "so hot..."

Blaine's hands reaches Kurt's waistband and before Kurt can so much as move or buck towards it, it slips inside and wraps around Kurt's cock. He buries his face in the crook of Blaine's neck, biting the flesh there – it was all he could do to keep himself from crying out.

Blaine's been pumping for a few moments before Kurt can recollect his mind and as soon as he does his hands fly towards Blaine's own pants, and he pushes them down, one hand coming to grab the best ass that has ever existed and the other wrapping around Blaine's cock.

"Wait..." Blaine gasps, and he doesn't stop pumping as his other hand pushes Kurt's clothes down too. He crashes their lips into a deep kiss, Kurt almost drowning in it until he feels Blaine's hand loosening the grasp on his cock, and he would complain if it weren't for the fact that Blaine's cock has disappeared from his own hand and his now completely pressed against Kurt's.

"Oohh!" He keens, arching his back and thrusting his hips into the sensation.

The feeling of Blaine right there *with* him, flush against him, as his hand pumps them both simultaneous, a strong, steady grasp, makes for an almost too fast progression. He can feel the heat pooling in his belly, building up. He clutches to the flesh of Blaine's ass as if for dear life as he moans out "I'm so close, Blaine, I'm so close, I'm so..."

"I know, I know, I got you..."

"F...fuck, so close..."

"I k-know..."

He wraps his legs tighter around Blaine, digs his heels into the back of his thighs, practically yanks on Blaine's hair, and ravishes his pulse point with lips, teeth and tongue. And he can feel Blaine's pumps becoming frantic and erratic too, he can feel Blaine thrusting into his own fist, against Kurt, with just as

much want and need and desperation. Blaine groans – deep and guttural, and it does it for Kurt, and he's arching off the bed, pressed completely against Blaine now, turning the scream he knows he can't let out into a silent gasp, holding onto Blaine like a lifeline, and it hits him so hard he's still riding it out when Blaine comes, gasping out a broken sob of "Kuuuurt!" and wrapping his free hand around Kurt's torso to keep him flush.

As oversensitivity kicks in and Blaine's hand disappears Kurt captures Blaine's lips in lazy, long kisses, distracting them both from the mess on their stomachs. "You're..." kiss "amazing..." he whispers into it.

Chapter Fifteen

Blaine leans against the wall, smiling softly as his eyes lock on the most beautiful boy he's ever seen. He's tall and slender; his chestnut hair was perfectly coiffed before the chilly end of winter wind swept through it and made it even the more perfect. His blue eyes sparkle as he talks with energy and enthusiasm and his cheeks are pink from the cool air. The world around him seems so insignificant, no matter how many children hop around him or how many girls throw their heads back and laugh, all that Blaine's eyes catch is that boy and his beauty. He wants to run the ten yards between them and wrap his arms around him, press their lips together, and spin him around and make him laugh.

Instead he sighs and smiles at the imperfect perfection before him and shoves his hands deeper in his pockets.

"You two are so cute." A voice startles him and he turns to find Rachel closing the bathroom door behind her "I must say I was a little apprehensive at first, when Kurt told me about you. But he couldn't stop gushing..." Rachel says as she loops her arm around Blaine's, making him smile in surprise "It's a miracle you managed to live up to the expectations."

Blaine chuckles "Thanks, I guess."

She nods "Thanks for waiting for me, by the way." She says, "You're a true gentleman."

He shrugs "I had a nice view." He jokes timidly.

"You had indeed!" she laughs, "those heart eyes don't fool anyone! Oh young love."

He blushes, mostly at the use of the word love. He wonders if he should correct her, say that they're not there just yet, but in the end he decides against it. He just can't bring himself to do it.

As they approach Kurt and Finn Rachel squeezes Blaine's elbow slightly "I'm happy Kurt found someone, even if it's a little complicated right now, I'm sure you'll be ok. He adores you, Blaine. I know sometimes he has a bit of a hard time admitting those things, but you should know he does." She says softly.

"Thank you!" Blaine says softly, touched by her earnest smile and her support, and for as intense and slightly crazy as she might be, he gets why she's Kurt's Wes.

"Finn, you honestly want to have cotton candy, now? You've barely had breakfast yet." Kurt is wrinkling his nose at his brother, and Blaine laughs to himself as they finally reach the pair.

"But it's delicious!" Finn whines.

"We have an entire day, I'm sure they won't run out of cotton candy. Why not have it after lunch? For dessert?"

"Whatever, dude." Finn mumbles and Kurt smiles proudly.

Blaine shoots Finn and sympathetic smile, before touching a soft hand to Kurt's back and asking, "Ok, where to first?"

"Let's just take a walk around the place, see what they have." Rachel suggests.

They all agree and the four of them start strolling around the carnival pointing out booths they want to go to every once in a while. Rachel turns out to be as talkative as everyone made her out to be. She chatters for the whole time, telling Blaine all sorts of stories about their High School.

Rachel tells Blaine about the time she won a diva-off against Kurt and Kurt just shrugs it off with a smile, telling Blaine about how Rachel once had a breakfast made on her head by an ex-boyfriend who'd turned out to be a spy for a rival show choir. The banter goes on for the rest of the morning before they find a little stage and a magician just starting his show. They decide to watch it and go find something to eat afterwards.

Blaine can't really be bothered to watch "Harold the Great", even if he is the most insanely cute kid. His head is reeling from the flawlessness of the day so far.

From the moment he woke up in Kurt's arms, listening to his heartbeat, head resting over Kurt's smooth chest, his own arms wrapped tightly around his boyfriend's waist. He'd suppressed the yawn, whimpering at the back of his throat and buried his nose in Kurt's skin as he tensed and stretched his whole body. Kurt had laughed and muttered "Good morning", his own voice slurry from sleep.

"MmmMorning..." Blaine had mumbled back, squeezing a little tighter. Kurt had started scraping his fingers across Blaine's back, sending shivers down his spine and Blaine turned his nuzzling into open mouthed kisses, things heating up fast and easy. Between moans and gasps, their hands making quick work of the few items of clothing they had slept in, they'd brought each other off, climaxing practically together as they panted into each other's mouth, and mumbling each other's names.

Remembering the pure bliss they'd shared at the start of the morning Blaine can't keep his eyes on the stage. Instead he keeps turning back to watch Kurt, to pay attention to every detail of his face, of his body, reveling in the fact that he knows it better than anyone on this earth, and yet he still has so much more to discover.

He follows the curve of Kurt's little adorable nose and stops himself from leaning in and kissing it. He admires the smooth planes of his face, the high cheekbone and the barely there scatter of freckles. He watches as his eyelashes brush his skin when he blinks. He admires the pink, soft lips that he knows by heart now and he feels hungry when a wet tongue slides quickly over them, leaving a trail of glistening moisture. He memorizes his perfect jawline, and marvels at how defined it is. He follows the curve of his neck, and the soft barely there Adam's apple as it bobs when Kurt swallows.

Blaine smiles and takes a deep breath to center himself. Picking up his cell phone he types a quick text to Kurt, mostly because he can, but also because Finn and Rachel are just there and there are things he likes to keep private.

"Today was the best morning of my life. You're the most beautiful thing in the all of the world. – B"

He watches as Kurt startles a little and fishes his phone out of his pocket. He watches Kurt's little frown and side-glance before the text opens. And then he watches as Kurt's eyebrows shoot up to his hairline and his mouth parts with a soft gasp, and he huffs out an almost choked breath and closes his eyes, and presses his lips together, containing a smile that grows bigger and brighter by the second as his cheeks flush a lovely shade of red.

Blaine feels the warmth that settles over his chest at the knowledge that he can make Kurt smile like that, that he can make his smile reach his eyes and make them sparkle with life.

Kurt opens his eyes to look at Blaine, his face an open book of emotions as he bites his lip tenderly and takes a deep breath before nudging Blaine's foot with his own and shaking his head while small, poorly

concealed giggles burst out of him. Blaine feels proud of himself as he turns back towards the show with a beam.

His own cell buzzes and he spares coy look towards Kurt who just barely managed to put his phone away.

'It was the best night of my life. I want more. I need more. Just so you know. – K'

Blaine takes a deep breath and pockets his phone with a smile, hooking his ankle around Kurt's for a moment.

The show ends to thunderous applause for the adorable ten-year-old kid in a black and red cape and a top hat, and Kurt's hand comes to rest gently on Blaine's upper arm as he says "let's go find some food, shall we?"

The four of them have hot dogs for lunch, and between the wake up he had, and Kurt's text of '*needing more*', Blaine's eyes are fixed on the way Kurt's lips wrap around his. He knows Kurt knows he's looking, there's a smirk as he bites slowly and moans a little, the dirty little minx. Blaine takes his own hot dog to his mouth visibly swirling his tongue around it before he actually wraps his own lips slowly around.

Kurt blushes a deep crimson and Blaine chuckles before leaning in and saying smugly "Two can play at this game, just remember that."

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Kurt scoffs and Blaine laughs.

"What's so funny, boys?" Rachel asks as she comes to walk between them, looping both her arms in theirs. Finn walks slightly behind them, making love to his food.

"Oh, nothing!" Kurt sing-songs "Blaine here was just saying how ghastly your sweater is."

"I was **not**!" Blaine gasps mortified.

"But he was thinking it." Kurt persists "The whole carnival was, honestly Rachel, what's that look supposed to be? Old spinster meets schoolgirl porn star?"

"I was *not* thinking that." Blaine mutters, sending Kurt a death glare.

"Relax, Blaine." Rachel smiles "That's just how Kurt changes the topic when he's either thinking or talking about naughty things. He criticizes my clothes. *Always*. So I won't enquire further and you can both relax."

Blaine has a hard time controlling his laughter, especially as he turns to see Kurt's turned a hundred different shades of red in less than two seconds, and has fixed his gaze somewhere else in the distance.

"I like you." Blaine winks at Rachel and she preens.

"Why, I like you too, Mr. Anderson."

"Maybe introducing the two of you wasn't such a good idea, after all." Kurt says haughtily.

"Awww, poor little Kurtie is upset!" Rachel coos and Blaine laughs.

"Think before you say anything, Blaine." Kurt warns and Blaine throws his head back with a hearty laugh before raising his hands in surrender.

"You two are too cute, for your own good." Rachel sighs, and Blaine can feel his face starting to burn too, exchanging a glance with Kurt who's blushing as well, but manages to give him a small, shy smile and a shrug.

Blaine looks away with a smile of his own and bites on his hot dog.

"But now, tell me really, will I have to burn the sheets on the guest bed after tomorrow?"

Blaine chokes on his food.

xXxXx

Kurt collects his cotton candy and joins the other three as they stand a little further from the booth. Finn is happily munching on his, glad that he finally has it. As it was they went against the original plan of dessert and saved it for late afternoon snack.

"Let's go on the ferris wheel..." Rachel pleads, wrapping her arms around Finn's waist with a pout.

Finn looks towards Kurt and Blaine, knowing that the two of them probably shouldn't be seen alone together in circumstances that would look like a date. Ferris Wheel would look like a date.

Kurt smiles as his step brother fondly "Go, we'll just go sit over there and wait for you."

"No, we should go, too." Blaine says at once, having barely swallowed a mouthful of pink fluffiness.

"Blaine..." Kurt warns.

"Kurt...!" Blaine counters playfully before rolling his eyes and sighing "Come on. No one around us even recognized us. And it's not like we're gonna start making out and calling attention to ourselves."

"Still."

"Please, what's so different between a ferris wheel ride and sitting over there together eating cotton candy? Come on... please...?" Blaine looks up at him with wide, pleading eyes and a pout, and Kurt almost wants to slap him for being too adorable.

"I can't understand how anyone ever manages to say no to you..." Kurt mumbles before he pushes Blaine towards the ferris wheel ticket booth.

"Yaaay!" Blaine and Rachel celebrate together.

Once they're settled on their seat – a respectable distance between them – and the wheel starts moving, slowly, Kurt finally turns to Blaine.

"I'm sorry I didn't... You know I wanted to come, it's just..."

"I know, Kurt, don't worry." Blaine says.

"Good. You know I'm just worried. I don't wanna see you get hurt, because of this... because of us."

"Kurt..." Blaine sighs and smiles "There's nothing about us that could hurt me, right now."

"But if anyone finds out, yo-"

"That's *them*, that's not us." Blaine interrupts and takes Kurt's hand in his – because they're high enough that it's ok – and his smile is dazzling "Now, are we gonna settle on that, or is it just going to be a recurring subject forever?" he says with a chuckle.

Kurt rolls his eyes "Fine." He nods with a half annoyed smile, and Blaine squeezes his hand.

"Today's been so much fun! I just don't wanna have to worry about those things. Wasn't that the whole point of coming here?"

"Yes..." Kurt concedes and lets Blaine play with his fingers.

"I love your fingers..." Blaine says.

"I've noticed." Kurt teases.

"I love how they feel around my-"

"Blaine!" Kurt gasps with a mortified laugh and burn to his cheeks and neck and, well, every inch of him, yanking his hand out of Blaine's.

Blaine laughs heartily "What?!" he shrugs, feigning nonchalance "It's not like anyone can hear us. And I think we should... you know, be able to talk about these things."

"We do!" Kurt struggles against his embarrassment "I've just sent you a text about it not five hours ago, of course we do!"

"No... not like that. I mean, really talk about what we *do*. What we like, what we don't like, what we want... What we want but aren't ready for, yet." Blaine explains with bright, earnest eyes "If we're doing those things, then we should be able to talk about them."

"Oh, huh..." it's not that it doesn't make sense, of course it does, but how does one talk about it? And anyway, if they do it now Kurt's gonna have to stay in the ferris wheel for another ride because *something* would be bound to show "it's just that... huh... but *here*? Now?"

Blaine's eyes bulge out and he gasps and laughs, "No, I'm sorry, I wasn't thinking..." Blaine ducks his head "about... consequences."

"But if you want..." Kurt says, sounding a little braver than he feels "we can talk about it tonight. I know my text was a little vague about what more meant. Maybe we should talk. And lay it all out. What we're ready for, and what we're not."

"Yeah." Blaine nods "I'd like that."

"But, huh, for the record, last night... was amazing. And this morning, too. With... huh... with our... huh... both... together. I liked that."

He looks up, expecting Blaine to be smirking or even biting back a laugh at his stuttering silliness, but Blaine's eyes are fixed on him, dark and his tongue running over his lip.

"Huh..." Blaine shakes his head and takes a deep breath "no, you were definitely right. Worst possible place to discuss these things." He laughs a little to himself, hanging his head with a smile and Kurt squeezes his hand.

"You're adorable."

Blaine shoots him a bashful smile, rubbing the back of his neck "We'll... we can... we should do it again tonight."

Kurt laughs at the way Blaine makes it sound like a question, because for Kurt the only question is if tonight he should push through yet another barrier. "Of course." He says, because suggesting something else now doesn't seem like the smartest move.

They let go of each other's hands as they step out to meet Finn and Rachel arguing.

"But you could win me a teddy bear, Finn! Please!"

"But my aim is lousy." Finn argues.

"But you could try!"

"It's actually not that hard." Blaine interrupts "Unless the game is rigged, which is actually very probable. But from the distance they have you shooting, it's pretty easy."

"You can do it?" Rachel beams.

Blaine shrugs, hands in his pockets – god, could he be any sexier? –, and cocks his head, assessing the shooting booth nearest to them "I think so." He nods.

Kurt cocks an eyebrow "You can?"

Blaine turns to him with an easy smile "Failed attempts at father-son bonding experiences have got to have *some* use, I suppose." He says before he starts towards the booth.

Kurt stares after him, torn between being turned on, or feeling bad for Blaine, forced to go on hunting trips in the wilderness to 'man up'. As he notices he was left standing alone he hurries after the three of them, as reaches the booth just as Blaine hands the man some money.

Blaine takes the gun and shoots his first try, hitting the can square in its center. Rachel gives a little whoop and Finn slaps his shoulder in congratulations. He shoots the second and it hits again as does the third and fourth, and as he hits the fifth he turns around beaming and gestures to Rachel "You may chose your prize."

"Oh no!" She gasps with a smile "I want *Finn* to win me something. Give yours to *Kurt*..." she teases.

Kurt blushes and squints at Rachel with a deathly glare, but can't hold on to it as Blaine turns to him with a smile just as charming as the one he'd offered Rachel – if not more – and said "Well, then, *you* may chose your prize."

Kurt feels his face burning with the power of a thousand suns, but he steps forward all the same and inspects the various stuffed animals, finally landing on a dog with big eyes and a pouty snout. "I want that one." He points.

Blaine turns to man in charge and says with a beam "You heard the man. That one, please."

The man nods, takes it and hands it to Blaine, who gives it to Kurt at once with a sweet look and beautiful smile.

Kurt puts a hand on his shoulder as Blaine turns to leave "Wait, I wanna try it, too."

He hands the puppy to Rachel and fishes out his wallet, taking out a few dollars and handing them over. "Teach me your ways, Anderson."

Blaine smiles and walks a little closer over to Kurt, as he receives the gun and lifts it up, pointing it towards the cans. Blaine's careful not to over do it – which Kurt is equal parts thankful and frustrated about -, but he does step closer, next to Kurt. He pushes the gun a little higher until it's lined up with Kurt's eyes, and says in a low, voice that sends shivers down Kurt's spine. "Take aim, take a deep breath, let it out, make sure your arms are steady and then press the trigger. Aim a little lower than the center, because of the kickback."

Kurt nods minutely before doing just that. It hits and he beams and gasps and jumps, while Blaine laughs, patting his back "One down, four more to go, and only seven more shots to go."

Kurt nods and assumes position again. He's glad when Blaine stands next to him, just as close as before, a steady hand on his back. "Just like that one." Blaine murmurs.

Kurt squints, aims, breathes, steadies himself and shoots, hitting again. And maybe Blaine was right after all in saying this wasn't all that difficult.

He misses the third, but hits the fourth, and when Blaine's hand on his back lowers a little he misses the fifth.

"Sorry..." Blaine mutters with a blush and soft chuckle, taking it away.

"No, no, no." Kurt bites his lip, nudging Blaine's hip with his "just don't move it."

Blaine returns his hand, steady and firm, to Kurt's lower back, and Kurt hoists the gun back up. He hits. And without pausing for celebration he hits again, throwing his arms up in victory. The man at the register scowls.

Kurt spins to face Blaine with a beam, "*now you choose!*"

Blaine gives a hearty chuckle before he steps closer to inspect the available options. He chooses a cute little white furry cat, returning to the group with a beam. Kurt resists the urge to lace their fingers together as they stand next to each other. After a particularly long glare from Rachel, Finn finally relents

and steps forward. He does not, however, win anything because he truly does have a terrible aim, and hits only four cans. Also, he doesn't have Blaine's firm and solid hand on his back, steadying him. (Thank god.)

Rachel pouts but hugs Finn nonetheless and the four of them walk away to find something to eat. They sit with their cheeseburgers, Blaine facing Kurt, sitting next to Rachel.

Rachel's is explaining her plan towards stardom to an attentive Blaine, and Kurt loves how much he's *trying*. Most people, upon meeting Rachel for the first time would frown and walk slowly away (he knows he did), but Blaine doesn't. Kurt wonders if he genuinely enjoys Rachel's speedy monologue, or if he just knows how important she is to Kurt. He pushes his foot lightly against Blaine's ankle and they exchange an affectionate glance. Once they're finished eating – and it's fully dark, they choose one last ride to go on. And, surprising everyone, Kurt suggests the haunted house. Finn agrees eagerly and Blaine frowns but smiles as he says "Yeah, sounds like fun."

Rachel wraps her arms around Finn and sighs "Only if you hold me tight."

And then Blaine laughs, letting Finn and Rachel walk ahead, before he leans a little closer to Kurt and mutters "Well, aren't we smart, scheming little minxes?"

Kurt smiles to himself and shrugs "I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about. I just enjoy walking along long pitch-black corridors."

Blaine returns his grin and they both walk towards the register to pay their fees. Rachel and Finn are waiting for them at the front door and the four of them go inside together. The entrance hall is dimly lit, but not dark enough for Kurt to reach out for Blaine's hand. They get a small security protocol briefing by a man dressed as a cheap imitation of count Dracula, speaking in a too-raspy voice, before they're ushered into a, indeed, pitch black corridor. As soon as the door closes behind them Kurt feels fingers interlacing with his own and he squeezes Blaine's hand, smiling to himself and tugging him a little closer, so they're walking shoulder to shoulder. He feels, after a minute, as Blaine leans his head on his shoulder and he lets go of Blaine's hand to wrap his arm around his waist and hold him as close as possible. There's some shuffling noise and in front of them Rachel yelps and Finn lets out a choked little noise.

He feels Blaine straightening up and steels himself for the upcoming... whatever it will be, unwrapping Blaine's waist and returning his hand to Blaine's.

"Scared?" He whispers to Blaine, smirking even though he can't see.

"Naa..." Blaine says back, voice just as hushed "I feel safe with you." He says in a teasing tone, but Kurt knows the words are truthful as Blaine squeezes his hand, and Kurt lifts their hands to their lips and barely gets around to brushing his lips to Blaine's knuckles before a hand wraps around his shoulder and he jumps.

"Jesus!" he gasps, and, next to him, Blaine's also startled crashing against Kurt's side, sending him crashing against whoever had grabbed his shoulder and he felt arms and hands all over his arm and a sort of chuckle to his ear, and that was certainly not ok because only Blaine was allowed to do those things. He disentangles himself as fast as possible and pulls Blaine along with him.

"So uncomfortable..." he mutters.

"I know, right?" Blaine says, pulling him a little closer.

The rest of the house is spent between dark corridors like this, and dimly lit rooms with creepy little things around them, and one or two those jumping forward and screaming at them. Apart from the awkward and uncomfortable feeling of some stranger touching him and standing close to him it's actually ok. Especially when Blaine keeps their hands clasped together, and sometimes – when it's completely dark – presses his lips to Kurt's cheeks.

They let go of their hands as the green glow from the exit sign cuts through the darkness. And they step outside to find Rachel and Finn hand in hand waiting for them. Kurt only allows himself a small pang of jealousy before he prompts them to leave.

In the car the two of them share the back seat, finally reveling in the complete freedom to touch each other and, completely ignoring Rachel and Finn, they share, long languid kisses every once in a while. Each kiss that passes just makes Kurt all the more sure about what he wants to suggest tonight. Each kiss that passes just makes it all the more difficult for Kurt to stop himself from blurting out "I love you."

He wants to be a hundred per cent sure when he does say it, and, anyway, it's not like he's going to do it in a car with Rachel and Finn overhearing everything they tell each other.

Once they've arrived and Blaine excuses both of them towards the guest bedroom, Kurt closes the door and immediately wraps his arms around Blaine "Today was amazing, Blaine."

"It was, wasn't it?" Blaine smiles, pressing their lips together.

"I wish we could do this always, no matter what. And I really wish we could hold hands, and hug and kiss..."

"I know..." Blaine murmurs against Kurt's jaw as he drags his lips across the skin, pressing them into a kiss every now and then "I wish I could take you on dates every week."

"Where would you take me?" Kurt teases; finally pulling away, so he can unbutton his jacket.

"Everywhere." Blaine shrugs "The Smithsonian, the zoo... We could spend entire Saturdays, just walking through the city. Talking, holding hands..." Blaine smiles wistfully before he walks closer to Kurt and taking his hand "We're being silly... We'll get to do all of that one day..." he leans down and kisses Kurt softly "Just because it can't happen today doesn't mean it can't happen ever."

"Because you're not going anywhere?" Kurt smiles.

"Because I'm not going anywhere." Blaine agrees with a long kiss.

"Me neither." Kurt breathes as he pulls away.

"Good." Blaine wraps his arms around Kurt's waist and pulls him closer.

Blaine's right there, and Kurt feels so safe, and so comfortable in his arms and those golden eyes are so breathtaking and those lips look and feel and taste so much like home that Kurt needs to say something to keep himself from spilling out words he's pretty sure he's not ready for yet. So what he does say is "I want to blow you." And then he cringes.

"I-huh-what?"

He steels himself, because he needs his second try to go a little smoother "We said we'd talk about it tonight – what we want and what we don't want... I want to b-blow you... I'm ready for it, and I wanna do it, and... look, I can even say it. Here, I want to blow you."

Blaine's gaping at him and his arms around Kurt have just become even tighter.

"With my mouth. On you."

"I... huh... I..."

"Is that... is that ok? Is that something you'd want?"

"Is that ok?!" Blaine breathes "Jesus, Kurt... You have... God, you have no idea what you do to me, do you?"

Kurt feels his cheeks burning, but he braves through, as he lets his hands wander from Blaine's shoulder blades to his rest on his ass and he pulls his hips closer "If it's anything like what would do to me..."

"Fuck." Blaine breathes, burying his face in Kurt's neck and pressing a hot open-mouthed kiss on the skin there before gasping out "I want you so bad, Kurt, *so bad*."

"I want you, too, Blaine... I wanna taste you."

"Need you..." Blaine mumbles as he starts tugging Kurt's shirt out of his jeans. Kurt pulls Blaine's cardigan and undershirt swiftly over his head, and immediately splays his hands against the hot, bare skin. Blaine works the buttons on his shirt fast before he pushes it off Kurt's shoulders and then tugs the two layers of clothes still left and immediately they grab at each other with needy and eager hands.

Blaine pulls them towards the bed, the back of his thighs hitting the mattress before they topple over, and Kurt feels himself being pulled on top of Blaine as they scramble upwards through the bed.

Blaine flips them over soon enough, pressing himself against Kurt for delicious friction before he pulls away just enough to let his hands land on Kurt's belt, unbuckling it speedily. Kurt returns the gesture and they tug each other's pants off with surprising ease and speed. They're back to hungry, desperate, wanton kisses at once, all tongue and teeth, and the only time they deviate from each other's mouths is when Blaine licks and kisses his way through Kurt's throat and jaw and neck, and Kurt whines and bucks against him, before burying fingers deep in dark curls, tugging him back up to drag teeth and tongue across Blaine's ear, sucking the lobe into his mouth. He drags his lips back to Blaine's and feels as his tongue enters and explores his mouth thoroughly. As a reminder of what's to come, Kurt tightens his lips around Blaine's tongue and sucks. The response is instantaneous as Blaine's starts thrusting his hips at a practically frantic pace against Kurt. The feel of Blaine's barely clothed cock against his reminds Kurt what he really means to do, and he lets Blaine's tongue slip out of his mouth, with the dirties wet sound – Blaine panting right into his mouth as he tries to chase back the warm heat.

Wrapping his legs around Blaine's hips he flips them around again, and, like Blaine had done it to him once before, pins Blaine's hands above his head.

He captures Blaine's lower lip between his, sucks on it, nibbles on it, before biting a little harder and Blaine trashes beneath him and moans out "Kuurt...!"

Kurt smiles to himself, glad that at least this much he can do properly. He trails kiss after kiss across Blaine's chin, jaw, neck, throat, collarbone, and chest. He feels a little silly as he wraps his lips around Blaine's nipple and swirls his tongue over it, but the feeling fades as soon as Blaine gasps out, crashing their hips together his wrists trying to fight Kurt's hold. He smiles a little to himself before he trails yet more kisses on his way to the other nipple, licking it, and treating it just as thoroughly, as one hand slides down to cup Blaine through his underwear, stroking him firmly through the thin cotton layer.

Blaine's openly trashing and moaning now and Kurt spares him a quick, but deep kiss to silence him "They're gonna hear you..." Kurt murmurs into Blaine's mouth as he pulls away, his lips moving against Blaine's panting ones as he speaks.

"Yeah..." Blaine gasps, pushing himself against Kurt's hand "Well... I can't... I'm... Fuck."

"Aren't we articulate, tonight." Kurt teases as he slips his hand inside his boxer briefs and wraps his hand around Blaine with a firm grip.

"Sh-Guh..." Blaine moans, burying his face in the crook of Kurt's neck and biting the skin before gasping out "sh-shut up!"

Kurt chuckles to himself before he lowers himself back down to suck a little on Blaine's nipple, hands pumping in a slow, yet steady rhythm. He releases the hard nub, and only as the kisses start trailing lower and lower and he stops being able to keep his hold on Blaine's wrists, the reality of where this is going hits him. His kisses become less needy, but more affectionate, his hand lets go of Blaine's and comes to rest on his hip, pulling the fabric down gently and carefully. Every one of his movements becomes slower and careful, because this needs to be perfect and memorable, for both of them. It's not about driving Blaine wild and crazy – they'll have plenty of time for that in the future – this is about another one of their many firsts and it's about showing Blaine how he really feels about him, about them. This has nothing to do with horniness, and everything with true and tender affection.

As he trails soft kiss after soft kiss, pausing to lick a little bit around his navel, he shuffles downwards lying between Blaine's legs pushing them open with every movement of his body down the mattress, one hand slides Blaine's underwear down them and the other continues to pump, slowly.

Blaine's hands came to rest on Kurt's shoulder, gripping just a little, not enough to hurt or bruise.

He lets out a nervous sigh once he finds himself facing Blaine's hard cock, so long and thick as his hands slides up and down on it. It's the first time he even stops to look at it, and it's equal parts strange and hot to watch his hand working on Blaine this closely. He looks up to find Blaine watching him through hooded eyes, his chest heaving as he bites his lips and takes long eager breath throughs his nose. Feeling only a little self conscious, both because he's nervous and both because he thinks this probably only ever happens in bad pornos, Kurt doesn't look away from Blaine's eyes, as he leans in and presses his tongue against Blaine's cock. Blaine's grip immediately becomes stronger and he bites harder on his lip, keeping his throaty moan inside. Kurt presses his tongue a little firmer, and runs it upwards, along the length of skin underneath.

"Kurt..."

He licks again, and again, trying to feel used to the taste of Blaine's skin and the feel of his cock against his tongue. When he reaches the top he's surprised to taste bittersweet and he realizes Blaine had been leaking. He dips his tongue between the slit, gathering as much pre come as he can, swallowing as one of Blaine's hands lets go of his shoulder and goes to stifle his moans.

"Kuurt...!"

He takes a long, calming breath – his heart hammering against his ribcage – before he lets his mouth sink over Blaine's erection, lips wrapping tightly and tongue swirling around it until it finds a place to stay, pressed against the underside of Blaine's cock. He sinks down as much as he can, careful not to make a fool of himself just yet. From the string of nonsense dripping out of Blaine's mouth he figures he might be doing alright. He sucks as he pulls back up and Blaine whines and cries a little into his hand as he bites down on his knuckles.

Kurt repeats the movement, careful and slow, sinking back down and sucking back up, feeling only a little silly over the few slurping sounds he doesn't manage to stop. By the third time he notices his hand as stayed put all this time and he starts moving to cover the length his mouth can't reach.

"Kuuuurt!"

He has a hard time keeping his movements in check, because the way Blaine's moaning his name has Kurt's cock aching in his briefs. So he figures, the hell with it, and he moves the hand that was holding Blaine's hips down to his briefs, palming himself and stroking a couple of times, before giving up altogether and slipping it inside and wrapping his fingers around himself.

He pants and groans around Blaine's cock at the relief and pleasure shooting through him, and maybe it's the vibrations or just the sound, but Blaine has to fist the sheets and cover his face with a hand.

As he pumps himself faster and tighter he sucks harder and he'd feel bad about the noises that he can't seem to stop, but from the way that Blaine's panting he figures they're not all that damaging to the overall effect of the blowjob. His jaw is starting to hurt a little, so it's a relief when Blaine starts whimpering out "So close, so close, so close"

He intensifies the efforts, moving his tongue along and around Blaine's cock as he moves and sucks up and down, he tightens the ring of his lips and he starts pressing the hardened tip of his tongue between the slit every time he slides up, and Blaine's mumbling "don'tstopdon'tsopdon'tstopdoOKUURT!"

Kurt feels as the warm come fills his mouth and swallows quickly, barely registering the bittersweet taste, and knows better then to linger, pulling away from Blaine's softening cock as soon as he's sure he won't drool come all over him.

As he sits up he's offered the view of a completely trashed Blaine, still panting for dear life with his eyes closed and his lips swollen and red from so much biting. It doesn't take more than a couple of strokes before Kurt's coming all over his hand and gasping out of pleasure. He's eyes aren't open yet when he feels a hand wrapping around his wrist and pulling. Kurt forces his eyes open as he lets Blaine take his hand, jaw dropping once he realizes what Blaine's going to do.

Sure enough his lips wrap around Kurt's middle finger and he sucks and swirls his tongue around it before he pulls away and swallows. "It seemed only fair..." he mutters, still a little breathless "Since you didn't give me the chance to return the favor."

Kurt whines a little at the back of his throat feeling his body trying, in vain, to conjure up another erection "It was no favor..." he sighs as he presses his lips to Blaine's in a long kiss, realizing they're both tasting themselves on each other's tongue, and not feeling the least bit disgusted by it.

It was one of those moments when Kurt could feel the years on him; he could feel how much he'd grown. He wasn't that kid that got scared with the mere mention of the word sex, now. He was kissing someone else, exchanging not just spit but come, and he was perfectly fine with it – more than fine – he was turned on by it. Yep. Kurt Hummel was growing up.

As they continued kissing it wasn't long before they were both hard again, and Blaine had beamed in triumph and pinned Kurt against the bed, teasing, much like Kurt, his path down Kurt's torso, and the showering Kurt's inner thighs with kisses, some small and quick, some long and open-mouthed, hot breath ghosting over wet flesh. Kurt's sure, come the morning, he'll have his thighs covered in hickeys, but honestly, who cares? Certainly not him, and not now with Blaine finally pressing his lips to Kurt's cock, and dragging long, lustful kisses along it's length.

It might be that he's on the receiving end now, but once Blaine starts wrapping lips and tongue around him and sucking, bobbing his head up and down, it progresses quickly, and he can feel the fire burning in his belly surprisingly soon, despite the fact that Blaine chokes a little once, and then, a couple of times through it, there's a few moments of hesitation before his tongue does something a little different. He wonders if he's felt like this too, all tenderness and hesitation, and if it came anywhere close to this he figures he should be proud of himself, because for all the imperfections it has, it's still amazing and mind blowing. The fact alone that someone would want to do this for him is enough.

When Blaine's hand comes up to rub his nipple and his tongue presses harder against the underside of his head, he has a hard time not bucking into Blaine's mouth, whining "So close, Blaine, so close."

Blaine hums, shooting another wave of fiery pleasure through Kurt, and his hand on Kurt's chest disappears, and Kurt realizes that, like himself before, he's stroking himself. He groans at the thought of Blaine touching himself, wanting to have a chance to look and have that image engraved forever in his brain, wondering why in the hell they never did that before – just watch each other masturbate – and committing the idea to memory. He tries to look, but he can't see past Blaine's head bobbing up and down, his lashes ghosting over his cheeks as his eyes are closed, his lips pink and stretched over Kurt's flesh and his cheeks hollowed as he sucks, making the veins in his neck pop and match the straining muscles on his shoulder as, Kurt imagines, his arm moves fast and hard on himself.

Blaine twists the hand he still has on Kurt, squeezing a little tighter and he sucks harder, moving faster and groaning against his cock. Covering his mouth with his hand Kurt muffles out his "I'm co-Blaiiine!" before he arches off the bed and feels his orgasm hit him like an explosion of fire and relief and release. He can barely register Blaine swallowing around him as he rides it out, but he does feel when Blaine pulls away hurriedly before gasping and groaning, burying his face in Kurt's hip, the hand resting on his inner thigh now squeezing tight.

"Oh my god..." he mumbles, as Blaine breathes out his orgasm against the wet skin of his hipbone.

xXxXx

Blaine blinks one eye open. There's too much light and a smooth plane of skin before him. He takes a deep breath and represses a sleepy moan as he tightens his whole body and relaxes, exhaling. Kurt moves a little under him, but when Blaine groggily checks if he's awake he finds his boyfriend's eyes peacefully closed, mouth slightly open letting soft breathing sounds pass through.

Blaine smiles to himself and lays his head back down on Kurt's chest, listening to his steady heartbeat, and feeling his leveled breathing. It's a while before he hears some noises outside their bedroom. He figures Rachel and Finn are awake by now, and so he also figures they didn't awake in the middle of the night to share languid, half asleep kisses, and to press against one another and move against one another in long, drawn out movements and touches that made it seem like they had their whole lives to do it. He figures they didn't bury cries of one another's name in panting kisses.

He turns his face inwards, presses his lips to Kurt's skin and holds him a little tighter, wondering if maybe they have time for Blaine to surprise Kurt with a morning blowjob. He smirks to himself, as his hands begin spreading against smooth expanses of skin, accompanying his grazing lips in their southward journey. Soft, barely there kiss after kiss, Kurt's finally waking up by the time Blaine's licking around his navel. There's a soft moan as hands came to thread fingers through curly hair.

"Morning..." Kurt whimpers with a smile to his voice, just as Blaine presses a kiss to his inner thigh, his almost fully hard cock brushing the side of his face.

Blaine hums in return, squeezing his waist, where his thumbs caressed in softly pressured circles. Kurt's legs wrap themselves around Blaine's torso, right under his arms and keep him in place, as he finally presses his lips in an open mouthed, moist kiss to the base of Kurt's cock. There's a soft gasp as Kurt's

fingers tighten in Blaine's hair, just as the door clicks open and from what Blaine can understand Rachel all but bursts in.

"Rise and Sh-Ahhh!" She screams "Oh my god!"

"Rachel!" Kurt yells, and Blaine all but throws himself on Kurt, covering his groin with his torso, and looks back to find a horrified Rachel, his face burning so much that he needs to look away, bury his face in Kurt's stomach.

"Oh my god!"

"Rachel!"

"Oh my god!"

"Rachel!"

"Oh my god!"

"RACHEL!" Kurt screams picking up a pillow and throwing it right at her face "Get out!"

They're finally alone, the silence only perforated by their horrified gasps and as Rachel's voice sounds outside ("I'm *so* burning those sheets!"), Blaine finally gives up and huffs a laugh. Kurt's stomach shakes with laughter and Blaine tightens his hold on his waist in a half assed hug.

"Jesus..." Blaine sighs after a while.

"This is quite possibly the most mortifying thing that's ever happened to me."

"I can't go out there."

"We have to!" Kurt sits up and Blaine slides off him, rolling over to his back next to Kurt "They'll think we're still at it if we don't!"

"I can't! It's your best friend, who I barely know, and your brother! And you know she's telling him right now!" he whines "I can't go out there right now, I'll die."

Kurt looks down at him, his cheeks still stained scarlet, but smiles nonetheless "Do you want me to go?" he asks "I'll go have breakfast while you shower."

"You'd do that?" Blaine pleads hopeful.

Kurt ducks down for a quick kiss and hops off the bed, finding his briefs and pulling them on "For you."

"My hero!" Blaine sighs and Kurt laughs and picks up Blaine's clothes as well, throwing them carelessly over the bed and himself.

"Yes, well, make my sacrifice worthwhile and get ready while I brave the awkwardness." He shoots over his shoulder before slipping through the door, pulling a shirt over his head.

Blaine lingers for only a minute on the bed, but eventually sits and pulls his underwear on, grabs his towel and shower items and goes to the bathroom. The whole thing is so horrifying that he can't stop thinking about it for one single moment, cringing every two seconds. Damn this weekend and its false sense of security!

Well, not false... per se. They really are safe in this house. It felt amazing to be able to be somewhere and never have to worry about who would see them doing what. Even if Rachel did see him with his mouth around Kurt's cock she would never tell that to anyone, so... taking that into account, it wasn't a false sense of security. It was exactly like it was for everyone else. No one wants to have another person walking in on them having sex, but then again, it was just a matter of intimacy and general sense of privacy, it wasn't – like any other moment of Kurt and Blaine's lives – a matter of near survival-

If this had happened at Dalton they wouldn't be discussing who was brave enough to get out first because the other was just too embarrassed. They'd be terrified beyond their wits who that person would tell, and how much, and what information the press would be publicizing the very next morning.

Blaine smiles to himself, knowing that sooner or later this would be the norm, and not the hiding and lying. The moment the race is over – regardless of the outcome – Blaine reminds himself, he'll stop hiding. Because Kurt deserves better than stolen weekends of easy romance. Blaine deserves better. They both do.

He finishes his shower feeling only remotely better about the interrupted blowjob. I mean, he wasn't even under the covers. Rachel had seen e-ve-ry-thing.

He pulls on his clothes and leaves towards the kitchen, voices sounding over the sounds of breakfast and he feels his cheeks burning already.

"Good morning", he announces with a strained smile, not meeting anyone's eyes as he takes the coffee mug Kurt's offering him.

"Morning." Rachel says before, without the smallest preamble she jumps into a fast monologue "You shouldn't be embarrassed about what happened, Blaine. I mean, you were sharing a bed, and you've been together for months. I knew you'd be doing stuff. I just... wasn't expecting to witness any of it. Honestly, I don't even know why I didn't knock, I should've knocked, and I apologize for that."

"I huh... it's fine." Blaine mutters.

"Well, better me than Finn, anyway." She says lightly and all three boys try not to choke on their drinks "Can you imagine how awkward that would've been? Not only stepbrothers but knowing Kurt used to have a huge crush on Finn."

"Rachel!" Kurt hisses, his face a deep shade of red again.

Blaine all but forgets what happened not half an hour ago, and stares between Finn's intense gaze at his own coffee, and Kurt's murderous glare at Rachel.

"You had a crush on Finn?" Blaine asks, surprise and a tiny bit amused.

"It was before we were stepbrothers." Kurt says defensively.

"He introduced their parents, actually." Rachel laughs "hoping that if the two of them dated-"

"Rachel!" Kurt asks "Yeah, I had a crush on him for like a year, I got over it, though... no story to tell."

"But...." Blaine frowns looking between himself and Finn and having a really hard time finding similarities aside for the hair color "... why? How?"

Kurt raises his chin high in the air, the way he always does when his pride's at stake and says haughtily "He was the only boy at school who was somewhat nice to me – or at least who didn't actively bully me."

And with that he springs from the table and crosses the kitchen towards the door "I'm going to go shower."

Blaine's amusement at the topic is suddenly replaced with an uneasy feeling in the pit of his stomach and he turns to Rachel with a frown. "Is that true?"

"What? The crush? Yes."

"No, that Finn was the only guy who was nice to Kurt...?" He sits and looks between Rachel and Finn.

"During the start of freshman year, yes." Finn shrugs "But I wasn't exactly nice. I just wasn't as much of a douche as everyone else. But then, with glee club and all of the things that went down he had more than just me."

Blaine nods to himself eyeing his coffee losing himself in thought. It wasn't exactly news that Kurt had been bullied back in Lima. He'd said so plenty of times, but each time Blaine was confronted with yet another consequence of those facts, and each time it just hurt him a little more to know that Kurt had had to go through that, mostly alone.

He was packing his things when Kurt finally emerged from the steaming bathroom running his fingers to the still wet strands of his hair. Blaine looks up from folding his sweater and smiles, putting down the sweater and walking over to Kurt. He kisses him as he wraps his arms around Kurt's waist, pulling him close and deepening his kiss, pulling Kurt's tongue inside his mouth to press his own against it in a slow, tender movement.

"Hello to you too!" Kurt gaps as he pulls away, and Blaine beams.

"Hi..." he breathes before reaching in again for another kiss.

"Is this your way of apologizing for thinking it was funny I used to like Finn?"

"Of sorts." Blaine shrugs and kisses him again, feeling as Kurt smiles against him, and rests his arms around his neck.

"I like it." Kurt sighs "you should always apologize like this."

"Mmmm..." Blaine hums against Kurt's lips.

A shy knock at the door interrupts their moment and Finn clears his throat before saying "Huh, guys, could you... like... hurry." he's blushing furiously and Blaine can't help feeling equal parts amused and embarrassed "I kind of need to be home before dinner, so..."

"Sure." Blaine says and pecks Kurt's cheek with finality before stepping away and going back to folding his shirt.

After a long, drawn-out goodbye to Rachel they're finally on the road, and Kurt has taken the first shift, again. Blaine waits until Finn's snores fill the car before resting a hand on Kurt's thigh and squeezing a little and saying softly "Hey, I thought it was funny that you used to like Finn, but it's nothing to be embarrassed about."

"I'm not." Kurt says at once, not taking his eyes off the road.

Blaine gives him a look, even though Kurt doesn't see it, and says "Yes, you are."

"Well, ok, fine. I am. But can you blame me? Everyone thinks it's so funny that I used to like my very straight stepbrother. Oh yes, it's hilarious!"

"Kurt. It's a little bit funny" Blaine says gently "it is, but not like you think it is. At least not for me. I don't think it's funny because 'ha ha look at Kurt and how ridiculous he is', I think it's funny because 'oh my god, look at how awkward it all could've been.'" He smiles a little hoping Kurt can see it in the corner of his eye "And I was just honestly surprised. Because... well... I would've never thought you'd go for someone like... Finn."

Kurt does smile at that "I know, right?!" he rolls his eyes "I was just..."

"Holding on to any hint of sympathy?"

"I guess."

"That sucks." Blaine sighs.

"And he wasn't like... super friendly or anything." Kurt explained "He just wasn't... openly rude and... I guess he just didn't act like I had leper or something, and that made me feel a little less... huh... disgusting." He said, wincing at how strong the word was, and Blaine could only hope that it came out as overstatement rather than accurate.

The fact that what he had to show for his years of abuse in that school was a barely embarrassing crush on his stepbrother just made Blaine admire Kurt all the more. He was truly one of the strongest and bravest people he'd ever met. Superman who? Spiderman who? Batman who? Blaine smiled to himself and resisted the urge to just announce Kurt as perfect and indisputably heroic "You were lonely, of course you'd turn to the only guy who treated you like a human being."

"Kind of, but yes... That's the... That's basically what happened. But that was freshman year, it was a while ago. I'm over it now. I made friends in glee club, and I made friends at Dalton, and I met you, and... everything's better, so..."

"You're not lonely?"

Kurt spares him a quick glance and an honest smile before he turns back to the road and says simply "Not in the least."

"Good." He squeezes Kurt's knee again and says "I don't want you to ever be lonely again."

Kurt's smile grows a little – and it's so beautiful – and he takes a hand off the steering wheel to lace their fingers together.

"So..." Kurt starts with a kind of finality to the conversation before "Have you thought of any songs to audition for regionals?"

"A couple..." he shrugs, even though he's just thought of the perfect one and he knows it's going to be amazing. He keeps it to himself because he wants to surprise Kurt with it.

xXxXx

I'm auditioning a song for regionals today. – B

Kurt barely even tries to hide his iPhone as he reads and replies, old Mr. Jerrins can barely see his own nose, let alone what any of his students are doing – which makes his sociology class easily the least educative in the whole of Dalton Academy.

Which one? – K

Can't tell you. It's a surprise! ;) – B

Is it dedicated to me, then? – K

Yes and no. No, because in an ideal world we'd sing it together as a duet. Yes, because we're not in an ideal world, so I'll just have to settle for singing it to you. – B

*It's going to be romantic, isn't it? The theme was supposed to be *inspirational* (not that I mind romantic, at all) - K*

Why can't it be both? – B

Kurt's already smiling in anticipation as he steps into the warbler's choir room, and sits next to Dom, who's eager to tell him all about his shopping spree adventures that weekend because, surely, only Kurt could ever understand the magnitude of his purchases.

It's not that the conversation is boring – it's really not, Dom's entertaining, to say the least, and the subject is just delightful - but Kurt almost sighs in relief as Wes bangs his gavel, indicating the start of the session. He's turned song upon song over in his head and he's, obviously, not settled on any guesses for Blaine's choice. He's sure it'll be brilliant, and he's sure it'll be chosen for their set list – because, hello, it's Blaine – but he can't help his eagerness to hear it and it's not because regionals are a big deal. It's because Blaine's singing whatever this song is, to him.

He keeps his expression in check as Blaine strides through the door – only half a minute late, with a laughing Josh by his side, holding a guitar. Kurt wants to beam, obviously, and share a meaningful look and maybe even indulge in some bashful blushing, but Sebastian's sitting right next to him and knocking their shoulders together and saying "How was that weekend?" reminding Kurt of everything that was wrong in their lives.

"It was pretty good, yours?" he answers, going for a polite cold shoulder.

"Mostly home, in front of the computer, you know the drill." He shrugs "Want to go out this Friday, there's this new Kate Hudson rom com we can totally not watch...?"

"Tempting, but no." Kurt says without the smallest hint of a smile, turning his head towards Wes who's finished scolding the tardy boys with his eyes.

"Alright, first order of business, as you all know, is auditions for Regionals, who has them?"

Blaine's hand is in the air at once, and Kurt eagerly watches, trying not to bounce in his seat or clap with anticipation, as he situates a chair in the middle of a room and sits, holding his guitar with care and grace.

If Kurt recognizes the opening chords is only because he's watched every musical on this earth at least five times, and knows all their songs – even their originals if the musical itself is only covering them – by heart. But the moment he does that song, one he has never paid much attention to instantly reveals itself as the musical masterpiece that it is, and Kurt wonders how he's never fallen in love with this song before now, he awaits every word, every chord, every harmony as eagerly as he waits the next moment he can kiss Blaine again.

"I..."

Blaine smiles softly as he strums the guitar and sings.

"I will be king

And you

You will be queen

Though nothing will

Drive them away

We can beat them

Just for one day

We can be heroes

Just for one day"

Kurt watches Blaine with a smile he can't hold back. He knows he probably should but it's just so hard when that boy, that amazing boy, is singing about heroes and escaping everything and everyone with just their love.

"And you

You can be mean

And I

I'll drink all the time

'Cause we're lovers

And that is a fact

Yes we're lovers

And that is that"

Kurt almost laughs as he Blaine almost laughs about Kurt being mean, and he wants to slap his shoulder and say "not fair!" but then again, wouldn't that be mean? In the end he stops thinking about that as the word lovers pours put of Blaine's mouth like an ode to happiness, bliss and everything that's ever been right in their lives.

"Though nothing

Will keep us together

We could steal time

Just for one day

We can be Heroes

For ever and ever

What d'you say"

Kurt can't tear his eyes off of Blaine, but if he could he's sure he'd find every single boy in that room enraptured by the song and the voice that sung it. But he can't, because Blaine's idea of stealing time – and space, for that matter – seems like just the thing to do. He pictures the both of them, lying alone in a bed, a morning glow embracing their bodies from the half closed curtains. Blaine's half on top of him, his chin resting on Kurt's collarbone as they sing softly to each other, lullabying each other with the same song, the same whispered melodies of love. They're naked and Kurt's hand travels up and down Blaine's smooth back, raising goose bumps every once in a while; the other hand searches for Blaine's and laces their fingers together, like a perfect puzzle, and brings them up to kiss their tangled skin as if that was the only possible answer there is.

"I

I wish you could swim

Like the dolphins

Like dolphins can swim

Though nothing

Will keep us together

We can beat them

For ever and ever

Oh we can be Heroes

Just for one day"

They kiss and sing, and move and make love as in a reality, which allows all of those things to happen simultaneously. And even though they haven't actually made love, the picture is so clear in Kurt's mind, he almost feels like they did. He almost feels the way Blaine's hands press against his shoulder blades as he pulls Kurt down, close, closer still. He almost feels Blaine's lips and tongue as they kiss and lick and bite at his lips and neck and shoulder and jaw and lips again. He almost feels as Blaine's heels dig into the back of his legs, urging him deeper. He almost feels as all of Blaine suddenly holds him tighter and stills and there's a silent scream that he only feels rather than hears, right next to his ear. He almost feels as the heat and tightness around him contract and become too much and he's suddenly blind, and doesn't even bother containing his scream. And they never once stopped singing about love and escaping and heroes.

"I

I will be king

And you

You will be queen

Though nothing

Will drive them away

We can be Heroes

Just for one day

We can be us

Just for one day"

Kurt raises his head from the crook of Blaine's neck, and finds Blaine's eyes. And they're each other's, and they're all they need in that moment, and that moment is all they're ever going to need, anyway. They share a simple smile and Kurt's fingertips brush stray curls away from a sweaty forehead, baring it for the soft press of a graceful and generous kiss that trails down to smiling, welcoming lips. Kurt can feel Blaine's soul as they kiss and he's sure Blaine can feel his, because it's right there in the open, everything he is, ever was and hopes to be. Everything is out in the open; everything is barred for Blaine and Blaine alone.

Because only Blaine is allowed to witness it, only Blaine can see it, only Blaine knows how to see it. And he's allowed to see Blaine, he can see Blaine, he knows how to see Blaine too. They're exactly, unapologetically and exclusively who they are, and they can be so because the other is there to see it.

"I

I can remember

Standing

By the wall

And the guns

Shot above our heads

And we kissed

As though nothing could fall

And the shame

Was on the other side

Oh we can beat them

For ever and ever

Then we can be Heroes

Just for one day"

As they kiss, and as they sing, and as they make love again and again and again, the world outside doesn't matter. Their frowns and their glares and their words and even their fists can't touch them now, so they're not even real. They're just a far away idea, a concept of something that's bad, that's ugly and that's inhuman. Their love is beautiful, their love is pure and untainted by the horror outside their embrace, and

so they ignore it. It shouldn't be real, and because, in each other's arms they get a say in it, they say it's not real, not now, not here. Everyone else and everywhere else can keep its hate and its sadness and its contempt for love and beauty and bliss. It's their choice. But Kurt and Blaine, they won't ever choose that. They will always choose beauty. They will always choose love.

"We can be Heroes

We can be Heroes

We can be Heroes

Just for one day

We can be Heroes

We're nothing

And nothing will help us

Maybe we're lying

Then you better not stay

But we could be safer

Just for one day"

And in that moment, as he pictures all of this in his head, and as he pictures it so clear that he can almost feel hands and lips and feet... in that moment, even though he doesn't say it then, or that night as they bring each other over the edge with their hands, panting into each other's mouth like it was almost second nature to them now, or even that week... in that moment, Kurt Hummel falls in love with Blaine Anderson.

Chapter Sixteen

"How was the weekend in Ohio?" A voice asks lightly behind him, just as Blaine crosses the door, readjusting his bag's shoulder strap.

Blaine falters for the exact amount of time that makes his words sound stupid and ridiculously fake "What weekend in Ohio?" he says feebly.

Sebastian pushes himself off the wall and smirks "You know... this weekend. How was it? Did you have fun? How's McKinley? Did you manage to get the public school stench off your clothes?"

Blaine frowns, looks around him, half hoping that there's someone he can run to and end this conversation, half hoping there's no one around to hear this. "I've no idea what you're talking about, I stayed home this weekend."

"Oh, sure." Sebastian says "My bad. I just thought... given the fact that both you and Kurt skipped school on Friday and then there was this video interview on one Jacob Israel's blog of Kurt visiting his old school in Lima, Ohio... But I must be wrong." He says teasingly.

"You are." Blaine nods "I was home sick."

"Except..." he says but stops short before waving his hand and shaking his head "Nahh, nevermind."

"What?"

"Nah, forget it, I probably misunderstood things."

"Except *what*?"

"Except..." Sebastian sighs, making a big spectacle of agreeing to say it "I called your house, because I was worried you'd missed out on the load of homework Ms. Tillsten sent out, on Friday, and asked to talk to you, but they said you were out for the weekend. They must've meant 'out cold' for the weekend, as in sick."

Blaine feels his cheeks burning, a mixture of anger, shame and pure fear settling into him. And he just wants to punch Sebastian, but instead he rolls his eyes and says "Clearly, that's exactly what they meant."

"Oh, I'm sorry I misunderstood then." Sebastian shrugs "I did have two questions for you, though?"

Blaine tries not to glare to obviously and nods "Go ahead?"

"Well, first is just... I mean, I'm pretty sure Kurt's never going to go out with me, is he? And I suppose asking you to put a good word in for me isn't really gonna work, is it? But I'm getting kind of... you know... eager. So I was wondering – since you and Kurt aren't together, *obviously* – if you were interested in having some dinner with me, maybe catch a movie...?" Sebastian smirks.

"I-I'm not gay."

"Oh." Sebastian frowns "My gaydar's usually so accurate. Huh. Sorry, then. Oh well, worth a try, right? After hearing such a terrific and truly *heartfelt* rendition of 'Heroes' I just couldn't stop myself from asking – you just sounded so passionate about it. Just fills my head with thoughts, and since no one is taking advantage of that passion, I just thought, what the hell, why not give it a try? Doesn't hurt to ask." He shrugs with a sly smile.

"Right." Blaine resists the urge to clench his jaw "Besides that? You said two questions...?"

"Oh, second one's a request really. I was hoping to secure your vote for when I audition for a regional's solo."

Blaine frowns and says nothing.

"We all know that if you vote for me my chances of getting a solo are pretty good. And, now, I know where that leaves you. You're already assigned two solos, right? So, that means you either vote for me, or for Kurt. Well, I'm sure his audition will be just lovely, but come on, you have to agree with me that his idea is risky, to say the least. And since you're just friends I doubt he'll be upset, right? He'll understand."

"I'd rather wait for the auditions and see who's better."

"I see." Sebastian nods and Blaine waits but a beat before turning and walking away. He's only halfway down the corridor when Sebastian calls out to him "Oh, and Blaine, just remember I asked nicely when everyone's wondering where you *really* spent the weekend tomorrow."

Blaine stops, tries to school his features to indifference and turns back around "Are you... trying to blackmail me?"

"That's such a strong word. Let's go with presenting you with a scenario where we both get what we want out of it. I get a solo for Regionals and you get... that I don't tell anyone that that pretty little hickey on Hummel's neck is from you."

Blaine can feel the cold sweat on the back of his neck as Sebastian brushes past him, smirk in place. He stands there frozen for a good few minutes before he finally starts to move, numbly making his way towards his dorm room.

As he reaches it he drops himself on his bed and stares at the ceiling for a few more minutes. He reaches for his cell and slowly texts Kurt. It's barely been a minute before there's a knock and he calls out "Come in! It's open!"

Kurt sticks his head in for a second, smiles, and then all but seamlessly slips inside, closes the door and sprints to the bed, practically throwing himself on top of Blaine and beaming and laughing "Oh my god, Blaine, that was so good!" it takes a moment to register that Kurt's talking about Blaine's performance not twenty minutes ago. Blaine has no chance of even saying thank you before his lips are captured in a kiss "Amazing!" kiss "You're amazing."

"Uh, t-thanks." He mutters before he's kissed again but he pulls away "Wait, Kurt, wait." He pushes against Kurt's shoulder softly

"What's wrong?" Kurt asks, frowning and sitting back on the edge of the bed.

"I had a... I... Sebastian came up to me. Just now. Asked me about the weekend. He figured it out. I, huh, didn't say he was right. But, I mean,... he *knows*, Kurt."

"Oh."

"And he kind of blackmailed us... me!... us...?"

"Us." Kurt corrects with a small smile, as he takes Blaine's hand into his, warming Blaine's heart a little and soothing his nerves "What did he ask for?"

"A solo."

"But that's David's job."

"He asked for my vote." Blaine shrugs "When you both audition... He knows you'll both go for the same spot, and he knows you'll be better. So he needs someone with some... sway on his side."

"Oh."

Blaine watches carefully as Kurt bites his lips and searches the ceiling for words. He doesn't want to put him in this position, but he can't just give into Sebastian without Kurt's ok – he needs to know Kurt doesn't feel cheated or held back.

"Well then" Kurt shrugs "I guess I'll have to win the solo without your vote."

Even if he can feel the weight of blackmailed guilt lift a little off his shoulders, his stomach doesn't feel any less tied up, and his head hurts too. "But... I... I really don't like that."

"Me neither, but what're you gonna do?" he shrugs with a sad smile.

"I could... ignore him."

"No. Blaine. I think we're pushing the envelope just a little too far, don't you?"

"But... what's he gonna say? That we went on a weekend trip together – ok, fine, so what if we did? That's not enough to prove we're an item. He can't even prove *that*, let alone that we're together! It's not enough!"

"Blaine, of course it is." Kurt half sighs half laughs "The rumors have started, each day there are more – and we both know that if anyone at Dalton's feeding those tabloids it's Sebastian, so you can bet that this will seal the deal for them, proof be damned. You think people care about *proof*? Hearsay's proof enough for them..." he sighs and gives a half hearted chuckle "There's *fanfiction*, Blaine!"

Blaine wants to disagree but he can't. It's true. He's gotten a couple of asks (to put it lightly) on his blog about the whole thing, and even if he refuses to answer them, like any other serious political blog would, he has to admit it worries him that things have gotten to that point. But, the knot in his stomach tells him, what truly worries him is that he can't help feeling worried. He's got this great thing going with this great guy, and why must he always be afraid of anyone finding out? Neither of them deserves this kind of thing, and even if he feels repetitive in his feelings about the whole subject, and the way his guilt comes and goes in waves, he can't really help it. Every time he feels like he's finally handling it well, something comes along to remind him that it's never going to be that easy.

"I'm so tired of always worrying about this, and then feeling guilty about worrying, Kurt..." He sighs "But you're right, of course you're right."

Kurt smiles and runs a palm through Blaine's chest, coming up to squeeze his shoulder "I think you should tattoo that on your wrist or something, just so you never forget."

Blaine chuckles weakly, and drops back to his bed, staring at his ceiling. At once his vision is filled with Kurt as he throws a leg of Blaine's hips, sits on top of his thighs and places both hands on his stomach with playful pressure "Come on!" Kurt urges his "Don't be like that."

He spares him a disheartened smile, as he takes a hand from his stomach and kisses its palm "I'm sorry I'm being such a downer..." He sighs "I know it sucks. It even goes against the song I just sang. But...I can't help it."

"There are better ways to apologize." Kurt teases.

"But what if he asks for something else? What then? What if he just keeps adding demand on demand? Where's the line? When do we just say no?"

"I thought I was the defeatist one in this relationship." Kurt pouts, "Where's my little ray of hopeful sunshine?"

"You're the farthest thing from defeatist." Blaine rolls his eyes "You might be careful and guarded, and maybe even pessimistic, but you're definitely not defeatist."

"No?" Kurt scrunches up his nose adorably.

"No." Blaine says with conviction "Your drive and ambition scare me sometimes."

Kurt smirks and squints his eyes "Good! I got you right where I want you!" he announces proudly.

"Scared?" Blaine chuckles.

"Scared, afraid and intimidated!" Kurt nods, lowering himself just a little bit.

"Completely frightened!"

"Downright panicked!"

"Terrified."

"Petrified!" Kurt gasps theatrically before diving to capture Blaine's lips in his in an intense, eager kiss. It is all that takes for Blaine to forget Sebastian altogether, as he moves his hands to grasp Kurt's ass and pull his hips closer to his own. They move together, eager and passionate, and between open mouthed kisses and panting licks, their lips barely ever stop touching each other's skin, even as they undress. This time it's Kurt who aligns them both, and uses his hand to pump them steadily in a crescendo of mutual pleasure, their legs tangled together as they end up lying on their sides, mouths only separating from each other when jaws and necks and ears beg to be kissed.

Blaine feels Kurt's leg, thrown over his hip, pull him even closer, straining, flexing, relaxing, and the liquid warmth that covers both his stomach as well as his own cock is enough to make him come.

"My hand's a mess... we're a mess." Kurt mutters with a laugh, once his breathing is a little easier, and Blaine laughs too, burying his face in the crook of Kurt's neck, and wrapping his arm tight around his waist. He laughs a little more before taking a deep breath and extricating himself from Kurt's arms and sitting up.

"No!" Kurt calls "Come back!"

"Wait!" He says mid-chuckles, as he reaches for his nightstand "I've got this, I've got this." He takes out the box of Kleenex and after quickly wiping himself, he straddles Kurt and makes sure he's completely clean before he throws the Kleenex away and drapes himself over him.

He smiles and nuzzles the dip of his collarbone as he feels Kurt's arms strong and tight around him. "Hey." Kurt says softly "I never want you to be scared." Fingers bury under curls and massage his scalp.

"I just... you just... You're... a big dreamer, is all." Blaine sighs, trying to find the right words "It's a little overwhelming... sometimes."

"I had to." Blaine feels the shrug more than he sees it "Nobody dreams for me, nobody thinks anything of me – so if I don't do it myself... I'll just have... I'll just give them one more reason to say no."

"But you couldn't do that with me? Us...?" Blaine lifts his head, so he can find Kurt's eyes and smile with as much affection as he can.

"I can now." Kurt says "I told you, I trust you, now. I trust this. I... I believe in this, and I... I do have ambitions for us."

Blaine beams and surges forward to take another kiss "Good. I do, too."

Kurt kisses the tip of Blaine's nose with finality "Which in conclusion means that you're going to vote for Sebastian and that's the end of that."

He sighs but agrees. He fully intends to follow through with that, too. Until the moment they're back in the Warblers' room and they've watched Sebastian's audition (which was actually pretty damn great) and Kurt's standing there, smiling and announcing how he's sure he's selected the perfect song for his idea because it's powerful and inspirational both on technical terms and on meaning and story. He gives a pointed look to Blaine as he ends with a "It's a song that speaks a lot to me, on an emotional level – I can relate to its every word, so..." he shrugs with a slight blush before he starts.

Birds flying high you know how I feel

Sun in the sky you know how I feel

Breeze driftin' on by you know how I feel

Blaine's never heard Kurt's voice quite this low, and it's a surprise he knows no one saw coming. It sounds beautiful. The words sound beautiful. The song sounds beautiful.

It's a new dawn

It's a new day

It's a new life

For me

And I'm feeling good

Blaine feels warm all around as he watches Kurt sing and smile, indeed meaning every word that pours out of his lips, silky smooth, his voice doing magic and full of emotion. Knowing he's wowing every single person in that room Kurt plows through that song like he was born to sing it.

Fish in the sea you know how I feel

River running free you know how I feel

Blossom on the tree you know how I feel

Kurt is walking slowly around the room, singing without any hurry, like he's got all the time in the world for it, like this is for him and himself alone. And maybe a little bit for Blaine, because he keeps glancing his way, and smiling wider each time he does, feeding the butterflies in their stomachs. On some telepathic level Blaine knows that, much like himself and his own song the day before, Kurt would've wanted this to be a duet, and so he feels it that way. He feels those words as his own as well.

Dragonfly out in the sun you know what I mean, don't you know?

Butterflies all havin' fun you know what I mean

Sleep in peace when day is done

That's what I mean

With each verse – or even each word – his voice grows stronger and bolder, and there are chills going down Blaine's spine. He'd be lying if he said it was this pure talent that made him fall completely. The

truth is that it's the climax of a crescendo, since day one. And maybe it's not even the voice or the words, maybe it's the ferocity behind them, the sparkle in his eye, the unguarded smile, the flushed cheeks or the graceful movements, maybe it's simply the glance, the split second their eyes meet and hold with meaning and feeling, but whatever it is it's what tips everything over.

And this old world is a new world

And a bold world

For me

The truth is that there is nothing he wants more than to hold him close, or thread their fingers together, make him smile, make him laugh, make him happy, and smile and laugh because he makes Blaine happy too. He makes Blaine the happiest he's ever been, and he makes him, most of all, hopeful and eager for the future, for a future he wants them to have together, teaching each other, learning from one another, and each making the other happy – day after day making their worlds a better and safer place to live.

Stars when you shine you know how I feel

Scent of the pine you know how I feel

Oh freedom is mine

And I know how I feel

With a smile Blaine puts a word to the feelings that have stopped swirling around his heart to settle down, safe and warm, making themselves right at home in the middle of his chest. Love.

xXxXx

Kurt watches the room erupt into applause as he finishes his song, and he knows he was good – hell, he knows he was better than good, much, much better. There's Dom, who's practically sobbing, there's David, who's positively glowing, there's even Wes, who Kurt has never seen smiling wider. And then there's Blaine, only half clapping, too busy beaming and looking at Kurt with the biggest heart eyes – and for as many times as Wes has teased them both about it, it's the first time that Kurt really does see what he's

talking about. He stops himself from crossing the room and wrapping his arms around his boyfriend and instead does the hardest thing he could do at the moment.

He raises a hand, asking for silence, which takes a while to be conceded. Once he can, he bites his lips and says "I... huh... I... I take this audition back. I'm sorry. I..."

"What?!"

"I realize now this is an awful idea." He says, a heaviness settling on the pit of his stomach. Blaine's frowning at him from across the room, but he completely dismisses him as he continues "This might have sounded ok here, but... hum... it's really, really risky. What if I'm not feeling all that well? What if I'm even the slightest bit nervous? I just... it's too much. You were all right when you said that." He sighs "This is a controlled environment, and we're all friends, but what's going to happen when I'm alone on a stage in front of an audience of strangers? I'm sorry, I think it's a bad idea, and I think Sebastian's audition song, for instance, is a much safer bet, and it's actually really, really good, and it can definitely bring a house to their feet if it's well done."

"I... huh..." David stutters while Blaine tries to get Kurt's attention shaking his head and mouthing 'are you nuts?' "I... That was perfect, Kurt. I mean, perfect. We could win with that alone. If we get that together with Blaine's Heroes, we would put on the best show we've ever had, and we would still have space for one more song. Kurt, come on!"

"No." Kurt shakes his head resolutely "I'm sorry, guys. I can't put the club on the line like that. I don't trust myself that much." He does. He really does.

There's commotion for a while, and each time he reiterates his denial it hurts a little bit more, but at least he meant it when he sung it and no one can take that away from him, no one can blackmail him into betraying *those* words. In the end the rehearsal ends with a very tired Kurt on the verge of tears trailing behind everyone else who, somehow still find it appropriate to beg him to reconsider. But he *can't* and he won't.

"What the hell Kurt, you would've gotten that solo, no matter what!" Blaine hisses, pulling him into an empty classroom.

"Exactly."

"What?"

"First of all, I saw you, I saw your face. You were one moment away from deciding to throw caution to the wind and vote for me."

"Well, yeah, bu-"

"Second, even if you didn't, yes, I know that no amount of persuasion from either you or Sebastian would take that solo away from me, but, then what, Blaine?" Kurt shrugs angrily, feeling his eyes burning and his throat clenching "What would happen when I got the solo and he didn't? You think he'd leave us alone just because you voted for him? He wanted your vote because he thought that would win it for him. But clearly it wouldn't, so... you think he would just sit there and watch me take the solo he wanted?"

"But-"

"So, of course I was better than him, and of course I had in it in the bag. But there are more important things in life than competition solos."

"There are?" Blaine says, and the hopeful way he asks it, like maybe those words made everything a little bit ok, make stop Kurt in his tracks. He reminds himself that he's not mad at Blaine at all – and he wonders when he even forgot that in the first place – and he takes a deep breath.

"Blaine..." he sighs "of course there are, and you're one of them. Obviously." Blaine smiles tentatively and Kurt reaches out for a hand and rolls his eyes "Blaine... come on, of course I care more about you than I do about a stupid song at a stupid competition. Listen, remember when Rachel was telling you about that time she *outsang* me in a diva-off back in McKinley?"

"Yeah...?"

"She doesn't know the full story." Kurt shrugs, pulling Blaine along so they can sit on a desk, their sides pressed together, as Kurt continues to toy with Blaine's hand "We were competing for Defying Gravity-"

"But-"

"I know, I can sing it perfectly well, and I could, too, back then." Kurt smiles "But it's a girl's song, and we were supposed to sing it for sectionals. And – I think it was the day before the diva-off – my dad got a

phone call to his office – how they got that number, I don't know, but they did, and they said something about his son being a fag. And he was pretty upset. He didn't say he was, but I knew he was. And all I could think was how many more of those phone calls would he get when I, son of senator Burt Hummel, got up on a stage in front of hundreds, to sing a girl's song with – let's face it – a girl's voice."

"Kurt..."

"Was it my favorite song? Yes. Would I have loved to get to sing it on a stage for a competition? Of course, I would. Was it more important to me than my dad? No." he shrugs "I told him, though... I don't think I should have, thinking back, but I did. I told him 'dad, I blew the note.' and he was like 'why?!' ... and I just said I loved him more than I loved being a star."

"Oh."

"There are things I want more than a spotlight on a stage, Blaine." He smiles and squeezes Blaine's hand "If it comes to a choice, it's not that hard, trust me."

Blaine sighs and kisses the corner of Kurt's lips "I wish it didn't." he says "But thank you." They kiss slow and tender before Blaine pulls back and says "You come first, too, by the way. You come first for me, you should know that."

Kurt beams and buries his face in the crook of his neck, wrapping his arms around Blaine and wondering how he got from wrecked and exhausted to positively radiant with comfort and calm.

xXxXx

Once they reach Blaine's bedroom, Wes and David are already there, and from the silence that suddenly falls between them they were just talking about Kurt' audition and subsequent withdrawal, and for all that Blaine wants to urge Kurt to listen to them, there's no point. And... well. Kurt might be a little bit right too.

And Kurt loves him.

He might not have said so in so many words. But Blaine knows he does. He can feel it. He said it back too, just also not in so many words.

"Guys, just give it a rest." He shakes his head and sighs, sensing Kurt's discomfort already "Warbler's rehearsal is over, let's leave it at that."

"Fine." Wes says with finality "But you're being silly. Just for the record."

"Noted." Kurt rolled his eyes, dropping himself unceremoniously on Blaine's bed and flipping open a book "now leave me to my Jane Eyre, because I'm falling behind and the paper is due in two weeks."

Blaine shot him a quick smile before sitting at his desk and flipping open his laptop, while Wes and David give into actually studying. He can't help glancing back towards Kurt every two seconds now that he knows they're actually in love. Like, for real *in love*. He smiles to himself as he opens tumblr and then practically chokes on his own breath.

"What?" Wes frowns at once, and Blaine almost tells him, but David's right there, so he shakes his head and just mumbles "Nothing, just choked on nothing..."

He sees Wes smirk to himself, obviously biting back some kind of joke about gag reflexes and whatnots, but he couldn't care less, honestly. Staring back at him, on his screen, is... not double, not triple, maybe not even four times the number of followers he had that same morning, which were actually a lot to begin with. His inbox is completely flooded and as he opens it and scrolls through he gapes at how much of it is only people congratulating the blog on its accuracy and relevance, and he's halfway through reading the new messages when one of them finally answers his unasked question and mentions '*so glad to have read that article, and it was completely right about this blog!*'

Trying, with some difficulty, to follow the breadcrumbs Blaine is completely dumbstruck to find that the blog was mentioned on an on-line article from Washington Post (!), about the new reality surrounding elections, taking into account the new forms of media and information circulation. He reads through it with avid speed. Blaine's blog was mentioned as an example of how the Internet can be both useful and harmful to certain campaigns, seen as the anonymity behind it provides for more freedom when writing than, say, a newspaper, which always belong to certain economic groups subject to political and economical lobbies. It's, thankfully, not mentioned again when they speak of the disadvantages of online sources because of the lack of reliability, and they do go so far as to recommend it for "anyone who wants an, admittedly biased, but thorough, rigorous and well-articulated analysis and deconstruction of Andersons' campaign promises".

Still in complete disbelief, Blaine barely has the presence of mind to say "Hey, Kurt, come read this article I found. I think it might work well for your sociology essay." instead of 'Omygod, my blog was recommended by the fucking WASHINGTON POST and ufck fuck fuck I got like....,rgbjeksdcs' (which he does, however, write in a word document that he leaves open as a prelude to the article).

Kurt puts down his book and makes his way to stand behind Blaine, hovering above his shoulder as he leans closer to read. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees as Kurt frowns and then lurches forward a little, pushing Blaine's hands away from the track pad, but Blaine's swats his hand away and opens the article. He can feel Kurt's eyes skimming through the article just as fast as his own, and then stopping dead as they finally reach the right paragraph.

"Huh... yeah..." Kurt finally sighs, "That's – huh – that's pretty interesting. E-mail me the link. Just in case."

"Sure." Blaine says, voice just as shaky with ill-contained excitement "Oh, one last thing." He opens tumblr and shows him his follower count and watches as Kurt's eyes bulge out.

"Oh m-my... right, yeah, that's awesome. Thanks, Blaine. I'll be sure to check that one too. Thanks." Kurt reluctantly walks back to Blaine's bed where he picks up his book, but it takes a long while before his eyes start moving across the page.

Blaine's trying to decide if he should answer all the.... *Fan mail?*... he's received when his phone buzzes.

OH MY GOD. – K

I KNOW RIGHT? – B

SHIT – K

LIKE. HOW. WHEN. WHY. – B

*I just... Is it weird that all I can think of right now is *I'm so proud of you*? – K*

Blaine beams to himself and looks at Kurt with ill concealed excitement. Kurt chuckles silently but covers it up with a half assed cough and finally looks up towards Wes and David with an almost natural "Anyone hungry? I could go for some dinner right now..."

Wes eyes them suspiciously before agreeing to it and the four of them head to the cafeteria. Blaine spots Sebastian a few tables away, which almost ruins his excitement, and the other boys raises an eyebrow and gives a little smirk, Blaine shoots him a glare and resists the urge to flip him off.

Amid all the confusion of the day Blaine can barely pay attention to the conversation at dinner let alone anything happening around him, so he's particularly startled when Sebastian walks up to him pats his shoulder – a piece of paper discreetly slipping down to his lap – and says "Hey, man, looking forward to rocking that regionals stage together."

Blaine tries to ignore the note as he squints at Sebastian and says, as lightly as he can "Auditions aren't over, yet."

"Oh." Sebastian laughs "I think they kind of are. Kurt, how about this Friday? You, me, a movie and my bed?"

"How about never?"

"Just thought I'd ask. I'm a man of traditions, you see." He shrugs before waving "See you guys around. Sleep tight."

"Night." They all say.

Once Sebastian's gone and the three boys at Blaine's table turn back to their conversation, he picks up the small note and keeps it under the table as he reads it.

That was a smart move from Hummel. But you didn't get a chance to keep your part of the deal. I'll get back to you with a new one.

Blaine feels his blood close to boiling and takes a few deep sighs and wonders if this day could have any more ups and downs. He rolls his eyes at the mess that's his life and pushes his plate away, suddenly not all that hungry, but waits patiently until everyone's finished before going back. David and Kurt head to their respective rooms and Wes and Blaine go to theirs. After a ten-minute catch-up chat with Wes – where he explains hurriedly about the blackmail – much to Wes' dismay and rage – and shows him the article, he picks up his cell phone and texts Kurt about Sebastian's note.

I hate that guy. – K

That makes two of us. – B

What now? – K

We wait...? – B

I guess. – K

That night he sleeps restlessly – his half-dreaming brain conjuring up nightmare after nightmare of terrible unachievable demands and tabloids filled with *intimate* pictures of Kurt and Blaine.

xXxXx

Kurt watches as Blaine stands with Sebastian at the far end of the corridor. Sebastian's smirking, and Blaine's scowling, which isn't surprising at all. Finally, there's some condescending, self-indulgent shoulder patting and the douchebag's walking away. Kurt waits until he's far-gone before he walks to join where Blaine's still standing.

"So...?" he asks after a moment just standing there side by side in silence.

Blaine takes a deep breath and turns to look at him. He shrugs and closes his eyes, rubbing the bridge of his nose between his fingers "He wants me to pretend we're really close friends on twitter, or something."

"What?"

"I think he's under the delusion that being perceived as my friend will make him famous." Blaine sighs.

"Oh." Kurt frowns "That's... that's not so bad."

"No..." Blaine shakes his head, agreeing, "It's really not bad at all. It's annoying, but it's not bad."

"Maybe, it'll be fine...?" Kurt says softly.

"Maybe."

"You said we only need to... hide until the race is over, right? So, the primaries are like two months away. And... your dad could still loose them."

Blaine scoffs at the ridiculousness of that thought – he's by far the strongest candidate, it's true. "He *would* loose if I came out."

Kurt aches to reach out and take his hands and whisper *I love you*, because this seems like a good time to do it, and a moment that needs an *I love you*, except they're in the middle of a crowded corridor and he thinks people might notice them holding hands. So he refrains because he doesn't want to compromise his *I love you*.

Instead he gives Blaine a sad smile and says "Come over for Friday night dinner...? Think you could?"

"Oh, huh... Yeah, I'd like that. I have to got home first, cuz my mom called about something very important they have to show me, but, I'll be there."

"Good. My dad and Carole are going out after dinner, to some fancy party somewhere, and Finn's got plans too, so we could have a sort of date of our own."

Blaine smiles and nods "I would never say no to that."

"Great!" Kurt beams "Dad's been pestering me about inviting you over again actually. We've just been so busy lately I constantly forget."

"He has?" Blaine asks eagerly, which makes Kurt laugh.

"I told you he likes you."

Blaine beams "I like him too." He says with conviction and Kurt laughs again.

With a pleased sigh he holds his hand out and says "Alright, give me your phone!"

Blaine frowns "What for?" but he hands it over anyway.

Kurt opens the twitter app and types out ' SebSmythe your audition was so awesome! Can't wait to rock with you! #RegionalsWatchOut' before handing it back.

"That's one, you should probably tweet every other day to keep him satisfied." He says.

Blaine reads it over and smiles genuinely "Thanks." He nods before pocketing his cell and saying "Come on, I'm starving."

The next day Sebastian looks particularly smug and punchable (even if Kurt's completely against that sort of useless and immature violence) when David – upon there not being any more auditions for the open solo spot – announces him as the second soloist and establishes that Blaine will sing two songs and Sebastian one.

Kurt pulls him aside after the end of rehearsal.

"I just want you to know one thing."

"You actually want to go out with me, but can't because you think I'm too good for you?" He teases and Kurt could totally slap him.

"No." he says instead "I need to remember you're dealing with people here. With actual people. With feelings, and lives, and needs, and problems of their own. And I get that you have your wants and needs and problems, but that doesn't give you the right to be a douche to others, and it certainly doesn't give you the right to treat other people like you do."

"And what is it exactly that I'm doing?" Sebastian smirks.

"You're being a horrible human being and working your way to a lifetime of loneliness, bitterness and regrets. That's what you're doing." Kurt says shortly before he turns and walks away.

On Friday Sebastian seems just as cocky as he stands in the middle of formation for the first go at his regional's number and Kurt can't help but feel a tiny bit disappointed at the complete lack of guilt in his eyes.

He leaves rehearsal feeling completely desperate to get home and hug his father and curl up on the couch next to him, listening to him talk about whatever advances they're making on the campaign – and then later, after dinner, curling up on the same couch, with Blaine and listen to his heartbeat, and his breathing.

He mouths "Dinner's at seven!" to which Blaine nods, before he grabs his bag and all but bolts out the door.

He sighs with relief and hoy as he pushes the door open and calls out "Dad, I'm home!"

"Kitchen!" Burt's voice calls out.

He follows it to find Burt and Carole sitting at the kitchen table, looking as nervous and excited as Kurt whenever he knows he's one please away from convincing his dad to buy him a new pair of shoes. He squints with suspicion "What's going on?"

Burt merely pushes the envelope that Kurt hadn't even noticed lying on the table between them towards him.

"Came on the mail today. For you."

Kurt reads the return address carefully and suddenly his heart is drumming right out of his ribcage.

xXxXx

"Blaine, son." His mother knocks on his bedroom door lightly before pushing it open and striding in. Blaine's barely put his things down, and he's in a hurry. He's about to say so when he notices an envelope on her hand. "This came in the mail for you last week, Monday, I think, but Anita got it mixed up with some your dad's mail, and you weren't even here last weekend, so..."

Blaine reaches for the envelope with already nervous hands. He knows what it is. He just does. Sure enough, there's the symbol, and if that wasn't enough there's the address, too.

xXxXx

Kurt yanks the door open and launches his arms around Blaine "I got in, Blaine! I got in! I got in to Parsons!"

"W-what?"

"I got in to Parsons!" he gasps "Early admissions! I got the letter today! Blaine! I'm... I got in! I got in! I got in!"

"Oh!" Blaine gasps and beams at once and launches and hugs Kurt again "Congratulations! Of course you would, Kurt!"

"Of course I would!" Kurt laughs, rolling his eyes. "Oh, god, I'm shaking with excitement!"

"Yeah, huh, actually... huh, me too!" Blaine bites his lip, containing a beam and Kurt frowns amusedly.

"You're shaking with excitement for me, too?" Kurt laughs.

"No – well, yeah, that too... but huh... I got a letter, too, actually." Blaine chews on his lip as he shoves a piece of paper towards Kurt.

Kurt smiles with curiosity and takes the letter and reads out loud "Dear Mr. Anderson, I am delighted to inform you that the Committee of Admissions and Financial Aid has voted to offer you a place in the Harvard cla-*Harvard?* Harvard?! You got into *Harvard?*!"

"And you got into Parsons!"

"You applied to Harvard and you got into Harvard! OH MY GOD!" Kurt gasped, mind still reeling from it. How did he not know Blaine had applied to Harvard?

"Oh, you didn't know?"

"N-no, but... Blaine, that's amazing!" he gasps "You got into *Harvard!*" He pulls Blaine inside, presses a quick, almost hard kiss on his mouth before pulling away and shouting "Dad! Blaine got into Harvard!"

Burt rounds the corner and Kurt practically crashes into him "Harvard?"

Kurt turns to find Blaine smiling shyly and blushing "Yeah, I did." He nods, and Burt steps forward to clap his shoulder.

"Congrats, kid!" he says

"Thanks."

"Come on, dinner awaits, and we can talk about it with food in front of us..." Burt says and as they walk into the kitchen

Kurt laces their fingers together as they walk through the house, his heart still not quite over so much excitement at once. Carole hugs Blaine and congratulates him before the four of them sit down (Finn's having some diner with his new football team and going to a party afterwards) and conversation starts.

"So, Harvard?" Burt prompts "The dream?"

"Yeah." Blaine nods, and Kurt squeezes his knee under the table "My family's a Yale legacy, but I've always wanted to prove I could do it by myself, you know, without the name."

Burt smiles and nods "So no Yale, for you?"

"I don't think so, no. I applied too, and I'll probably get in, but Harvard... Harvard's the dream, yeah. Definitely."

"But you researched, right? Programs and classes...? What do you want to study?"

"I'm leaning towards law, or political sciences – for the major. Maybe a minor in Economy."

"Politics?" Burt squints playfully and Blaine ducks his head and blushes "Don't tell me you're going into the families business?!" Burt laughs "Going to become your father's protégé?"

Blaine nearly chokes on his water "No, not at all." He chuckles shyly.

"I know, I know – just teasing you, son. *My* protégé?" he shrugs teasingly.

Kurt sees as Blaine starts to blush again and stutter, but he's surprised to find him shaking his head to himself and sitting a little straighter, putting on a smirk and saying "That depends."

"On what?" Burt matches his tone.

"On your stand on gun control." Blaine shrugs.

"I don't have one." Burt frowns, though the smile stays in place.

"Exactly."

Burt laughs and Kurt knows he's about to say something but Carole interrupts with a singsonged "No politics at the table!"

Blaine shoots her his most charming smile – the one that Kurt hardly ever gets and he knows that's a good thing (it means he's not *trying* to charm him) – and elbows Kurt playfully "So Parsons, hey?"

"Oh god!" Kurt sighs "I'm so excited! I'm so on the fence about that or NYADA – Rachel and I are auditioning for NYADA next month –but I got in to Parsons! And I think... I think I want Parsons." He says, voicing his year-long dilemma "I love performance and I love fashion – it's like choosing between two sons. But... I don't know. At the end of the day... I get more of a thrill with fashion, than I do with a stage."

"That's great, that you know that." Blaine beams "But you don't have to choose *now*, do you?"

"No. I've got a little while to decide. But. I don't know."

"W-we... we could talk about it." Blaine says, and Kurt can hear the hesitation in his voice and notices how nervous his smile's become, because they've never done that – they've never talked about each other's future like they were a part of it – they've established they want that, but they've never actually *discussed* it. And when can you assume you have a say in it, or that your opinion is valuable?

Kurt smiles and slips his hand back under the table, squeezes his knee again and nods "Yeah, I'd like that."

Burt clears his throat, snapping the two teens out of their loving gaze "So, there's Parsons and Harvard, then. That's some power between you two, hey?"

"Our own little geniuses!" Carole announces proudly.

"I feel like I need to start looking at apartments in New York, either way!" Kurt sighs. He'd be lying if he didn't say 40% of the excitement about college was moving out.

"What about you?" Carole asks with a sweet smile.

"Oh, my best friend's waiting to know if he's got into Harvard, too – he probably did, though, and if he did we'll start looking at houses in Cambridge during Spring break, I guess."

"Cambridge!" Burt says with a whistle "Well, someone's gonna be on the train a lot." He teases "What's the distance between Cambridge and New York?"

"Oh." Blaine says softly, his smile fading a little and Kurt's heart finally slows to a normal rhythm.

Right.

Distance.

Of course.

How hadn't he thought of that?

"W-well." Blaine's voice breaks Kurt out of his stupor "It's... it's not that far. I don't think. I... huh... I must admit I've never... I... suppose... definitely not more than half a day? I mean..."

"Oh, please, son, I'm just kidding. What is it? A two-hour drive? You'll see each other every weekend, I'll bet." He shrugs. If anyone knows Burt Hummel, it's Kurt Hummel. And Kurt can see him regretting his earlier joke, Kurt can see the understanding dawning on his dad's face that he's just highlighted an issue for the young couple, and he can see, clear as day, as he tries to drop the subject.

"So, hum, yeah, we'll figure it out. Carole, this stuffing is delicious, what did you put here?!"

Not one person at that table is dumb, so the subject remains untouched for the rest of dinner. After dessert Burt checks his watch, announces they'd better go, and kisses Kurt on the forehead as he leaves – a sort of apology, Kurt thinks.

The door clicks behind them and Kurt thinks if he's learned anything about his relationship with Blaine is that issues should be tackled at once and not danced around. He takes Blaine's hand and pulls him into his bedroom, where he opens his laptop and searches for the distance between Harvard and Parsons.

"Four hours." He mumbles.

"On public transportation." Blaine counters, "It's a two hour drive. I think it's doable." He says softly "We'll take turns, one weekend I can come up to New York, another you'll come down to Cambridge." He sighs "I... I think it'll work out."

Kurt has his doubts. They're together every day, as it is (they're *together* practically every day, as it is). Will weekends be enough after that? And when they start having tests and papers and essays to write? And when... no. Blaine's right. It'll work.

"It'll work." Kurt says with conviction he's not sure he has.

"Yes, it will."

"Of course it will." Kurt says taking Blaine's hand and pulling him towards the bed. They lie side by side and Kurt rest his head on Blaine's shoulder, wraps an arm around his waist and holds tight.

"Blaine?"

"Yeah?"

"Why politics?"

"Because I love the idea of having the means to helping others at the best of my ability. Because I think principles and ideals need to come back to politics, and because I think I might be able to do that one day. Because it's something I'm passionate about." It makes sense. Of course it does. If anyone were to have asked Kurt what he thinks Blaine should study, he would've said it was a tie between performing and politics, to be honest. But for some reason his brain doesn't want that to make sense.

"You're passionate about performing."

"I am."

"Why not that? We could both go to NYADA. You'd get in for sure, you're amazing."

"Kurt...!" Blaine half-chuckles, moving a hand up his back to squeeze his shoulder "Don't be like that."

"I just... Are you sure you don't want politics because of your dad? Just to make him mad?"

Blaine laughs quietly "Of course I do. But I want that as a side note, not the other way around. I want to make a difference in this world in a way I know I can, and that I'm sure it'll stick. And as a bonus I get to piss him off. But that's not the point at all."

"You sure?"

"I'm sure."

"Ok..." Kurt sighs.

"We'll make it work, Kurt."

"Ok."

"I love you, Kurt."

Kurt smiles to himself, more than to Blaine, his arm tightens ever so slightly around his boyfriend's waist, his nose turned a little towards Blaine's skin, taking in the smell of cinnamon and fabric softener, and his thumb caresses the dip of Blaine's collarbone as he softly says "I love you, Blaine."

Of course Kurt loves hearing those words almost as much as he loves saying them, but in the end, he smiles even more because he's pretty sure they should've been introduced with a 'it goes without saying'. He gets what the fuss is all about and that makes him chuckle with giddiness, and he lifts his head to find Blaine's eyes. They're the most beautiful they've ever been, shining with love, warmth and quiet happiness.

He dips down for a quick kiss, capturing Blaine's lips in his.

"I want to make love to you." Blaine says, as Kurt pulls back, and his hands move to pull Kurt closer to him.

Their eyes lock again, and Kurt tries to find any lingering doubts in the depths of hazel, but finds none. So, just as sure of it, he smiles softy and says "I want to make love to you, too."

"Now?"

"Definitely."

"Do you have...?"

"Yes." And he nods his head towards his nightstand, which just makes Blaine gasp a little and his eyes become darker.

"Which one of u-"

"Both...?"

"You mean...?"

"Why not?" Kurt shrugs "We've got time." He smiles and leans forward to lock their lips together, Blaine sighing into the kiss, and wrapping his arms so tight around Kurt's shoulders it makes him laugh.

Blaine takes the chance to slip his tongue inside, curling it around Kurt's, as he pulls Kurt on top of him and locks his hips between his legs. They move together in perfect harmony, easily falling into the rhythm they know by heart now, Blaine's hands travelling down to guide Kurt's ass, Kurt's hands settling on Blaine's chest, feeling the hard muscles, the heartbeat, the heat.

Shivers shoot down his spine as Blaine mouths along his neck, teeth and tongue working the tender skin, barely careful not to leave marks. Before they know it clothes are coming off. Shirts first, then belts, and pants, shoes and socks, and finally, amid kisses and gropes, the briefs come off.

Kurt peppers kisses throughout Blaine's torso – neck, shoulder, chest, stomach, navel – his hands exploring skin thoroughly all the while. One wraps around Blaine's cock and between gasps moans of pleasure Blaine parts his legs a little wider "I... huh...you... hum... you first."

Kurt looks up, from where his lips are still brushing Blaine's left hip "You sure?"

"Yeah." He nods eagerly.

"Oh... huh, could you-could you reach into the first drawer, then... the l-lube."

Blaine nods again and twists his body to open the drawer and wrap his hand around the small bottle, which he hands Kurt with almost comic speed.

"Thanks." Kurt mumbles, and pops the bottle open "Like... huh... now?"

"Yeah, please."

"Ok. So. Hum. Just... open your-yeah, right there. So... huh. Right. Ok." He takes a few deep breaths as he coats his right hand fingers with lube. He thinks it's probably a good idea to keep his left hand pumping – maybe it'll distract Blaine from the pain. It is painful, right? "Ready?"

Kurt looks up from where his forefinger's lingering at Blaine's opening, to find him all flushed and wide eyed, nervously nodding. With a deep breath and not really able to tear his eyes away from Blaine's, he pushes in slowly and carefully. It's tight and warm but Blaine doesn't squirm away, so he keeps going until he can't anymore.

"Move it." Blaine breathes "In and out... around... Just move." Kurt nods at once and does just that, and it's not long before Blaine mutters "More, Kurt, more."

As Kurt pulls his hand back to smear some more lube on more fingers he realizes this is definitely not the first time Blaine's done this, and the thought of him doing this to himself, tightens the urgent fire in Kurt's belly. He slides two fingers inside, and once again Blaine merely pushes himself against them, fastening their entrance, and Kurt could just stay there a whole day, watching his boyfriend ride his fingers. But he yanks himself out of his awed stupor and starts moving, scissoring and twisting his fingers and he's surprised when Blaine arches off the bed moaning.

"Yesyesyesyes, right there, Kurt, right there!"

Kurt makes sure to rub his fingers over the same spot again, as the hand on Blaine's cocks pumps with a tighter squeeze.

"More! More! Kurt, you!"

"Wait..." Kurt stills his hands entirely and Blaine whines, trying to move himself against the fingers still in him "we should... three f-fin"

"No, you! I want you, Kurt, please."

"Oh, huh, ok, ok. I... huh. Condom. I need a condom." He says, ignoring the voice in his head that says they're each other's firsts and there's no need for that. He won't be that person. Blaine seems to do just the same as he immediately pulls himself away from Kurt's hands and twists towards the nightstand where he paws for the brand new box of condoms Kurt's been keeping there since they came back from Ohio.

He tears the plastic away, and practically rips it open, sitting up and taking out a small silver square and tearing it open with fumbling movements. One hand comes out to rest over Kurt's waist and pull him closer, and he does.

Kurt sighs and moans a little as Blaine rolls the condom on him, squeezing his hand around Kurt's cock and pumping a few times, as Kurt pours a little lube on himself. Kurt leans over, mouthing at Blaine's neck and pulling his earlobe between his teeth, biting gently before saying "Alright, lay back."

Blaine moves his mouth towards Kurt's in a strong, deep kiss, before he does, breaking the kiss.

Kurt tries not to linger too much at the vision of Blaine all laid out for him, his legs open and bent at the knees, open and waiting for him – entrance still glistening from Kurt's fingers –, because he's sure he could come with that sight alone.

He lies down, covering Blaine's body with his, feels his legs wrap around his hips, and his heels settling on the back of his thighs, his arms coming around to pull him that much closer, hands grabbing the back of Kurt's shoulders. He reaches a hand down and aligns himself with Blaine's entrance, pausing just a moment to register that he's not just about to lose his virginity to Blaine, but he's also taking Blaine's virginity.

"Please..." The low, barely audible plea, breathed right next to his ear as Blaine's lips rub along Kurt's jaw, break him out of it and he pushes in, as slow as possible, biting his lips to keep himself in check.

"Blaine!" he gasps out, once he's fully enveloped in tight heat. It comes out strained and broken. An almost sob.

Blaine's arms around him have tightened impossibly and the way his fingers are digging into Kurt's flesh would hurt at any other time. "K-Kurt... Jes-Kurt..." he breathes and buries his face in the crook of Kurt's neck, moving his legs a little upwards and the moment he does he lets a groan escape him.

"You ok?" Kurt asks, trying to clear his head from everything going on in his body.

"Yes-God-Yes." Blaine sighs into his skin before readjusting his legs again, moaning again, and then taking a deep breath and saying "ok, you can move..."

Kurt pulls out slowly and Blaine gives up on trying to kiss his collarbone altogether, instead choosing to just keep his lips there as he breathes against the wet skin. He pushes back in, almost as slow as before, making Blaine moan.

Again and again it goes, painstakingly slow, until one of Blaine's hands shoot down to grab his ass and push him forward fast and hard, making the both of them scream.

"I'm n-not going to break, Kurt." He mutters, before moving his own hips to pull away, and slamming it back in.

"Ok, ok, ok." Faster. Harder. Ok. Kurt can't definitely do that, so he does, trying to not hold himself back from fear of hurting Blaine.

As both of Blaine's hands come down to cup his ass and guide him through his movements, and his moans get louder and longer, the idea of maybe hurting him gets completely left behind, and Kurt pulls back and pushes with increasing speed, only to have Blaine breathe out "Harder!" or "Faster!" or "More!" every three thrusts, opening his legs wider, his heels practically digging into Kurt's ass now.

Kurt props himself up on his hands, one on each side of Blaine's face, so his movement is less constricted, and once he thrusts back in Blaine arches off the bed and tightens his hold on his ass with a scream "God Kurt!" he pants "Right there! Right there! Don't ever stop, Kurt! Right there!"

Kurt watches Blaine as he screws his eyes shut and bites his lip, and throws his head back and forward and sideways, as thrust after thrust he trashes more and more, hands leaving Kurt to fist the sheets, legs contracting and relaxing around him in a chaotic manner, and Kurt knows he's less than a few thrusts away from watching Blaine completely lose himself in an orgasm, so he reinforces his left arm and moves his right hand to wrap around Blaine's cock.

"Kurt!" Blaine shouts the moment he does and Kurt moves his hand, trying his best to keep his hand and his hips in synch "Kurt! Kurt! Oh my god, KURT!" He's coming, eyes opening wide and dark, cheeks flushed and glistening with running sweat, lips red and swollen, as throws his head back, tightening and loosening around Kurt's cock as he rides out his orgasm. Kurt doesn't notice he's been moaning out Blaine's name

over and over again until Blaine's pulling him down, crashing their lips together, and moving his hips, rolling them, to meet Kurt's hurried, frantic thrusts, until the fire in the deep of his stomach becomes too much and he tips over too, pulling back to moan and pant against Blaine's lips.

"I love you, I love you, I love you." Blaine murmurs against his ear as Kurt lets himself collapse on top of Blaine and buries his nose in his neck, peppering it with small, wet kisses.

They only lay like that for a couple of seconds before Kurt remembers he's still inside of Blaine, with a condom full of come on and that there's a mess between their stomachs. He pulls out, attentive to Blaine small sigh. He unwraps the condom and ties it before getting up and going to his bathroom for a towel, taking the chance to throw it out.

He returns and cleans Blaine's torso reverently, before putting it aside and smirking, from where he sits, straddling Blaine "So... How long before round two?"

Blaine throws his head back in laughter before, in a swift movement, he flips them around, Kurt's legs open around his hips, as his hands run up and down the porcelain white thighs with care and tenderness.

"Did I mention that I love you?" Blaine smiles, lowering down to kiss Kurt's nose.

"Yes." Kurt preens "But you can mention it again, I don't mind."

"I love you." Blaine says softly before kissing his nose again and muttering "I really, really do."

Kurt tilts his head up and captures Blaine's lips in his before saying "Good. I love you, too. I really, really love you too."

It ends up taking them less than ten minutes until they're pressing hard against each other, and Kurt mutters for Blaine to show him, too, so Blaine does. He takes longer with his fingers, not moving for a while, not skipping anything, and definitely not hurrying anything, and Kurt is both thankful – because he barely feels any pain during the whole thing – and frustrated, because by the time Blaine's got a condom on himself and as aligned their hips into place, he's writhing mess.

Blaine moves carefully, too, and Kurt can somehow laugh and say "remember how you said you weren't going to break?" in a breathy voice. Blaine laughs too, before picking up a little speed, pulling back and turning his movements into shallow thrust, that brush that little piece of paradise, and have Kurt fisting

his hair, and reaching down to his own cock and before he knows it his vision his white and he's crying out "Yes!", Blaine following soon after as Kurt takes his nipples into his mouth with sloppy, wet kisses.

They lay side by side, Blaine working the condom off him in silence and throwing it mindlessly away, before resting his head next to Kurt's and, panting, they both stare at the ceiling for a while before Blaine cranes his neck to look at Kurt and say.

"Round three?"

Kurt cranes his neck to raise his eyebrows at Blaine and as he finds him smirking and biting his lips, his eyes shining eager and mischievous he laughs and says "God, yes!"

Blaine grins triumphant, crashing their lips together and pulling Kurt on top of him with a mumbled "God, I'm *so* not walking tomorrow."

Chapter Seventeen

Source: [www. people. com](http://www.people.com)

Move aside Hummel!

It's been a while since I've experienced the gossip mill of high school. But boy, do I miss it!

The Anderson campaign may now rest assured that the rumors of a relationship between the youngest Anderson and the just as young Hummel are over. But they might as well start stressing over the new rumors with one openly gay Sebastian Smythe. The tweets between the two are pretty much obvious in their flirting and there are reports of a budding friendship with a serious case of the heart eyes between the two boys.

One can only feel sorry for Kurt Hummel, who was not only pushed aside as the controversial and shocking love interest for the conservative candidate's son, but also, it seems, as one of the soloists for the Regionals performance of Dalton Academy's show choir. (Who knew show choir could be exciting, huh?) Is this the start of a very interesting love triangle?

Of course, I feel obligated to say everything here is only rumored and there's absolutely no proof that Anderson is actually gay, but who are we kidding, right? A guy that attracts this much attention from two openly gay teens? Something seems very queer about this whole situation.

"We should start thinking of getting dressed," Kurt says between kisses. "My parents should be home soon."

Blaine hums and steals a few more kisses before pulling away and asking, "Do you think there's time for a shower?" He doesn't particularly feel like putting on his clothes and going home smelling of sweat and sex – even if it smells delicious at the moment.

"You go ahead. The towels are in the cabinet under the sink. You can use my shampoo."

"You don't want to join me?" Blaine raises an eyebrow suggestively and smirks, already sitting up, but brushing a finger over Kurt's naked torso.

Kurt laughs. "You'll be the death of me, Blaine Anderson – death by sexual exhaustion."

Blaine shrugs. "Sounds like a good death to me."

"Yes, well, I'd join you but the shower is actually pretty small – barely fits one, let alone two." He sighs as he sits up. "And there's no way we're taking this to any other bathroom in the house when I'm not sure if my parents will walk in at any moment."

"Understandable." Blaine nods. "I'll let you go this one time!" he says in a warning tone, pointing his finger at Kurt like he means it as a threat.

Kurt smiles in response before getting up and pulling on a pair of underwear and a T-shirt. Blaine takes it as his cue to go and closes the bathroom door quietly behind him.

As he waits for the water to heat (in the, indeed, too small for two shower) he inspects himself in the mirror, almost expecting to see some kind of difference. He sees none and shakes his head to himself wondering what exactly he was expecting – a manlier, sharper jaw? Thicker stubble? More chest hair?

The only thing he does notice is the mark on his collarbone and he brushes his thumb over it with a smile.

He winces slightly as he has to step wide to get into the shower and he realizes how painful it will be driving home later that night. He wonders if his parents will notice him fidgeting in his seat tomorrow at lunch, or if they'll ask him about his funny walk. He almost hopes that they do, because when someone is in love it's hard not to want the whole world to know.

He can barely wrap his head around the fact that they've finally said it – those three little words that mean so much.

Blaine knows how they're thrown around like they don't mean a thing by a lot of people – he's seen his friends tell people 'I love you' after barely a week together. He knows the words have been overstretched and he knows a lot of people will use them without knowing their true meaning.

But he also knows that that's not the case with him and Kurt. They'd meant it. They'd waited until they were sure, and they'd meant it. They hadn't had sex that night – they'd made love. He knew that because he'd felt the love between them with every kiss and every touch and every panting word and gasp. There

would be times, sure, when they'd have sex, or even just fuck, but tonight hadn't been about lust or fun, it'd been about love and that's what made Blaine feel like he was truly on top of the world.

He sang a little to himself as he scrubbed his skin, almost sorry to wash Kurt off himself.

"L is for the way you look at me..."

He continued to sing it even as he stepped out (wincing again, his voice breaking slightly, and making him giggle).

"O is for the only one I see..."

He steps out of the bathroom with his towel around his waist and grins widely as he finds Kurt sitting at his desk, spinning his chair towards him, tilting his head in a way that says 'I love you even though you're ridiculous.'

"V is for very, very extraordinary..." Blaine carries on, holding out his hand to Kurt, which he takes as Blaine pulls him to his feet and circles his arms around him. Kurt giggles and wraps his arms around Blaine's neck.

"E is even more than anyone that you adore!" he sings as he moves them across the room in a sloppy waltz.

"And love was made for you and me!" Kurt joins him as he hoists Blaine's hand over their heads and spins him around.

"My ass is sore and I'm so happy about it!" Blaine announces happily making Kurt throw his head back and laugh before swatting him on the shoulder.

"Ok, lover-boy," Kurt says with a smile and a quick peck to Blaine's nose. "I don't want to ruin the night but there's something you should probably see," he says, changing his previously sweet smile to a cringe.

Blaine feels his own smile falter considerably as he asks carefully, "What?"

Kurt pulls him towards the desk, where his computer is open, and he opens an Internet page with which Blaine has become unwillingly familiar lately. He reads the article and finishes with a sigh, dropping his head on Kurt's shoulder and muttering "Can't we ever get a break?"

"I think th-there's a way around this." Kurt says, his voice small and unsure.

"You do?"

"Yeah." He nods. "I should date Sebastian."

"You w-what?!"

"Not for real!" Kurt assures him. "Listen, he wanted to date me because he thought it would make him famous. He wasn't getting that so he changed means and targets. If we pretend to go on a few dates he gets what he originally wanted, and you get the heat off your back." He shrugs. "It's win-win."

"I don't like that." Blaine shakes his head. The thought alone of Kurt on a date with Sebastian made his stomach sick.

"I don't either, but it's either that or..." he sighs, trailing off. "I want to go to dinner with Sebastian as much as I want your father to win the primaries."

Blaine takes his hands and squeezes them tight. "No. I don't want this, Kurt."

"What other option is there, Blaine? It's just a small sacrifice, I-"

"But it's sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice, Kurt," he argues. "You're always sacrificing your needs for mine, and I don't want that!"

"That's what love is." Kurt says softly, leaning closer. "Doing things you don't necessarily want to because it's what the other person needs. Sacrifice is a part of love."

"Not like this." Blaine shakes his head resolutely. "They didn't mean it like that when they said that. They meant that I had to go shopping with you for a whole day and hold your bags while you run from store to store like everything's about to disappear if you don't. They meant that you have to sit through a football game with me every once in a while... That's what they meant when they said love is about sacrifices," Blaine whines.

"I love you, Blaine, but you're wrong." Kurt smiles sadly. "They meant big and they meant small."

"But why does it have to be all on you?"

"Maybe one day it'll be on you, too," Kurt sighs. "Hopefully not." He leans over and kisses Blaine with *love* – because they can use that word to describe their actions now. "Besides, you're worth it."

"Thank you," Blaine says. "I hope I am."

"I wouldn't do it if you weren't." Kurt squeezes Blaine's hands "I'm sure you'd do the same if things were reversed."

"Of course I would." That wasn't even questionable. Blaine would do anything for Kurt – but it isn't *that* fact that makes him be sure he loves Kurt; no, it's the fact that he isn't scared of feeling like that, of giving and opening himself up so freely to someone else. There were many things in life that scared him, but his feeling for Kurt would never be one of them.

"So let me do this." Kurt asks "Please."

"I'll talk to Sebastian on Monday." Blaine sighed.

"No. *We'll* talk to Sebastian on Monday." Kurt corrected with narrow eyes and sharp voice, making Blaine chuckle.

"Ok. We." He laughs but then blanches as they hear the front door open. Between the noise and becoming aware that he's standing there naked with nothing but a towel around his hips, Blaine loses himself in the panic and he's pretty much glued to the spot, as if his legs have forgotten how to run.

Kurt doesn't seem much better either, poorly dressed in a t-shirt and briefs, he's running around in circles collecting random items of clothing and muttering "ohgmygodohgmygodohgmygod." He only stops when there's the horrible, terrible, excruciating sound of a knock at his bedroom door.

Kurt doesn't even have time to scream his "No!" before the door's flung open to reveal Finn.

"Hey, K-Oh."

Blaine's torn between relief and mortification. At least he won't be getting his head ripped off tonight. But still. Kurt's trying to cover himself with the large bundle of clothes he collected, and his voice seems to have vanished, so Blaine does his best to find his own as Finn just stands there, staring.

"Huh... Hi. Could you like... leave...?" He cringes.

"Huh, oh, yeah, yeah, sorry guys." He mumbles "I-I'll be, huh, in my room."

He hurried to close the door behind him and Blaine manages to take the first deep breath since the front door opened. "Oh, thank god."

"Thank god?!"

"Well, it's only Finn." Blaine shrugs. "I'd be dead if it was your parents," he says, grabbing his boxer briefs from Kurt's arms "I can live through embarrassment. Fire arms? Not so much."

"Ok, ok, just get dressed!" he says before pulling on a pair of jeans and jogging out of the bedroom. It barely makes it any better.

It's not long before their thorough and passionate kiss, by the front door, is interrupted by the elevator bell and they part just late enough for Burt and Carole to burst out laughing. Maybe it is funny, but all Blaine can think about is how his hair is ungelled and messy, how his tie is all crooked, how he's leaving his boyfriend's house at one in the morning... how everything around them conspires to scream 'They just had sex!'

"Leaving already?" Carole asks through giggles, and as Blaine feels his face burning he realizes just how tipsy the pair is. It makes the whole thing only a little bit better.

xXxXx

Never once had Kurt imagined Finn would be the first person to know about his lost virginity, but lo and behold, there was a knock at Kurt's door and he sighed out a 'come on in', and Finn was stepping inside timidly.

"Kurt, are you-"

"You promised you wouldn't tell!" Kurt warns at once. He'd made Finn promise silence almost at once.

"I won't, but... Are you... you're sleeping with Blaine...?" Finn asks softly.

"I... huh... well, hum, yes." Kurt answers with burning cheeks. "Not that it's any of your business."

"Oh, huh, it's huh... I just... He's not pressuring you, is he?"

"No!" Kurt gasps. "Of course not! We... we progressed slowly, and hum... tonight was actually the first time we did *it*. But he's never once pressured me into anything, or I him," he adds with a light scold because he's pretty sure Finn's a few words away from saying Kurt's the girl in the relationship, which is just stupid. But his worry is kind of touching.

"Great, that's great. How did you... How... How did it come about?" Finn cringes through his question.

Kurt frowns and answers slowly, unsure if he got the question right "We said 'I love you' for the first time tonight, so..."

"Oh." Finn nods.

"Finn..." Kurt starts as the pieces start fitting together "Do you want to... take the next step with Rachel?" He knows they haven't done it, yet. It's a little bit gross to even think about it, but if they'd done it he's pretty sure he'd know it the minute afterward.

"Well... yes. Of course. And I think she might be ready. She keeps... dropping these little hints... I mean... But. I just don't know how to go about it."

"Oh! Right... Why don't you just..." Kurt sighs "Be open about it. Tell her what you want, ask her if she's ready. And if you both want to, take her out for a nice dinner and make sure to have a... bed and condoms afterward." Kurt can't get over how awkward this is, and as happy as he is about helping his brother out, he was kind of hoping to just lie in his bed and bask in the glory of that night.

"I... huh... How do you just ask?!" Finn sighs. "It's so awkward!"

Kurt chuckles "Well, this is awkward, but you're still here talking about it, aren't you?" He shrugs and says "When you have to do something you just do it, right? No point fighting it. Talk to Rachel, Finn. Talking is always the best way to go about it."

"Ok, I guess you're right."

"Of course I am." He smirks, reminding himself of every time he's shared those words with Blaine with playful banter. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to lay down and dream about my perfect boyfriend..."

"Oh, gross!" Finn gasps. "I don't wanna know about *that*!"

Kurt laughs. "I wasn't telling you about *that*, idiot! I really am going to sleep, now. Trust me, I don't need *that* tonight." He shakes his head and adds under his breath as he pushes Finn out of his bedroom, "Maybe in the morning, but not now..."

"I heard that!" Finn whines just as the door shuts.

Kurt smiles to himself as he turns away from the door and climbs into bed – into the same sheets where, not an hour ago, he was losing himself in Blaine with every movement and touch and smell and taste, over and over again.

He's pretty sure he's given everything he had to give to Blaine, but he's also pretty sure it's safe. Everyone always talks about how scary it is to put your heart out on the line, in someone else's hands. He used to think that – he remembers how scared he was of that. But tonight nothing had been scary. Some moments had been awkward. Some moments had been strange. But he never once felt scared throughout any of it, and he still doesn't.

He's sure Blaine will still be there tomorrow and the day after that, and probably the year after that. How silly is it for an eighteen-year-old boy to be thinking of forever with his first boyfriend? And how silly is it that he doesn't care? That all he wants is to give the world to Blaine, and if he can't give that much, because he's not god, than at least he gives himself – all of himself without shame, doubt, or hesitation.

A few months ago he would've never even thought of this, let alone done it. A few months ago he would've kept his heart safe in its bulletproof box. A few months ago he would've barely entertained the idea of being ok with these many feelings. But a few months ago he hadn't met Blaine. He hadn't met that short kid with a head of curls and the brightest eyes in the world. He hadn't met a boy that could feel with such

intensity and bravery it made Kurt feel silly and even cowardly about all the walls he's ever built for himself. And he hadn't met a boy that didn't make him feel ashamed of having been so cowardly, who only ever understood. He hadn't met the boy who would always say 'it's ok, I get it', no matter how hurt he was, a boy whose first instinct was always to forgive.

He hadn't met a boy whose heart was the purest he'd ever seen. A boy whose heart was the kindest he'd ever felt. The most beautiful he'd ever heard.

Kurt smiles to himself, hugs his pillow tight, marveling at how it smells just the tiniest bit of Blaine, and comes to the conclusion that yes, he's the safest he's ever going to be with Blaine. It might be difficult, because of everyone else around them, but they'll work it out, and Blaine won't ever do anything to hurt Kurt – just like Kurt couldn't even begin to imagine doing anything that hurt Blaine.

Before he falls asleep he texts Blaine.

'I love you - K'

It's five minutes before it buzzes with a reply, and he reads it with half-open eyes and yawn.

'I love you, too. Just got home and I'm pretty sure I'm about to have the best night ever dreaming about you. Dream about me, yeah? :) – B'

xXxXx

Blaine pockets his phone with smile and hops out of the car. He makes his way inside the house still smiling, but he's careful not to make too much noise and wake everyone up. Dropping his keys and his wallet on the little table next to the front door he makes his way to the kitchen where he yanks the fridge open and inspects it closely. One thing about sex – it makes you hungry. Blaine almost laughs to himself as he thinks it. He pulls out the carton of milk and takes it over to the counter, next to a plate of leftover cookies.

He's pouring milk into a glass when the light's flicked on. He startles and splashes some milk on the counter as he whirls around and gasps out, "Grandpa! Jesus, you scared me!"

"Where've you been?" the old man grunts, putting down an empty glass. "Do you think two am is a good time to get home?! Your grandma's worried sick."

"No, she's not." Blaine frowns. "I told mom I'd be out with friends tonight."

"Out with friends, you say." He says, sarcasm dripping "You were out with a boy, weren't you?"

Blaine should probably just say no and get to his room, but he fists his hands and eyes his grandfather with defiance. "So what if I was?"

"Disgusting!" He snarls "Your parents should ground you right now! Running around being someone's butt-toy!" he rants, voice growing louder with each word, and Blaine thinks maybe that was a door creaking upstairs "And the state of you! I can't even stand to look at you! Fix your tie, at the very least!" Blaine doesn't want this right now, he doesn't deserve to have tonight ruined for him, and he just wants to leave. He ignores his glass and the cookies, and he doesn't even bother with cleaning up the spilt milk as he turns to walk away "The whole world doesn't need to know you've been disgracing your family, taking it up the ass! You can't even walk right, can you?! You humiliate us! If you were my son-"

"Well, I'm not." Blaine says, trying to look taller than he feels, as he turns around, biting back the burn in his throat. And because he definitely hears the sound of footsteps approaching the stairs he adds, "If I was your son you wouldn't let anyone say things like that to me, regardless of who was saying them, or why. You just wouldn't."

"Fuck you, you little fa-"

"Dad!" the booming voice of Blaine's father sounds strong and forceful as he interrupts the older man, and his footsteps hurry down the stairs. "That's enough. It's two in the morning, you should go to sleep."

"You don't get to tell me any-"

"You're in my house, dad, I get to tell you what I want," he says, voice harsher than Blaine ever heard directed at his grandparents.

Blaine stares at his father as he stares his own father down. He watches in disbelief as his grandfather finally mumbles, "Disgusting..." and walks away with crisp steps.

His father watches him go and Blaine watches him watching. He looks tired. There are deep lines on his forehead, and he thinks his hair's thinner and grayer, too.

"Dad, I..."

"Go to bed." He interrupts, sounding almost as harsh as he'd had before, and Blaine can't help but obey wordlessly. He swallows hard as he turns, feeling a creeping burn at the back of his throat.

He finds his mother at the top of the stairs. She's clutching her robe's belt, nervously twisting it between her hands and fingers. He considers not saying anything to her either, but when he glances he catches the sparkle of tears.

He stops with his back still to her, because as much as he does forgive her that instant he knows he shouldn't, and with his hand on his doorknob he says, "Good night, mom."

He hears her snuffle before she says, "S-sweet dreams, honey."

He nods to himself and twists the doorknob, stepping inside and closing the door behind himself at once. He leans against it, trying not to succumb to the urge of burying himself in his covers and crying. He barely hears his mother's hushed 'Thank you' as his father walks by, and that just makes it a little bit worse.

He runs a hand over his face, strips to his briefs and his cellphone drops out of his pocket with a thud. He sighs and picks it back up, mindlessly checking for new texts, to find that, in the midst of all the confusion, he missed Kurt's answer.

'I always do. – K'

He smiles to himself, wonders why he even lets these people get him down on a night like this, decides that Kurt's the best thing that's ever happened to him and slides into bed with a bittersweet taste in his mouth.

The next morning he wakes up unusually early and he takes a long shower, clearing his mind and gathering his thoughts. He only starts feeling a small twinge of nerves once he's knocking on his dad's office door.

"Yes?" his voice calls out and Blaine almost has second thoughts, just from hearing it.

He pushes the door open, though, and steps inside. "Good morning."

"Morning." His father grumbles, barely raising his eyes from his computer.

"I need to talk to you, dad."

"Ok." He shrugs.

"Could you... like, pay attention to me, then?" Blaine asks, trying to keep any sour hint out of his voice.

His father takes a deep breath and closes his laptop. "Alright. You have my undivided attention," he says, sounding anything but honest.

"Thank you." He nods, before finding his father's eyes and asking, "Why did you defend me last night?"

"Because it was two am. It wasn't the appropriate time for a screaming match between the two of you." His father shrugs. Blaine knows it's not true, or at the very least, incomplete.

"Did mom ask you to? Was that why you did it?" He refrains from asking what would be the appropriate time.

"She might have insisted, yes."

"And if she hadn't?"

"I would've still said something. I have a business lunch today, I needed a good night's sleep." His tone is business-like, his voice cold with logic and indifference. He turns back to the computer screen.

"Dad," Blaine starts, feeling equal parts annoyed and sad. "You know I could put an end to your campaign, right? Just like that."

This is enough to win back his attention and he stares at Blaine cold and hard. "Blaine, we've been thr-"

"I won't." Blaine says "I won't say anything. I swear. But it's not because I'm afraid you'll take away my trust fund... It's really not because you know very well almost a month away from turning eighteen. It's one month until you can't touch the trust fund and then, no matter what I do, I'm safe. So, the reason I won't destroy your campaign has nothing to do with the *me*." it almost pains him to say things like this and

it pains him that they're true, because they shouldn't be "I won't do it because I love you, and I want you to love me too."

"Blaine, this is silly," he says with an awkward laugh, trying to look dismissive and he succeeds enough to make pain stab through Blaine's heart. "You're my son, of course I love you." It sounds mechanic, at best, and it hurts Blaine worse than it should.

"Then act like it." Blaine pleads, standing up and startling his father. "Defend me because someone says I'm an embarrassment, not because it's two in the morning and you need to sleep."

"I didn't- I don't- I..."

"Every day, dad, I'm lying to my *friends*, not because I need to, or want to, but because you need me to. All I want is for that sacrifice to be recognized, at the very least."

"It is, Bl-"

"No, it's not. And I don't want to be this person. I've told you once and I'll tell you again: I am not your puppet, dad, and I refuse to behave like it, *or* be treated like it."

"I don't... I don't know what you're asking me to do here, Blaine."

"Be my dad. Treat me like I'm your son. Like you *care* about me. Like I'm not a disappointment every day. And most of all, defend me, even when you don't agree with me: stand up for me, because I'm exhausted of doing it alone."

"I..," His dad starts but doesn't finish, just sighs and shrugs.

"I don't want to be that cliché of the gay kid that doesn't speak to his parents ever. I wanna have a relationship with you, even when I leave. I don't need to, but I want to. I mean... God knows I've fantasized about it, about leaving it all behind, you included – never looking back, never having to deal with you again... but that's not what I really want. I want to talk to you. I want you guys to come to my wedding, and I want you to meet my kids if I ever have them... and I want a lot of things with you guys."

"I w-"

"I'm not finished." He interrupts "I only want this if you want it, too. I'm not going to be the only one chasing it, I'm not going to fight for it alone. You have to put in some effort too. I mean it when I say I can leave you behind and never look back – I'm at a point in my life when I've got other things to look forward to, and I don't need to be in a one-sided fight for a messed up relationship with my parents."

"Alright." His father nods, looking a little guilty and embarrassed. "What do you want me to do...?"

"Acknowledge the strain you're putting on me to keep everything a secret," he starts. "Stop and say thank you every once in a while. And... just... *be there*." He sighs, "When someone's saying I'm disgusting *be there*. And not just because mom tells you to be, but because you want to be there."

"Alright. I-I'll... I'll do my best, Blaine."

"Thank you." Blaine nods and stands to leave.

"Yes, well... hum... thank you." His dad says, and even though it's clearly a foreign concept for him and it sounds awkward and stilted, it's still better than nothing at all. It's progress.

That day he almost (*almost*) feels a little bit guilty as he updates his blog, but the knowledge that he can (and should) separate affection from his opinion and beliefs makes up for it. Oh, that and finding out that the business lunch was with some of the worst names in politics, as far as Blaine is concerned.

xXxXx

"Hey, Wes!" Kurt jogs a little to catch up to him. "Any idea where Blaine might be? I needed to talk to him, but he's not answering his phone or my texts."

"Oh!" Wes nods. "We left class a little early. I think he went to the auditorium..."

Kurt frowns. "The auditorium?"

Wes rolls his eyes and smiles fondly "Yeah, he had that 'excuse me, I'm just gonna go pour my heart out through song' look on his face, probably rehearse for Regionals or something."

"Oh, huh... ok" Kurt nods, still a little confused before starting to walk back towards the auditorium "Thanks!" he shoots over his shoulder before he remembers something else. "Wait!" he jogs back. "Do you have Sebastian's number?"

"Huh, sure...?" Wes frowns before he picks his cell phone up and taps quickly through it, holding it out towards Kurt, who takes it, copies the number to his own phone and saves the contact.

"Thanks, Wes. See you at practice!" he smiles and dashes off.

"No problem, see you." He still hears faintly.

He's at the auditorium in less than a minute, and knocks on the door, but of course there's no answer and he thinks there might be the sound of piano playing inside. He pushes the door open carefully.

Blaine's sitting by the piano, playing the soft ending notes of a song as it 'uhhhs' to an stop. Kurt raises his hands to clap, but before he even joins them Blaine starts up again. The piano is soft and even hesitant and Kurt doesn't recognize it.

"There are some nights I hold on to every note I ever wrote

Some nights, I say "fuck it all" and stare at the calendar

Waiting for catastrophes, imagine when they scare me

Into changing whatever it is I am changing into...

And you have every right to be scared."

Kurt almost hopes this isn't about him. He's not scared. Not in the least, and he needs Blaine to know that. He needs Blaine to see how he stopped being scared a long time ago and it was all him.

"Cuz there are some nights I hold you close, pushing you to hold me

Or begging you to lock me up, never let me see the world

Some nights, I live in horror of people on the radio

Tea parties and Twitter, I've never been so bitter"

But of course it is. It's about Kurt, and even if it's amazing to know he's Blaine's safe harbor too, it huts him to think Blaine feels bad about that. He shouldn't.

"And you, why you wanna stay?

Oh my God! Have you listened to me lately?

Lately, I've been going crazy..."

Kurt wants to stop him right then and right there. Tell that there's a big difference between being crazy and being human. Being a coward and being afraid. Being weak and needing support.

"And you, why you wanna stay?

Oh my God! Have you listened to me lately?

Lately, I've been fucking crazy..."

And the thing is, all those things: all those realizations that help each day get brighter and easier, Kurt had them because of Blaine. It was Blaine who taught him those. So, why doesn't he know that?

"There are some nights I wait for someone to save us

But I never look inward, try not to look upward

And some nights I pray a sign is gonna come to me

But usually, I'm just trying to get some sleep... Some nights!"

He doesn't clap as Blaine finally lets go of the last note. Instead he says "I have a lot of reasons I want to stay. Do you need me to list them all?"

Blaine jumps in his seat and he's heaving from both surprise and singing "Kurt!" he gasps.

"I love the way your hair smells of raspberry – even if you use too much gel. I love that you use too much gel. I love the way you always assume the best in people. I love that you didn't do that with Sebastian. And I love that you didn't because you were jealous. I love that you felt guilty about being jealous." He takes each step towards the stage "I love how your first instinct is to forgive. I love how you have the kindest heart I've ever known. I love how you look when you scrunch up your nose. I love the faces you make when you sing. I lo-"

"Kurt... I... What?"

"You were asking why I wanna stay..." Kurt shrugs, as if it's obvious, as he finally reaches Blaine "I know I'm your... shelter... As cheesy as that sounds out loud..." He sits down on the piano next to Blaine, plays a few notes as he talks. "I'm glad I am. I want to be that for you. I truly do. But you know you're that for me too, right?" He stops fiddling with piano keys to find Blaine's eyes with his and lock them together. "The world is as crazy and scary for me as it is for you, and we make it better for *each other*. It is a two-way street."

"Oh... I, huh, yeah..."

"I thought you knew that."

"No, I know. I think... I just... I *know*, but I don't... I have a hard time believing I *am* that for someone, you know. It's... It's what I want the most. To be that for someone – for you. But... I know, Kurt, ok? I know you love me, and... I'm... not – I'm not doubting anything about us."

Kurt smiles "Good. Because we need to go talk to Sebastian, now."

Blaine sighs and scrunches up his nose – in the exact way Kurt loves the most – and whines "Do we really?"

"Yes." Kurt laughs and gets up "Come on!" he pulls Blaine's hands until he yields and stands up as well.

He types a text to Sebastian as they walk.

'Meet me in the warbler's practice room in five. Kurt H.'

The answer comes practically at once and Kurt rolls his eyes with annoyance *'Booty call? I'm pleasantly surprised! I'll be there!'*

"God, I hate the guy." Kurt mutters, as Blaine holds the practice room door open and they slip inside.

"I know, right? I wonder what's his excuse to be such a dickhead."

"Some people just are." Kurt shrugs and refrains from ending the unpleasant topic by locking lips with Blaine. He would like to very much, but there are still *some* dumb ideas he's not willing to try.

"He should start a club with my granddad." Blaine nods "You wouldn't believe the stunt he pulled the other night. Started barking at me again, thought I had sex – he was right about that, though – and started yelling obscenities... I think I like it better when he just pretends I don't exist."

"Pff, he's just jealous, I bet he hasn't has sex in fifty years!" Kurt smirks as he teases.

"Naa..." Blaine laughs, "My youngest uncle is forty years old."

"Between fifty or forty, the difference isn't that much when you're flying solo for so long. Still stands, he's not getting any, and you are. Who's the clear winner in the situation?" Kurt winks.

"I'll tell him that, next time." Blaine nods "Speaking of which, though... Hmmm. I really enjoyed... Friday night, and I was wondering..." he smiles and blushes as he pushes through it, and Kurt has to wonder, after all the things that they've done together, how is it that Blaine's still blushing. "When... can we... meet?"

He stops wondering when he realizes his own cheeks are burning – when did that happen? – and ducks his head and smiles "Jesus, one would think we'd be able to talk about it properly....!" he chuckles, and places a hand over his cheek, trying to cool it down "hmm, I don't know... Would you like to come over after practice and... huh... practice...?"

Blaine chuckles and nods, opening his mouth to speak, but the door opens and an obnoxious voice announces, "I'm here, boot-oh! Threesome! Alright!"

Kurt rolls his eyes and crosses his arms over his chest. "Sebastian. Hi," he says shortly "I hope your weekend was nice."

"Meh." He shrugged, stepping closer. "Hi-ya Blainey-boy."

"Hello."

"So, what's up?" Sebastian leans against a table, adopting his usual casual arrogance.

"I have a proposition for you." Kurt says.

"Marriage?!"

"Proposition, not proposal, idiot." Blaine mutters.

"Uh, someone's a little itchy," Sebastian teases before he looks back to Kurt with an unreadable expression. "Shoot."

"We all know the real reason you started hitting on me was because you thought you might get some free publicity out of it."

"I resent that implication!" he says, but Kurt ignores it with a dismissive wave.

"The exact same reason you then blackmailed Blaine into pretending he's your friend." He continues, "But now that's left us in quite a pickle, because the tabloids went from thinking Blaine and I are together, to thinking you two are together – and don't think for a second we don't know who's feeding those rumors - which is barely better than the first situation."

"Ok..." Sebastian drawls, finally starting to drop the act, and becoming genuinely interested.

"I was wondering if you'd be interesting in achieving your first goal?" he prompts, finally.

"You mean, the two of us? Dating?" Sebastian quirks an eyebrow and there's a sort of smile playing at his lips as he gestures between the two of them.

Kurt nods. "Not really, of course. I wouldn't date you if that meant getting an internship with Alexander McQueen, Tom Ford and Vivienne Westwood *combined*. But just stand pretty close to each other, smile and talk in the general direction of each other, basically pretend to enjoy each other, while out in public."

"Interesting... But... I don't know. I think being the alleged forbidden love interest of closeted Blaine Anderson gives me-"

"And of course I'd gush all about you on twitter and tumblr and whatever other social network there is. Now, as the hypothetical closeted gay you were talking about Blaine couldn't really do that, now, could he?"

"You make a good point..." Sebastian says thoughtfully "But then again we'd need to pretend to be an item here at Dalton too, sweet cheeks..."

"No, you wouldn't," Blaine interrupts. "There's a code of honor at this school that includes a confidentiality agreement. Failure to uphold it means expulsion. But I'm sure *you* read all about that, didn't you?" Blaine glares. "I mean, of course someone as dedicated as yourself to this institution surely wouldn't go to the tabloids to feed rumors about his classmates, would he? Especially if that means expulsion..."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Sebastian responds, his voice hard and every hint of a smile finally gone.

"I'm sure you don't." Blaine nods with a scoff.

"So." Kurt cuts in before things start to get ugly. "That's our offer. You in?" he asks just as the door opens and Warblers start filing in.

"I'll think about it," Sebastian announces dramatically, which only serves to annoy Kurt further. But he's pretty sure they got it – he could see the wheels turning in Sebastian's head. So when, at the end of the day, just as Blaine's kissing him goodnight to leave towards his own dorm room, he receives a text with a simple 'ok' he's not surprised.

It starts with a flirty tweet from Kurt, the answer from Sebastian. A night out on a fairly populated restaurant, a few more tweets and a link to a video of Sebastian singing, a walk around town with a couple of pictures taken and put on twitter, too. The press eats it up like candy, and they feel like they can breathe. They wonder why they never thought of it sooner because, honestly, "it's not that bad."

It's been a month now and it's not that hard just going out twice a week with Sebastian, or even the couple of times he does spend alone with him at school (just to be safe, because maybe someone will comment if

they don't). It's just a few hours he has to himself and his own thoughts. That is, if he's successful at ignoring Sebastian's words, which he manages to be around 75% of the time.

"Does he scream a lot?" Now is not one of those times, obviously.

Kurt yanks his eyes from the book he was reading. The two of them are sitting together at the library, at one of the corner tables, secluded from the rest. He can practically feel Blaine's eyes on the back of his head. "I'm sorry, what was that?"

"Is he a screamer? You know... when you do it does he scream?" Sebastian looks over Kurt's shoulder in the general direction Kurt knows Blaine's sitting. "I can't quite make up my mind about him..." Kurt just stares at him like he's a piece of rotting meat and refrains from any answer whatsoever. "You two *have* done it, right? Of course you have – you were walking funny just the other day... You know preparation is really important, Kurt, you mustn't disregard it." Kurt keeps quietly glaring at him in disgust, but it's not enough to make him shut up "Now *you*... you I'm sure about. I bet you scream pretty damn loud. Now, Blaine... I can't be sure. Some days I feel he's probably one of those really loud beggars; others I just... mmm... I don't know..." Sebastian shrugs and goes back to his book.

Kurt sits there staring at him before the words bubble out of him "What the hell is wrong with you?" he snaps, startling Sebastian who looks up surprised, but manages to keep his voice barely above a whisper. "Do you ever... just... stop to think that there are people in the world besides you...?"

Sebastian just looks dumbfounded for a moment before he says "No... not really."

"And you're ok with that? With how selfish you are? With how bad a person you are? And just... you're ok with being a class A douchebag, and basically not even caring about other people's feelings?"

Sebastian ponders the question before shrugging and saying "Yeah. I'm ok with that."

"How?" Kurt gasps "How can you do that? How can you walk all over people like that and still sleep at night? Don't you think the world's a hard enough place without people like you screwing everyone over?"

"Exactly."

"What?"

"Well, the world's not a bed of roses. You give it a chance to screw you over and it will. So, why wait for the punch, if you can throw it first?" he says simply. "The thing is... what you want – it's never going to just get handed to you. You need to go for it, no matter what. That's the only way you're going to survive in this world."

"I don't want to survive, I want to live."

"That's very pretty. Does it come with a shitty photograph of a Starbucks latte out of focus?" he smirks.

Kurt sighs and rolls his eyes. "My point, Sebastian, is: fifty years down the road none of this is going to matter – the people standing next to you, or the memories you get to keep of them are. And as cliché or cheesy as this is, it's the truth. I'd rather try to get what I want and not get it because I didn't walk all over people for it, than be a selfish brat. If that means I get to come home to someone who'll hold me and say it's ok and tells me they love me, I'll be fine. You'll never have that. At the end of the day you'll be alone and none of what you ever got will mean anything."

"I repent. You've changed me forever." Sebastian drawls.

Kurt sighs and shakes his head, making a show of returning to his book. When they're packing their things Kurt can't help but say, "I just hope sometimes you'll remember that other people have feelings and lives and dreams, too. Just... just know that." he hoists his bag over his shoulder and leaves to his own bedroom. It's Friday and he's got better things to think about than that schmuck.

He's putting his wallet in his bag when there's a soft knock and the door opens, Blaine's head peeping inside.

"Hey" he smiles. "You're ready?"

"Yes!" he picks his bag and remembers to grab his cell phone from his desk before joining Blaine outside. They walk towards their cars together. "I'll see you there," Kurt announces cheerfully.

"Yeah, I might stop to get some gas, but yeah."

Kurt nods, refrains from kissing Blaine like it would be natural to do and climbs into his own car.

In the last four weeks Blaine's been to Friday night dinner three times – at Burt's insistence. Kurt smiles to himself as he thinks about how well the two most important men of his life get along. There was even that time Blaine slept over just because Burt wanted proper company to watch a game with and Finn was out of state visiting Rachel. Kurt had actually stayed in his bedroom working on homework and grinning like an idiot each time the two dumbasses in the living room got carried away and starting talking too loud or cheering like a couple of high school girls.

He steps inside feeling considerably better than he did at the library with Sebastian and calls out, "I'm home!"

"Hey kiddo!" Burt's voice calls from the living room couch. Kurt practically runs towards it, and plops down right next to his dad, burying his head on his shoulder and wrapping his arms around the man's stomach.

"Hey dad!"

"What's up?" Burt chuckles, squeezing his shoulders a little.

"Nothing, I was just... thinking about you and how great you are."

Burt hums appreciatively. "You're not so bad yourself."

"Thanks." Kurt beams, sitting up straighter.

"So where's your fiancé?"

"He had to stop for gas, but he'll be here any minute," Kurt answers, pointedly ignoring the little recurrent joke.

Burt nods and then squints his eyes with something that might be playfulness. "Does he know you're cheating on him?"

"I-huh-What?"

"Oh, I just... I got an campaign intern at my office, this morning, asking me if we should let out any kind of press releases about the apparent romance you seem to be developing with some boy whose name escapes me but is not Blaine Anderson."

"Oh... huh..."

"I told her to leave it alone, I mean, as of now I see no reason to worry, since there are no nude pictures or things like that, but...?"

"It's just... he goes to Dalton – his name's Sebastian, and he transferred a couple months after me, and he was very insistent about me going out with him. But obviously I always said no, because it was pretty obvious he was just looking for his five minutes of fame and I was already with Blaine, anyway. But then he found out about me and Blaine, like for real, and he started blackmailing Blaine about it, and we just figured it was easy to give him what he wanted in the first place, instead of risking it."

"Oh..." Burt nods in understanding. "I see. But, Kurt, you should've come to me about this."

"What would you have done?" Kurt shrugs.

"I'm not sure. But you know this is not ideal, either. What if the kid does something stupid now? He'll be connected to you and therefore to me....it could have really serious implications on my campaign."

"Shit," Kurt mumbles, his heart suddenly hammering against his chest, running wild scenario after wild scenario. "Why didn't I think about that?! I mean, I didn't want to come out with a relationship either way, because I knew that was bound to affect your campaign, but... I didn't see another way. And I honestly didn't even think about that."

"Ok... relax, kid. It's not the end of the world, and if he hasn't done anything like that yet, he probably won't," Burt reasons just as the doorbell rings.

Kurt gives a quick, apologetic and mildly hopeful smile at his dad before he springs up and jogs to open the door. Blaine places a quick kiss on his lips, and steps around him before Kurt can even say "Hi."

"Hey there, Burt." Blaine greets as he slips his coat off. "How was your week?"

"Good. Your dad's losing some big votes!" Burt says happily.

"I know, right? Man, big mistake, that press release he did..." Blaine shrugs "He's been insufferable ever since, actually." He sits down on the left corner of the couch, while Kurt sits between the two – like they usually do. "So Carole's not home yet?"

"I'm afraid not. I was actually just waiting for Kurt so we could get started on dinner. She said she couldn't get home in time to make it herself."

"Do you want the two of us to make it?" Kurt suggested.

"I'm not much of a cook, but I make a spectacular assistant!" Blaine announces, getting up and rolling his sleeves up to his elbows.

"How about we all do it?" Burt chuckles and hops off the couch, too. "And you can both tell me all about this little shit Kurt's apparently dating."

"Sebastian?" Blaine frowns, suddenly confused and not at all smiling.

"That's the name!" Burt gasps as he turns towards the kitchen. "Tell me about this Sebastian."

xXxXx

Blaine feels stupid. There's no other word for it. Stupid. And irresponsible and selfish.

He can't believe they've never even thought about it.

Of course this could hurt Burt's campaign just as bad as the previous rumors hurt his father's. Of course this could turn out to be the worst idea they could've had.

"I am so sorry..." Blaine mumbles.

"Hey, hey, kid, it's ok. There's no need to be like that..."

"No, but you're right. This is insane. What if he just decides to start saying things about Kurt to the press, what if he just-"

"Blaine, kid, it's fine."

"It's not. I'm so selfish. I'm so *stupid*!" he gasps. "We did it to protect my dad's campaign, but what about yours? Why didn't I think of that?!"

"Hey, Blaine!" Burt takes his shoulders and shakes him quiet. "You did it to protect yourself and your dad, not his campaign – which I understand and agree with. Some things are more important than a freaking campaign, Blaine." He sighs and rubs a hand over his face. "Damn, sometimes I forget you're just kids. The two of you are too young to be this caught up in things like these, to be honest. I'm real sorry."

"I don't..." Blaine starts, but he's not quite sure what he should say, "I'm... You... Everything just got so messed up... I'm..."

"I know, Blaine, I know," Burt says "And it's not like anything bad happened."

"Not yet," Blaine counters, looking for Kurt, who's turning the oven on and looking just as distressed and guilt-ridden as Blaine.

"And if anything does happen, we'll deal with it when the time comes," Burt says evenly, a soothing hand on Blaine's shoulder. "But for now I need you *both* to promise to come talk to me if anything else ever happens. Even if it has nothing to do with the campaign, ok? I don't care if you think it's silly, or childish: I'm here, always. If you need someone to talk to, ever, just promise you'll come to me."

"Of course." Blaine nods at once.

"I promise, dad." Kurt says in a kind of sad voice. Burt smiles sadly at him before pulling him into an embrace.

"I'm sorry you're having to deal with all of this shit, kiddo, I really am," he mutters against Kurt's hair and Blaine finds himself smiling at them, and how much they obviously care about each other.

The hug lingers for such a long time that Blaine starts feeling like he's intruding on something completely private and turns his attention back to the long forgotten salad, slicing up tomatoes before Burt's hearty laugh sounds and he's suddenly being pulled into a tight embrace – barely able to drop the knife so it doesn't stab the man.

"You too, Blaine, you're a good sport!"

Blaine chuckles, and it doesn't sound as awkward as would be expected. "I try, thanks."

"He is not, however, a good tomato slicer." Kurt points out in a less than amused tone. "What the hell's that, Blaine? You destroyed the poor tomato!"

Blaine opens his mouth to defend himself but is interrupted by the front door opening and Carole's voice. "Boys?!"

"In the kitchen!" the three of them call back in unison.

Finn trails after her, with a grocery bag in his arms. "Hey guys!"

"I went to pick up a few fresh fruits, since I didn't have time to prepare any kind of dessert..." she smiles before kissing Burt with a quick, simple peck – the kind Blaine imagines he'll be giving Kurt everyday.

Dinner goes by and pleasantly as usual – so much so, Blaine almost forgets everything about Sebastian. He's pretty sure he couldn't live without the Hudmel's (as they call themselves) Friday night dinners, if he tried. He's never felt this comfortable and safe around a dinner table.

Carole suggests a movie as they all eat the fresh fruit she brought "My friend Shonda was telling me about that new Meryl Streep movie – the one with that guy... what's his name? Doesn't have much of a friendly face..." she looks around for ideas, but only gets quirked eyebrows. "From those movies with – huh – with the aliens...?"

"Tommy Lee Jones?" Blaine chances.

"That's the one. He's Meryl Streep's husband but the spark's kind of gone out, so they go to this therapist..."

"Steve Carell!" Kurt interrupts. "The therapist's Steve Carell. I know the movie. Yeah, let's go watch that." He smiles, picking up his and Blaine's plates to take them to the kitchen. Blaine smiles and mouths thank you, but gets up nonetheless to take the everyone's glasses.

Once the table's cleared and the dishwasher loaded up, they settle around the couch. As comfortable as Blaine is with this family it's still the first time they're all watching something together. Finn calls dibs on

the armchair sprawling all over it, and Burt just chuckles and says "Let him have it!" as he sits down on one end of the big couch. Carole sits right next to Burt with a content sigh and snuggles into him.

Blaine finds Kurt's eyes, as he sits down with a soft smile. "Come here..." Kurt mouths holding out his hand for Blaine, which he takes and lets himself be pulled next to Kurt. They sit close – thighs and arms pressed together, but other than holding hands they sit properly.

Finn finds the movie on Netflix and it starts.

By the time Tommy Lee Jones is refusing to go to couples therapy Blaine's arm has come to rest around Kurt's shoulder. "Jackass..." Kurt mutters as Meryl Streep is left alone in the kitchen with tears in her eyes, and Blaine chuckles softly and nods in agreement. When the man does board the plane Kurt smiles to himself and sits a little straighter and Blaine rolls his eyes at his boyfriend with fondness. "Do you identify with her?" Blaine whispers into his ear. "Do you feel neglected, is that it?"

Kurt looks at Blaine with a raised eyebrow before he mutters, "Shut up. Meryl Streep could play a dying rhinoceros and I'd relate to her."

Blaine laughs, and tightens the arm around Kurt.

When the couple on-screen wakes up with their arms around each other Kurt coos and leans into Blaine, pulling his legs up to rest over Blaine's lap. Blaine brushes his lips lightly over his temples, the start of his little butterfly kisses interrupted as everyone laughs at how giddy the couple is talking to Steve Carell that morning.

Kurt's hands come to play with the fabric of Blaine's shirt, and Blaine's fingers are drawing patterns on Kurt's upper arm.

Before Blaine knows it, they're completely cocooned into each other, like they always are when watching movies alone together. Blaine figures they might as well just stay like that now – it'd just be a lot weirder if all of a sudden they just went back to sitting normally next to each other.

He does lean into Kurt's ear and mutters, "Something tells me we'll never really have that problem." He moves his hand to cup Kurt's neck, his thumb rubbing tenderly.

Kurt chuckles quietly, splays his hand across Blaine's chest and squeezes a little. "I'll kill you if you ever stop touching me like that."

"I'm not planning to," he replies with a quick, soft kiss to Kurt's hair. He doesn't miss the way Burt's head turns towards them for a moment, and he feels his cheeks burning even though he tries his hardest at keeping a poker face in place.

Kurt moves one hand to Blaine's upper thigh, squeezes gently and Blaine quirks an eyebrow when he looks up. On-screen, Tommy Lee Jones has his own hand traveling up Meryl Streep's legs, and things are heating up. Blaine rolls his eyes, and, with a firm grip on Kurt's thighs, pulls his legs even closer. He lets his hand rest there – admittedly mere inches away from Kurt's ass – but Kurt lets his hand rest on the inside of Blaine's thighs too – not even an inch from Blaine's groin, and as long as they don't move them there's nothing sexual about it.

"Love you..." he murmurs against Kurt's temple – because it seems like a moment to say it, to treasure. Even if everything's falling apart on the screen, the two of them are in love in a room full of people who accept them and couldn't care less about how close they're sitting.

"Mmm..." Kurt hums, nuzzling Blaine's neck a little before turning back toward the TV.

By the end of the movie Carole's sobbing her eyes out and laughing at her own silliness, and Blaine and Kurt squeeze each other a little tighter just before letting go, and moving to a slightly more acceptable position.

"It's late," Burt says, stretching out as the credits start rolling. "Why don't you stay over, Blaine? There's no need to drive home now, I'm sure you're tired, bud."

"Oh, huh, I..." He's about to say no. It's ridiculous, really, it takes him little over twenty minutes to drive home, but Kurt's hand squeezes his upper thigh and leans into him just a little more. "Hum, yeah, that'd be great, thanks."

Burt smiles and huffs out as he gets up, "Well then, good night, boys." He holds his hand out for Carole, who takes it. "The Mrs. and I have a little therapy of our own to attend to!" he announces and while Carole giggles, blushing and running giddily after Burt towards their bedroom, Kurt and Finn groan in horror.

"I can't believe he just said that..." Finn complains as he leaves. "Night, guys."

"Good night, Finn," they call out in unison as the taller boy leaves still shaking his head and shuddering.

Kurt turns to Blaine with an almost shy smile. "So... let's go to bed?"

"Shouldn't I stay on the couch – you know, like last time?" Blaine half teases.

"Oh, please. If he wanted you to stay on the couch he should've said so."

"It happened two weeks ago. I doubt the rules have changed, " he says with a laugh.

"Well, fine, then. If you don't want to..." he challenges and Blaine sighs and rolls his eyes.

"Of course I *want* to," he says pointedly. "But I also want to keep my head. *Both* of them."

Kurt lets out a loud tinkling laugh. "Wait here," he says with a wink, before rushing down the hallway and knocking on his parents' bedroom door.

"Kurt!" Blaine lets out in a hiss.

"Hey dad! Does Blaine have to sleep on the couch?"

The door opens and Burt's head appears attached to a very naked neck and Kurt just covers his eyes while Burt laughs, "I honestly thought you were going to complain last time, and then I was just too amused to say anything when you didn't. Of course he can sleep in your bedroom. We're all adults here. Bye now." The door shuts and the two of them are left standing there in the hallway with wide eyes and hanging jaws.

"Ok then," Kurt says suddenly, managing to get himself together. "There you go." Blaine's still a little dumbfounded as he follows Kurt towards the bedroom. As soon as the door clicks closed Kurt's arms are wrapped around his neck and he smiles. "Hey, mister..."

Blaine considers asking if the fact that Burt and Carole probably know what's about to happen in this bedroom bothers him, but then Burt's voice sounds in his head. "We're all adults here." He figures it's the truth – so in the end, what the hell. He beams at Kurt, wraps his arms tight around his waist. "Hey yourself!"

"So... do *you* have any fantasies?" Kurt teases.

Blaine laughs, ready to laugh the question off. But something about the way Kurt's smiling up at him with a twinkle in his eyes, pink on his cheeks and biting his lip softly makes his voice break a little and he asks nervously, "Are you... are you serious?"

"What? About the fantasies?"

"Yeah..."

"I was kind of kidding, Blaine, but if you want to try something... I wouldn't... I'd like to know. Yeah."

"Oh, huh..." He chews on his lip before shaking his head. "Never mind." He reaches up for Kurt's lips.

"No, Blaine, really, talk to me!" Kurt insists, half laughing and he resists Blaine's tugs towards the bed. "I remember you once telling me we should be able to talk about these things. And honestly, with the things we've done it seems silly to actually be so... shy about it."

"Well... one thing is when you're in the heat of the moment, Kurt, it's perfectly normal to be-"

"Blaine, stop it. We've been having sex for I think a month now, and we've been doing... other stuff for longer than that. So. Talk to me." Kurt urges, climbing into bed, sitting neatly at its center and pulling on Blaine till he climbs onto it, too.

"Ok..." Blaine mutters. "I'll tell you about it. But. You have to promise me you'll tell me yours too."

"Fair enough." Kurt nods with a smirk.

"And... we don't do it tonight."

"Oh?"

"I... I might... I want to... kind of... be able to... be... like... vocal. And stuff."

"Oh!" Kurt gasps and his back are straighter and his attention has doubled, if such a thing is possible. Blaine just feels himself burning from head to toe. He shouldn't have said anything in the first place.

"I... huh... I just... I keep thinking... I... Ok. Wait. I can't. No, I'm sorry, this is stupid."

"Blaine, stop it! Talk to me. I'm sure it's not that bad."

"You first...?"

"Ok..." Kurt sighs, and now it's his turn to blush and stutter "I know it's silly, but I've always wondered what's so special about sex in... huh... public places... like school... or... hum... a car..." He brushes a few stray strands of hair off his forehead and licks his lips and Blaine can't help but follow the movement of his tongue, his pants already tightening "Or hum... I guess... at the movies... with, hum... well... other people around... like in the movie.... It might be... interesting... I guess... I don't know."

"Oh, that's – huh – that's perfectly fine with me..." Blaine mutters, already leaning forward, his hand moving to Kurt's crotch of its own accord. But another hand stops it and Kurt glares at him – though it's kind of adorable because he's still completely red.

"Your turn."

"Fine." Blaine sighs "I... Have you ever just... wanted to lose yourself completely in the... sensations of it all? Like... give up total control... Like... just... give yourself over entirely, and just... let the other person just... do whatever the hell he wanted."

"Huh..."

"Cause I do... like all the time... I love it when you just pin me against the mattress or something and just... like take me completely – you can't imagine how good that feels, I just... I just... I want more, you know? I want... I want you to have everything – to just... have everything. All of me... and I just... I keep thinking about it... about what it would be like if you just..." He cringes as he lets out the final words. "Tied me up and just... took control."

It's a few moments before Blaine manages to raise his eyes towards Kurt's. He's sitting there with wide eyes and open mouth, and Blaine can only hope that's a good thing – maybe it is because Kurt's lips are red and swollen and his eyes are dark and he lunges forward and crashes their lips together hungrily. Blaine practically sags with relief, giving himself over to the kiss and letting Kurt pull him on top of himself, wrapping his legs around Blaine's hips before flipping them over in a swift movement. He's tearing Blaine's shirt open, mouthing hungrily at each expanse of skin that gets newly exposed.

"I d-didn't mean n-now...!" Blaine moans as Kurt suddenly cups his cock through his jeans.

"I know..." Kurt says against Blaine's nipple, his breath cooling the spit and making it become a hard nub and Blaine has to fist the sheets to control himself "I just... fuck Blaine, you're so hot." Kurt's never talked like this before, never even acted like this. He moves his hand against Blaine's cock and Blaine tries his best not to whimper too loud, before giving up altogether and shoving his own hand between them to unfasten his belt and his pants as quickly as possible.

They shuffle out of their clothes in hurried, frantic movements stopping once or twice to kiss hungrily at each other. Kurt pushes Blaine against the mattress and pins his hands above his head. "You like it like this?" he breathes against Blaine's ear before he licks its shell and bites its lobe.

Blaine merely thrusts his naked hips against Kurt, his cock rubbing against Kurt's in delicious friction. Kurt's hands leave Blaine, though, one finding its way into his bedside table, and the other playing with Blaine's nipples, making him writhe and pant beneath him.

Blaine's free hand wraps around Kurt's cock and he loves the sound that leaves his boyfriend's throat as he starts pumping. He grabs a handful of Kurt's ass and pulls him closer, making him thrust into Blaine's hand.

He can't believe they're doing this. It's probably the first time they've ever just done this. They're fucking. Clear and simple. In the month or so that they've been having sex, they always *make love*. But not tonight. They're fucking. And it's so hot Blaine can barely breathe. And they probably could've chosen a better night to do it – one when they don't have to keep themselves from screaming names or begging for more. But Blaine doesn't care about that now, because Kurt's taking his hand and squeezing lube onto his finger and panting against his lips "I need your fingers inside of me." He kisses hard and then bites Blaine's lower lips and breathes out, "Now."

Blaine nods, dumbly and only takes a second between moving his arm around Kurt, and opening his cheeks with one hand, finding his hole with his other. He circles it, thinks about teasing Kurt a little, but the idea's cut short when Kurt just pushes himself against his finger, driving Blaine's finger fast and hard into him. They both gasp, and stop for just a second, and then Kurt's fucking himself onto Blaine's finger.

It takes Blaine a little while to get around the idea but when he does he just pushes Kurt and flips them over. He sits up, just so he can sit with Kurt splayed beneath him, arching his back, panting, thrashing, as

his legs are wide open around Blaine's hips and his cock is rock hard and leaking against his stomach and Blaine's hand is buried in his ass.

"More?" Blaine mutters.

"God yes!"

So he thrusts two fingers inside without even giving Kurt enough time to miss the first one. He moves his hand fast, crooking his fingers just right – the way he knows Kurt likes – and scissoring them, and it isn't long before Kurt's slamming his hips against Blaine's hand harder and silently pleading for more. As he fills Kurt with three fingers he bends down to lick the pre come leaking off his cock and Kurt buries his high pitched moan against the pillow, arching off the bed.

"Fuck Kurt..." Blaine pants, rutting against the mattress, as he mouths at Kurt's cock.

"I know, right?" Kurt pants back.

"Shit! I just..."

"Stop talking!" Kurt laughs, before grabbing Blaine's shoulder and pulling him upwards, crashing their lips back together, shoving his tongue inside, and sucking on Blaine's tongue hard, moaning, and making Blaine almost forget about moving his hand still inside Kurt. There's a quick shove to Blaine's shoulder and they're flipping over again and Kurt's pulling off Blaine's hand and twisting and stretching himself frantically as he searches the open drawer of his bedside table. He brings out a condom and rips the silver plastic open. In swift moves he rolls it on Blaine and pants out, "You ready?"

"You're kidding me, right?" Blaine chuckles with a broken voice.

Kurt grins and sits on Blaine, moving slowly until Blaine is balls deep inside him.

"Fuuuuuck..." Blaine whines at the heat and the tightness.

"God...!" Kurt throws his head back, and if he could Blaine would lunge for that gorgeous neck and mouth all over it, but Kurt's hands are pressing Blaine's chest down as he uses it as leverage, starting to move up, almost all the way up, until Blaine's dick is about to slip about, before he slams back down again. They pant, high and needy, before he does it again, and again, and again, and faster, and harder.

"Kurt! Kurt! Kurt!" is the only word Blaine can seem to remember right now. He can feel the heat in his belly closing in on him, so he grabs Kurt's cock and he grips it hard and moves fast. And shit if they don't come together, Kurt's arms finally giving out as he buries his head on the pillow right next to Blaine, just as Blaine chokes down his scream with a fist in his mouth.

"Oh god..." Kurt mumbles feebly as he rolls off Blaine, his now soft cock slipping out and Blaine hisses at the hypersensitivity. "Sorry."

"s'ok..." he mumbles.

"I... huh... wow."

"I know... I.... shit, Kurt."

"I think I like your idea." Kurt finally says.

"I think you do."

Chapter Eighteen

Kurt feels the morning light against his eyes, but keeps them closed for a while. He lets his head rise and fall with Blaine's chest as he listens to the quiet thumping of his boyfriend's heart, moving his finger in barely there movements across his bare stomach. His peaceful bliss is interrupted when a buzzing noise prompts Kurt to crack one eye open. On the nightstand he can see Blaine's cell phone vibrating with an incoming call. He sighs, closes his eye, sighs again and opens both. Propping himself on one elbow he leans over Blaine.

"Blaine..." he calls softly, to no response "Blaine, hey, wake up." Still nothing "Wake up, wake up, wake up!" he chuckles, speaking a little louder. Blaine's eyes remain just as closed and unmoving, until Kurt finally prods him on the shoulder and the boy finally jerks awake – practically punching, kicking and slapping all of Kurt in the process.

"M'awake!" he announces and he tries and fails to sit up.

Kurt chuckles. "Morning, your phone's ringing," he informs, as he stretches and reaches over Blaine, picks up the offending item and holds it out.

Blaine fumbles to grab it and press it to his ear then it buzzes right on his skin and he scrunches his face adorably, almost drops it to get it away from his ear, fumbles again as he tries to swipe his finger to answer the call. "Mmm?"

Kurt smiles as he climbs out of bed, grabbing a pair of briefs from the drawer and pulling them on (they probably shouldn't have slept naked...). He goes around the room collecting articles of clothing, separating his from Blaine's, while the other seems to have forgotten how to even talk.

"Hmhmom..." he's mumbling. "Wes... I told you I wasaving dinner'ere." He pauses and Kurt doesn't even need to hear Blaine's mom to know what she says and sure enough, "Oh. Right. I forgot. Sorry. We were watchinamovie and I... mmm... I fell asleep, so. That's... sorry." Kurt smiles to himself as he finishes folding Blaine's clothes, laying them down at the foot of the bed as Blaine closes his eyes while listening to his mother "Right. Like an (yawn) hour... Yeah. OK Thanks mom, I'm sorry. Bye." He hangs up, drops his hand to his side and sighs loudly.

"Trouble?" Kurt quirks an amused eyebrow.

"I doubt. We've been... better, lately... you know." Blaine shrugs lazily. "It'll be fine."

"Good." He bends and kisses the tip of Blaine's nose. "I'm going to take a shower..."

"Wake me up when you're done," Blaine murmurs, already turning to hug and nuzzle the empty pillow next to him. Kurt laughs, presses another kiss to the back of Blaine's neck and goes off to the bathroom, towel and clothes in hand.

He sings cheerfully as he scrubs his skin carefully (Kleenexes aren't as effective in the daylight as they seem through the hazy cloud of post-orgasm bliss and exhaustion), and last night's still so vivid in his mind that he can easily pretend those are Blaine's hands massaging his scalp or feeling down his legs. Therefore, it obviously takes him a little longer than expected to finish, but once he does, and pulls on his most comfortable clothes, he leaves the bathroom with a satisfied grin that's not usually there most mornings. He climbs on the bed, straddles a sleeping Blaine, laying on his stomach, and begins to peck and bite at the back of his neck and shoulders.

"Wake up!" he sing songs.

"Mmmphhfivemominuss," is what he gets in return, as Blaine buries his face in deeper.

"No, wake up, or I'll eat you up!"

"Gohead."

"I will!" Kurt threatens, withholding his laughter. "I haven't had breakfast yet! I'll eat you! I swear!" To prove his point he attacks Blaine's shoulder, mouthing sloppily at it, with tongue and teeth, and as he moves lower and towards his waist he can feel Blaine starting to squirm away and hold back his own laughter, so he persists.

"Stop it!" Blaine pants, voice scratchy and breaking with a whiny chuckle.

"No." Kurt laughs as continues tickling at Blaine's sides with mouth and hands and finally Blaine's twisting and turning and unmistakably awake.

"You're – hah – evil!" he gasps through cries. "Stop!"

"I thought you liked to give up total control..." Kurt teases. "Give yourself over to sensations..." he says, one hand still working against the tight stomach and another reaching towards an armpit.

"Shu-ut up! Ha!" He arches out, nearly throwing Kurt off him when the latter blows a raspberry right over his belly-button. "Kuuurt!" he whines.

Kurt finally stops and sits back to grin at him and lets out a chuckle at the panting mess beneath him. With a tinkling laugh he ducks down for a quick kiss, but Blaine's hand shoots up to hold him in place and quick turns to lingering, and lingering turns to long, and long to passionate, and passionate to deep, and then Kurt's leg is brushing Blaine's erection, and he smiles as he pulls away.

"Now that you're up, you can hit the shower, *mister*."

"What?!" Blaine gasps in horror as Kurt promptly hops off the bed and practically jogs towards the door. "What the... Kurt?!"

"Shower, Blaine, shower." He grins and slips through the door.

He walks into the kitchen to find his dad already sipping a cup of coffee and he chirps, "Good morning!" as he pours a cup for himself.

"Morning!" his dad says, and after a moment of silently watching Kurt prance around the kitchen getting this and that for breakfast he observes, "someone's in a good mood today."

Kurt blushes a little and only shoots a smile over his shoulder as he picks the bread up from the toaster.

"Sleep well?" Burt teases before laughing to himself and saying, "forget it, I don't really wanna know."

"Thanks..." Kurt mutters, but still can't help smiling as he sits down with his coffee and buttered toast.

"But honestly, I know I said all that about waiting till you're thirty when we had the talk..." Burt sighs. "And obviously you didn't... I don't... I... what I mean to say, Kurt, is – you two are real good for each other, and it makes me happy that I can offer you a place where you can just... be in love and... take advantage of that love."

"Oh... That's... thanks, dad." Kurt smiles reaching for his dad's hand and squeezing it "I appreciate it. We both do."

"Well, it's the le-Hello, Blaine!" Kurt turns his head to find Blaine still buttoning up the top of his shirt, bowtie hanging over his shoulders, coat under his arm, and bag already over one shoulder.

"Hi!" Blaine smiles. "Good morning! I have to run. I told my mom I'd be back in... huh..." he checks his wrist but doesn't find a watch and Kurt smiles to himself and makes a mental note to go find it later. "Well, I gotta run."

"Eat something!" Burt says.

"Huh... right." Blaine looks around and grins as he grabs an apple and holds it up for Burt's approval.

"Here. I don't want you eating and driving. Both hands belong on the steering wheel."

"Right, right." Blaine nods and takes the first bite, letting his bag drop to the floor and leaning against the counter. Burt smiles, turns to Kurt and smiles to him too, who smiles back, and the three of them spend a few minutes just smiling at each other. Kurt bites his lips and brings his coffee to his mouth to try and distract himself from the almost awkwardness, while Blaine continues to eat his apple.

Burt chuckles and shakes his head to himself before clearing his throat. "So, any special plans this weekend?" he asks conversationally, and Blaine looks surprised at being addressed and shakes his head before he starts to speak – voice straining at the first word from having just swallowed.

"No, not really, no." He shrugs and then his eyebrows shoot up as if he's just remembered something. "Actually, that reminds me... huh. I was thinking on Monday, just having a quiet... like... movie night with the warblers, and then... having dinner with you...? I'm not... feeling much of a big party vibe here... so." He shrugs. "What do you think?"

"Sounds fine!" Kurt breathes, heart hammering against his ribcage.

"Great!" Blaine takes one last bite, before throwing the core out and ducking for a quick kiss on Kurt's cheek. "Gotta run!" he says, picking up his stuff. "Bye, Mr. Hummel!"

This is not what Kurt thinks it is.

"It's Burt!" Burt calls back but Blaine's already disappearing into the hallway.

This can't be what Kurt thinks it is.

"Bye Burt!" the boy hollers back.

Because if it is, then Kurt's forgotten it.

"Bye, Blaine! Drive safe!"

And Kurt can't have forgotten it.

"I always do!" The front door closes.

No. it can't be.

"It's Blaine's birthday, isn't it?"

It's Blaine's birthday.

"Yes."

"And you completely forgot about it, didn't you?"

And Kurt's completely forgotten about it.

"Yes."

"Ah, well. As the kids say these days, shit fuck shit."

Shit fuck shit, indeed.

xXxXx

"I'm home!" Blaine calls as he shuts the door behind him, walking fast towards the living room where he hopes his parents are. "Hi!" he breathes as he finds his mother reading a magazine on the couch. He dips and kisses her cheek. "I'm sorry, I am! I completely forgot!"

She sighs and rolls her eyes. "Well, don't let it happen again! We were worried, Blaine. Next time make sure you cell phone is next to you – I really don't like calling you up fifty times with no answer."

"Of course, of course....it was still on vibrate only because of classes and I forgot it in my bag, and we were watching a movie. I'm sorry."

"It's OK, just don't do it again, Blaine."

"Promise," he smiles.

"OK. Now, go on and talk to your father, he had something he wanted to discuss with you."

Blaine nods and leaves her, only stopping on his way to his dad's study to drop his bag and coat at the foot of the stairs. He knocks carefully before pushing the door in.

"Hey," he says "good morning. I'm sorry I didn't call last night, I forgot."

"Yes, well, your mother was worried sick. Next time remember," his father says simply. "That's not what I wanted to talk about, though. Have a seat." Blaine does as he's told. "I was looking at my calendar and I've noticed I have a very, *very* important and big fundraiser, just before the primaries start. The big names will all be there, and I really need it to be great, actually. Now, of course, there's already some sort of entertainment for the night, probably a band too, but it would mean a lot to me if you could perform."

"Oh."

"I mean, it wouldn't have to be for hours, or anything, maybe just a couple of songs. But I think it would look really good."

"Yeah, it would... it would show a united family, I guess."

"Yes, that's..." Blaine can practically hear the words 'what I was going for' stop, just short of a train wreck, and he coughs and clears his throat instead. "Well, I mean, you're so good at singing and all that... stuff, I

just thought it'd be a nice idea. I'd really like that. I've never gotten the chance to watch one of your... show choir... thingies... so. I could finally watch you perform live. I have a feeling that the living room piano and an actual stage have some kind of difference going on between them, performance wise."

"Yes, they do. That sounds great, dad."

"It does? You'll do it?" His father looks half surprised.

"Of course." Blaine frowns, why would the man even think otherwise? As bad as everything ever was, Blaine had never denied him a single smile for the cameras – and he knew this was just that, another way to smile for the cameras and pretend they were perfect and happy, but the fact that his father tried to act otherwise meant he was at least attempting at behaving like a real father, now, which was progress. "It'll be fun. I guess."

"Great!" his father smiled, though it was slightly uneasy and strained. "That was it, I guess, you can go-oh, wait!" he shook his head and toyed nervously with his pencil. "I'm leaving this Thursday, you know, right? So I won't be here for a family birthday party on Friday. I was wondering if you'd mind it if we had it tomorrow night – of course we'll have to wait until midnight to sing happy birthday, because god forbid your grandmother ever stops believing it's bad luck to do it before. It's just that if we don't, I won't be here. I wish I only had to leave on Saturday, but..."

"Oh sure." Blaine nods. "Are you ready for that, yet?" he asks, genuinely interested. "The debate, I mean...?"

"Sure," the older man nods with a half shrug. "I mean, it's usually same old, same old. It'll be fine, I guess."

"Cool." Blaine nods and stands. "Well... huh..."

"Thanks for saying yes," his dad says to fill the awkward silence and Blaine relaxes just a little as he nods and walks to the door.

"Anytime." He shrugs and walks out the door. Closes it and just stands there, frowning and trying to wrap his mind around what just happened. Things really are different, he thinks.

Two months ago his father would've just demanded his presence in the fundraiser, now he asks and talks about 'meaning a lot' and 'getting to watch him perform live'. Of course Blaine knows that's mostly a lie, or at the very least an euphemism, but it still feels nice that he's making the effort to be... *nice*.

He smiles to himself as he goes to his bedroom, and as he updates his blog he feels a kind of guilt run through him, and because it takes two to tango he decides to make a post about the things about the Anderson campaign that are actually good, interesting and cohesive points and ideas (*In the Spirit of Fairness* – he titles it).

My dad's being openly nice to me. It feels weird. It feels like when I was ten and he'd come play with me every once in a while. – B

*So things really **are** that different? Show me your ways, O master. – W*

I think so. I think I really got through to him last month. I feel a little bit stupid for being this happy after all that happened, but I really am. – B

*That's great, Blaine. You **should** be happy – W*

We're staying up until midnight tomorrow, just so he can be here to sing happy birthday to me. – B

Wow! Well, aren't you a regular Brady Bunch! – W

Shit! Sorry, Wes. I didn't mean it like that. I didn't mean to rub it in your face or anything. Sorry! – B

*Relax, Blaine. It was a joke. I **am** happy for you! Of course I'm happy for you! I didn't take it like that, at all. It was just a stupid joke. I'm sorry, it was an idiot thing to say. – W*

OK, thank you... Do you want to do something today? - B

Actually, yes, very much so. Dad's at home. There was lipstick again. Belt buckle this time. I swear, he does this on purpose. I can barely hear myself thinking with all the screaming. – W

Shit Wes! Come over, we'll watch a movie or something. – B

Thanks. I will. I'll be over in an hour, I guess. – W

Wes does come over, and they put a movie on, but don't watch it, instead Wes just starts crying and panting out things like "I hate him for doing this..." and "I hate her for always forgiving him" and "I hate them for not even noticing what it's doing to *us*..." Blaine just sits next to him, with an arm around his shoulders and listening without even once glancing at the screen. Actually they put several movies on, they spend the whole day in Blaine's room – Blaine's mom comes in a few times with trays of food, and if she notices Wes' tear stained cheeks she doesn't say anything – but she also doesn't insist on dinner time or how 'it's getting late and maybe Wes' parents want him home for dinner' which is a first in all the years the two of them have been best friends.

Wes ends up calling his mother to let her know he's staying over for the rest of the weekend.

It's almost weird for Blaine, sharing a bed with someone other than Kurt, and he tells Wes that in a sort of embarrassed whisper, when the lights are off.

"Yes, well, just don't get confused and grab my junk or anything."

Blaine laughs and punches him. "You wish!"

"I do not!" Wes punches back. "Perfect gold star straight, thank you very much!"

Blaine laughs harder. "I seem to remember one night when-"

"That was drunk experimentation and it was just a kiss so it doesn't count!"

"Excuse me, I wasn't the one shoving *my* tongue down *your* throat!"

"You were drinking strawberry vodka! You smelled like a girl! And you have girly lips, too. It was a perfectly understandable mistake."

Blaine chuckles. It's just playful banter really. The kiss had been more than two years ago and there had never been a repeat of it or anything close to it. It had ended as suddenly as it started with both of them just shaking their heads and saying "Nope....no. Not really, no." And they had gone back to drinking and playing a lousy game of poker.

Silence falls between them. It's comfortable and easy, but Blaine knows that there are things that still need to be said. It turns to his side, catching a faint light from the window tracing Wes profile – he's got his eyes

open and staring at the ceiling, and his smile is gone. He touches a hand to his shoulder in a comforting gesture and says, "I'm sorry, Wes. " Wes just turns to look at him and gives him a sad half smile. "And... well, I love you, man."

Wes' smile grows wider and more genuine. "Love you, too, Blaine." He reaches to pat Blaine's hand on his shoulder. "Thanks for everything."

"Anytime," he nods, and lays back down on his back.

The two of them stare at the ceiling until eventually they don't even notice falling asleep and wake up way past breakfast time.

They go downstairs to have breakfast and Blaine's mother is unusually nice and attentive with Wes, which just makes Blaine happier. He kisses her cheek and whispers, "Thank you," as he takes a plate of eggs from her hands, and she just smiles and nods.

His grandfather though, walks in for a glass of water and just spends a long time staring at Wes through squinted eyes. Blaine shakes off the annoyance and ignores the man completely, paying attention as Wes rants about all the things that need to be done before Regionals, which are barely two weeks away.

He smiles condescendingly at how anal Wes is about the Warblers, before assuring him that rehearsals are actually pretty much great and that they'll be fantastic. They've gotten the harmonies down to perfection, and choreography is practically done, too.

The two of them head upstairs to work on a growing mountain of homework (what with the end of term fast approaching, things are finally starting to pile up), until their brains are made into mush and they decide to take a break and help Blaine's mom and grandmother with making dinner. Blaine particularly loves decorating the birthday cake, and he feels nothing but affection as his grandmother walks him through it and laughs every time he fumbles with the icing and ends up with the cream all over his hands and arms and hair.

Dinner is actually pretty nice – Blaine's becoming really good at ignoring his grandfather, which means the scowls and grumbles don't even phase him. The fact that Wes is there means the world to him, and he thinks this is the first time this house has actually felt like home.

He and Wes perform a couple of songs on the piano, as they wait for midnight to come along, and the whole thing is just *nice*.

It's always an awkward experience standing there while a bunch of people sing Happy Birthday to you, but this time it's kind of OK, because it's the first time in almost five years Blaine actually feels like they mean it.

When his father hands him a slender, tightly wrapped box and he opens to find his dad's favorite watch, his stomach actually does a somersault, and he beams with genuine gratitude – he loves that watch – and it's just the right type of vintage.

"Now, you be careful with that!" his father – dad, his *dad* warns with a teasing smile. "It's a family heirloom. I've already given your brother the wedding cufflinks. You get my first watch. Which I got when I turned eighteen, too."

"Wow, gee, dad, thanks!" he gasps. "I really love it! It's beautiful! Thanks! This has always been my favorite watch of yours!"

"Well I guess you have good taste, then."

The call he gets from Kurt half an hour later is really just the cherry on top of a really, really good birthday. It's not a long call because they both need to wake up early and it's already way past midnight, and Wes is right next to Blaine, anyway – so it's not like they can just... you know.

But there's enough time for "happy birthday!" (and then Kurt actually sings it) and "I love you!" and then Burt's stealing Kurt's phone to laugh and say, "Happy Birthday, kiddo, I hope you're in for many, many more!"

So when he goes to bed that night he's pretty much stoked.

xXxXx

His weekend had been hell. Hell. HELL.

That's what happens when you actually forget your boyfriend's birthday and you remember barely TWO DAYS from it. All of Saturday is spent brainstorming – he calls Rachel, he calls Mercedes, Tina – he even calls Finn – that's how desperate for ideas he is.

He doesn't want to be one of those lame boyfriends who just gives the other a really good sexual experience and says 'there you go', but he guesses that should probably still be on the agenda. He makes sure the house is empty on Friday and when Burt agrees and asks no questions, he's very much relieved. A serenade is also an obvious choice and he spends two hours until he finds the perfect song.

But it's still not enough. He needs something else. Something that Blaine can keep. Like the scarf on Christmas. Blaine had loved that.

Burt, in the end, is the most helpful about this whole thing. "What does he love to do? What do you love to do? What do you think Blaine might love to do, that you could show him?" he asks. "Don't be redundant – don't go with the obvious. So he loves music – everyone knows that – everyone probably gives him music stuff. I doubt there's something he needs for that he doesn't already have. He loves politics – there's not much you can give him related to that, anyway. Give him something he doesn't *know* that he might want."

"OK... but what...?" he groans.

"I don't know... When you're upset, is there anything that makes you *feel* better...?"

Kurt thinks about it. He doesn't just shrug and mumble 'I dunno', instead he chews on his lips and he thinks. "Him... you... Mom's dresser, the way it smells..." he starts after a while. "Baking... singing, definitely... writing... writing about things that are good and I should always remember... and reading those things, too... watching musicals... or even cheesy romantic comedies..."

"OK, that's enough," Burt nods. "Is there anything in that list that you think he might find great?"

"I..."

"For example... the smell thing – that's actually pretty great, because smell is the sense that works best with memories, so, maybe you could incorporate it somehow... I'm sure he... huh... likes the way you smell, for instance. And it is true that you won't always be with him – so maybe..."

"I guess..."

"Anything else?"

"I... he likes... he likes to write. He writes... argumentative things, though. Mostly politics. But I've read his essays for English lit and other things, and he's actually pretty good. But... I don't think he's ever considered... like... writing just for himself."

"There you go. Give him a journal."

"Just a journal?" Kurt wrinkles his nose.

"Not just a journal!" Burt chuckles with an eye roll. "Make it a special journal, make it something only *you* could give him."

"Oh..." Kurt nods, the different pieces of a puzzle fitting together and suddenly he knows exactly what to do. "Yeah! Thanks!" he beams.

"No problem, son. You know I've picked up a couple of tricks along the way..." he teases. "You know it certainly wasn't with this fugly thing up here I got myself the finest women I ever met!" he laughs and then stops and starts, "Not that I'm implying you're ugly. You're your mother's spitting image! Not that you look like a woman!"

Kurt laughs and chucks an eraser at him. "Thanks, dad!" He rolls his eyes. "You can stop talking now."

"Phew..." He pretends to wipe some sweat off his forehead. "Nearly dug my own grave, right there."

"Nearly did," Kurt agrees with a chuckle.

"I'll go, and let you go back to your love letters and whatnot..." he sighs, getting up from Kurt's bed and walking to the door. "Let me know when you've chosen your wedding song," he adds with a wink.

"Wait!" Kurt asks.

"What?"

"Did you mean that?"

"What?"

"About the wedding song. Do you mean that? Do you think Blaine and I will get married one day?"

"I don't know, Kurt. It was just a joke," Burt says with a soft smile, walking back towards Kurt's bed and sitting down. "Do you?"

"I... I dunno." Kurt shrugs. "Is it stupid if I think so? I mean... we're high school sweethearts. We're eighteen, we're just kids. Why do I... I dunno."

Burt's smile broadens and he laughs a little. "Your mother and I were high school sweethearts. Granted, it was a different generation, and there was never a real question of colleges in different states at the time – mostly, at least. But..." he stops, gathers his thoughts and then turns back to look at Kurt with an expression of loving wisdom "You know, soul mates, and 'loves of my lives'... they're... not exactly how they're painted. Sure, your mother was my soul mate, but so is Carole – and having to choose between the two right now... I don't know if I could. I mean – your mom gave me you, so... of course – but... when it comes down to loving them pure and simple, I just can't choose, because they're both the love of my life in their own way. And you know why?" Burt smiles. "Because we worked for it."

Kurt frowns slightly. "OK..."

"OK, let's just take your mom for example. We were sixteen when we started seeing each other. We saw one another grow and change a lot and we never stopped loving each other because we did it together – we made a decision each day to help the other grow and, most of all, to help our love grow. You choose love. Of course you can't force feelings and sometimes things just fade away and people grow apart and relationships stop making sense – but sometimes, when it's right, you only have to *nurture* love, to work for it and keep it alive, to make sure it lasts."

"Yes, but how do you know it's the right person?"

"That's what I'm telling you, Kurt. There isn't a right person. There's an endless world of possibilities out there. You find one you think will work and you hang on to that and you work for that." Burt laughs. "Hell, I found it twice, didn't I? You just... have to learn how to love and be generous about it, and... it'll be OK. If it's not Blaine, it's not Blaine. But if it is... that's amazing. So what you're eighteen? Who cares?! If it feels

right than why not let yourself dream about it? Maybe it'll crash and burn but at least you gave it your all, and you tried, huh?"

"Yeah." Kurt nods shyly, feeling the warmth in his body spreading like it always does when he thinks about Blaine and their relationship and all the possibilities. "But... what if we're just... putting too much pressure on it? Unreasonable expectations?"

"As long as you're not each other's whole worlds, I don't... I don't see that happening," Burt says, looking genuinely undisturbed about the whole thing. "Just make sure you know how to make yourself happy outside of Blaine, and make sure Blaine makes himself happy as well – be a great thing in each other's life, but not everything. If you can do that, there's no pressure in anything and there's certainly no unreasonable expectation – that only happens when people expect to find everything they ever need in their partner and that's impossible – that's why there are parents, friends, children, teachers, movies; that's why people don't go into hiding after marriage."

"So what you're saying is that... I need to have my happiness outside of Blaine, so that he adds to it, and not becomes it."

"Exactly., Burt nods. "Do you?"

Kurt stops to think for a moment. He has his father. Carole and Finn, too. He has Rachel. He has the New Directions – hell, he has the Warblers! He has music. He has fashion. He has movies and musicals. He has his fashion blog. On really boring night he even has funny videos on YouTube to keep him laughing. Outside of Blaine he has so many things, and the moment he understands that is the moment he knows his father's right. He doesn't love Blaine any less – actually it's quite the opposite. He loves Blaine – with everything he's got - but he also loves so many other things – he loves his life, in short – that he can enjoy what he has with Blaine, and what he wants to have with Blaine, without *any* pressure, whatsoever. He smiles and looks at Burt as he nods. "Yeah, yeah, I do."

"Then you've got nothing to worry about, bud."

"I guess not." He grins.

Burt laughs, "Well, there you go!" He winks before he stands and ruffles Kurt's hair. "I gotta go, kiddo, but good luck with that."

So after slaving away in his bedroom all of Sunday, in the midst of scissors and papers and glue and fabrics and pens and his bottle of cologne and hair driers and ironing boards, Kurt's pretty damn happy as he slips the beautifully wrapped notebook into Blaine's locker on Monday morning, a white rose on top of it.

He makes sure he can watch, unnoticed, as his boyfriend walks up – even more high fives, handshakes and hugs than usual as every one stops him for a quick word and 'happy birthday' smile. He rubs his hands nervously as Blaine opens the locker and his eyebrow quirks and he smiles before looking over his shoulder – miraculously missing Kurt.

He lifts the rose up to his nose, inhales with a soft smile and closed eyes, and tucks it carefully into his bag. Afterward, he picks up the package and twirls it in his hands before grinning ear to ear and opening it up. Kurt had covered its cover in a maroon velvety fabric, spelling out *B.A. (journal)* in gold thread. It was actually pretty damn beautiful, even if Kurt does say so himself, and it's Blaine all the way. He grins even wider at Blaine's surprised raise of eyebrows as he raises the notebook to his nose and takes in a long breath, smiling at once. He opens it to flip through the beautiful light gold tanned pages, he pauses to catch the random words and sentences Kurt wrote down on a couple of pages, and only in the end does he notice the inside of the cover, lyrics of every song they've ever sang to each other carefully written in the richest colors Kurt could find.

The card slips through the pages and Blaine picks it up. Kurt knows the words by heart – obviously – and he can practically read in perfect synchrony with Blaine.

'Happy Birthday, Blaine. I hope you like this.

You have a talent for words – you really do. You should use it more often, even if it's just for yourself. Make sure you write about everything, the good and the bad, but especially the good, and make sure you can always read it when I'm not there to kiss those lines on your forehead away.

I love you so much it's ridiculous.

Truly yours,

Kurt'

He knows it's probably best to not speak to Blaine now, so he keeps from grinning too hard at the idiotic smile on Blaine's face and the way he takes the journal back to his nose and closes his eyes as he breathes in, and just walks quickly towards the classroom.

He's just managed to sit down when his cell buzzes.

'Thank you, it's perfect, I love it! – B'

'I love *you* - K'

':D :D :D – B'

Kurt laughs to himself and picks up his notebook, the teacher already walking towards the front of the classroom. He barely notices as Sebastian sits behind him, but he does hear his whisper.

"I hear it's your boyfriend's birthday today..."

"Oh, is it? I'm sorry, I forgot. Happy birthday, Sebastian." He answers dryly.

"My, my, how witty."

"Do you need something, Sebastian? I actually want to pay attention." Kurt raises an eyebrow.

"I guess I could talk to you later." The other boy shrugs. "There *will* be a party, tonight, won't there? And I *am* invited, aren't I?"

"Yes." Kurt rolls his eyes. "Movie in the common room. Bye now."

He turns back toward the front, just as the teacher calls for silence. He waits until the class is well on track before he slips his cell phone out of his pocket and types.

'That was part one. Meet me in the auditorium at the start of lunch break for part two. Xoxo'

The period before lunch he asks the teacher to leave ten minutes early. (OK, so maybe he's not really waiting for an urgent call from his dad, but when you have the face of an angelic five year old you might as well take advantage of it).

Phase two is, admittedly, Rachel's idea. Not the serenade – that much is pretty obvious and he wouldn't have needed Rachel's help for that. But when he sighed, saying he wasn't exactly sure when he'd have time for that, she suggested he use the lunch break for a picnic in the auditorium and then serenade Blaine.

Of course, by the time he found out she had used that one on Finn before, he'd already made the sandwiches, and got the fresh fruit all washed and ready, and Carole had baked those blueberry muffins and the basket was all nice and ready, and shit Rachel, why would anyone want to *recycle* your ideas?!

But Blaine didn't need to know that and they could just have a really nice lunch and he could sing him a beautiful song, regardless.

He barely has time to arrange the whole thing in the middle of the stage before the side door is creaking open and he looks up to find Blaine peering inside. They share a broad smile at once, and Blaine slides quickly inside, closing the door with a soft click.

"Hey there, birthday boy!" Kurt greets, springing to his feet and crowding Blaine with a soft peck to his lips.

"Thank you for the journal!" Blaine says, face still so close Kurt can feel his breath. Then his hand at the back of Kurt's neck pulls him in for a second, deeper kiss. "What's this?"

Kurt beams at the look of intrigued wonder in Blaine's eyes, and he gestures widely as he sits back down. "Sit, please!" As Blaine does, Kurt starts taking the incredible – if he does say so himself – salad he'd prepared the day before (of course, warm food was out of question), and the (small) bottle of white wine he'd managed to convince his dad to give him. "I hope you'll like it..." he hums as he pours the sparkling wine into tall glasses.

"Is that...?" Blaine gasps.

"Yup." Kurt nods and starts serving the salad. "Just don't tell anyone and don't drink more than a cup." He smiles and winks.

"Of course," Blaine agrees, taking his glass and sipping as he watches Kurt. "This is great! Thank you..." he leans over and kisses Kurt. "You're gonna make it really hard for me to live up to this on your birthday, aren't you?" he frowns.

"I'll let *you* worry about *that* when we get there," Kurt smirks with a raised eyebrow. "But I expect scarves."

"Duly noted."

They eat in comfortable conversation – Kurt tells Blaine about the conversation he had with his dad about the two of them having a safe place at his house. Blaine beams and gasps how much he loves Burt Hummel and wishes he could win President of the Universe, and then talks all about the new way of life in the Anderson household and how much better it feels.

When he knows he needs to wrap it up he sticks a candle on the muffin and he lights it and makes Blaine blow it out and make a wish, accepting the kiss that follows with a warm heart.

He laughs and pulls away as he feels Blaine start pushing him gently towards the floor "Hold on, Casanova. First of all, we are not about to have sex in the school auditorium, because... just no."

"But you said-"

"I know what I said," Kurt interrupts Blaine's smirk. "But now is not the time for that. Honestly, Blaine, do you really think it'd be a good idea? What if someone walked in?"

"What? Because a romantic picnic isn't obvious at all...?" Blaine teases back.

"Well, I'm sure we could... come up with something for that," Kurt says haughtily. "Your dick in my ass, however. Impossible." Blaine just laughs and Kurt pushes at his shoulder before hopping to his feet. "And I have something else in mind, anyway."

"Oh?"

"Just sit there and look pretty." Kurt smiles ducking down for a quick peck, before he jogs to the boom box and hits play.

"Ohhh!" Blaine coos, "you're serenading me!"

"Yes, now shut up and let me do it!" Kurt rolls his eyes as the first chords start to play.

Blaine laughs but watches attentively as Kurt starts.

"At last

My love has come along

My lonely days are over

And life is like a song"

Blaine's grin morphs into a soft, sweet smile at once, eyes wide and bright, and he pulls his legs to his chest, hugging them closer. Kurt smiles back as he sings, keeping it as simple and pure as possible.

"Oh yeah yeah

At last

The skies above are blue

My heart was wrapped up in clover

The night I looked at you"

Blaine's eyes slip closed and he sways gently to the song. Kurt loves the peacefulness that graces his face. Someone as beautiful as Blaine deserves to make the most of it, and God if Blaine doesn't look breathtaking, right now. All long lashes against lightly colored cheeks, soft lips upturned into the easiest of smiles, not a line or a shadow marring the smoothness of his young skin.

"I found a dream, that I could speak to

A dream that I can call my own

I found a thrill to press my cheek to

A thrill that I have never known"

Kurt closes his own eyes, delivering himself completely to the song and to the emotions coursing through his veins. Feels his heart, his stomach, his lips, his fingertips, and even his toes tingling with the love he could never help feeling for Blaine. He opens them again when they start burning slightly and he's equal parts annoyed and amused at how idiotic it probably is to cry from *love*. He finds Blaine's bright eyes already looking right back, as he beams.

"Oh yeah yeah

You smiled, you smiled

Oh and then the spell was cast

And here we are in heaven

for you are mine..."

Kurt remembers his dad's words. "You choose love." He'd said. And Kurt knows that he does choose to love Blaine, but he also realizes that he does it because, in his life, there has never been an easier, more obvious choice to make. It's like second nature to him. It feels like he's been doing it all his life. Like the Guide To Loving Blaine Anderson has been engraved in his brain even before he was born. It's a choice that he makes, yes, but it's a choice that he was always bound to make.

"At Last."

xXxXx

It's really, really hard to pretend Blaine doesn't have the most amazing and perfect boyfriend in the world. In a room full of teenage boys watching *Tropic Thunder* – which is a surprisingly good movie, mind you – he's having the worst time not spending the whole time staring at Kurt's perfection and holding him close and kissing him every time the boy opens his mouth to say something genius.

But, OK, he can still sit between David and Wes and join in their banter as Robert Downey Jr. embodies perfection on screen, and it's actually quite fun. Sure, it's not exactly a birthday party, because they constantly do this, and at the end of the day it's just another movie night – only this time it has pizza and chips and soda, and the guys feel a need to cater to Blaine's every wish, which is always fun.

They pop in a second movie when Tropic Thunder's over – mostly because it's a great way to avoid the growing pile of homework that awaits each and every one of them. But of course the attention span is long gone, and most of them are just joking around with really cool explosions as a background noise. He finds himself gravitating between duos and trios, and then he spots Kurt sitting only slightly away from the others, frowning at his cell phone and looking around himself.

Following Kurt's eye-line he finds Sebastian discreetly leaving the room. He turns back to find Kurt already looking at him with apprehension in his eyes. They have a silent exchange before Kurt just sighs and leaves after Sebastian. Blaine knows he should go after them, but what if anyone noticed? Wouldn't it be suspicious?

In the end he can't let go of it, and he practically interrupts Josh as he says, "Excuse me, I need to use the bathroom!" and dashes out. The corridor is empty, but he thinks he hears Sebastian's voice from his left so he follows the sound.

"What do you mean?" he hears Kurt asking and he's not sure what makes him do it, but he stays back, just before turning the corner, as he listens to them. Maybe it's not a good idea to just keep giving Sebastian proof after proof that they're both in it together.

"I just mean... We've been going steady for a while now, right? How do you feel about that?" Just like that Blaine thinks he knows where this is headed.

"I like monogamy, yes." Kurt says dully, and Blaine knows he's guessed it, too.

"Hmm, right."

"Listen, Sebastian, I really don't have the time or the patience for your little games right now. So... just come out and say it. What's your problem?" Blaine smiles a little, even if he still feels like punching Sebastian.

"Fine. No games then. It's boring. We're boring. Nothing's happening anymore and I don't like that. I agreed to this because it would put my name on the map, but... it's not anymore..." Blaine's guess is proven right and he has to keep himself from swearing or even sighing.

"So. What do you want me to do? Tweet more about you?"

"Like that would do anything..." the douchebag scoffs. "How do you feel about... exhibitionism? Does that turn you on?" There's a smirk in Sebastian's voice and Blaine could definitely kill him, right now.

There's a strain on Kurt's voice as he responds, "No. No way."

"What? You're telling me it wouldn't be exciting to have some hot pics in the newspaper?"

"Are you telling me you'd like to have some pics of you raping me in the newspaper? That would surely put your name on the map."

Blaine's head is resting against the wall and he has to close his eyes and remind himself that, duh, of course Kurt can more than handle this.

"What do you mean rape?"

"I mean that if you so much as try to kiss me the next time we're out together I will scream and kick to get away from you, regardless of whose camera is pointing at us," Kurt warns.

"So what do you suggest then?"

"I suggest you get over yourself and learn to live in the anonymity you deserve. Goodbye and good luck proving *anything*."

Blaine's ready to cut and run, when Sebastian's voice calls out a menacing, "Well, what if I *can* prove something?"

"Then why don't you?!"

Silence.

"Thought so." Kurt says harshly before the sound of his heels turning startles Blaine and he makes his way back to the common room. He does his best at plastering a fake smile on his face and laughing along with David as he throws his arms around Blaine and hugs him fiercely. He knows Kurt's just slipped through the door as well, even though his back is turned to the door and he can't exactly just pull away from David, right now.

"Kurt!" David bellows next to Blaine's ear, making him wince. "Come here! Hug us! Join our circle of love!"

Blaine smiles a little as he feels a body wrapping around them both and the low and obviously strained chuckles as he does. Kurt's hand comes to grasp at Blaine's waist and he knows the tight grip means something.

As much as Blaine had been enjoying the whole thing, now he just wants it to be over and once it finally is he has a hard time not sighing out loud in relief. He makes his way to his room, and waits until he knows the hallways will be empty to hurry to Kurt's room. He knocks before he enters, to find Kurt furiously pacing.

"Blaine!"

"I know!" Blaine interrupts as soon as Kurt opens his mouth again "I heard everything."

"Do you think I messed up?"

"I... Well... I... I hope not."

"I couldn't... do *that*!" Kurt gasps "And, honestly, everything else that I could think of would still have really bad implications on my dad's campaign and I just wanted... I don't know. I... fuck, Blaine. I swear I know he's got *nothing* on us."

"You do?"

"You should've seen his face when... he was red with rage. Trust me, I'm sure. He knows, of course he does, but he can't prove it to anyone else," Kurt says, speaking fast and barely even looking at Blaine, as if he's trying to reason with himself. "So... I don't... I think he won't say anything. He can't. It'll just look like a far out cry for attention, right?" Kurt runs nervous hands through his hair. "I mean, it's been so long since they even suspected we were together, anyway, they won't believe that, right?"

"Kurt... I... honestly, Kurt, I don't know." Blaine sighs and drops to sit on Kurt's bed. "Obviously if he doesn't have proof then... and you know he can't exactly just come out and say it, or he'll be expelled from Dalton," he reasons. "Maybe it won't be that bad."

"You think so?" Kurt gasps, half hopeful, half desperate.

"I... I think we should... call your dad. Honestly, that's what I think." Burt had told them to do so, after all, and last time they had managed to screw up enough on their own. Maybe this time they could at least try not to destroy everything, and there comes a time when one must admit a need for help.

"I... yeah... I think so, too." Kurt nods and steps closer to Blaine, looking tired as he stands right in front of him and drapes his arms on Blaine's shoulders. "I'm so sick of this mess... I want it all to disappear."

Blaine smiles sadly and takes one of Kurt's hands in his, running a thumb across his knuckles. "Me too. But it will. Soon... well, sooner or later, but it will, Kurt. I promise."

Kurt returns the smile. "Yeah, I promise it, too." He ducks down and pecks his forehead. "I can't wait for the day that's just... us. Just the two of us and none of this freak circus. If I could that'd be my birthday present to you."

Blaine chuckles at that and shakes his head. "Well... I wasn't going to say anything, but now that you mention it... you could've..." he laughs a little more as Kurt shoves at his shoulder.

"Shut up!" Kurt whines. "I did good!"

Blaine tugs him closer and kisses him before saying, "Yes, you did. It was perfect, all of it, Kurt, of course it was."

"It's not exactly over yet," Kurt says with a smirk and the fact that they're alone in a bedroom, and how Blaine's sitting on a bed with Kurt hovering just above him, and the way Kurt's eyes look kind of dark right now... it all just makes Blaine's heart start pounding and his pants get tighter.

"Oh?" he smiles.

"But not now," Kurt shrugs, stepping away from Blaine. "You need to go back to your bedroom because it's almost past curfew, and I need to call my dad about the whole mess with Sebastian."

"But..."

"But on Friday I have something special planned for us," Kurt says over his shoulder. "I promise you'll love it."

"But... it's my birthday..." Blaine whines.

"It's also curfew," Kurt counters.

"They never check."

"Listen... honestly, Blaine, I'm just... a little paranoid right now. I feel like Sebastian's going to walk in any moment now... And I really need us to... not do anything in school anymore. Like ever..." Kurt exhales deeply. "I'm scared enough as it is right now... And I think we've been complete idiots and... so reckless, lately. We got caught up in a completely false sense of security, and it was a mistake. My dad gave us a place to be us, and we should use it and stick to just there. At least while... I don't know, Blaine. I... can't. Not here and certainly not tonight."

The words turn inside Blaine's head and they make so much sense he hates them. He pinches the bridge of his nose between his fingers and does a few breathing exercises before he finally rises and walks up to Kurt, wrapping him up in a hug.

"Happy Birthday," Kurt mutters, lips brushing against Blaine's temples.

"Thank you... for everything," Blaine kisses his neck before he trails his lips back towards Kurt's lips and they move against one another in long, drawn out movements.

"Alright..." Kurt sighs as he pulls back. "Sleep tight." He smiles, kissing Blaine's nose and Blaine smiles, tightens their hug for a moment more and finally pulls back and leaves. Thankfully Sebastian is not waiting behind the door with a tape recorder and an evil smirk, so Blaine just shoves his hands in his pockets and walks back to his room thinking that there needs to be a special place in hell for idiots who go as far as cock blocking someone on their birthday. OK. So he knows that's not the worst of what Sebastian has done to them. But honestly. Cock blocked. Birthday.

Wes frowns as Blaine closes the door behind him.

"I didn't expect you back so soon. Or so... put together," he observes with a quirked eyebrow.

"I hate Sebastian Smythe."

"Oh..."

"He told Kurt he was pissed at how little attention they had going on, and when Kurt refused to do anything about it he threatened to talk, and Kurt told him to go for it. And the thing is, the guy doesn't have anything to talk about because he hasn't got a single shred of proof, but still... we can't risk anything anymore..."

"Oh..."

"So that sucks."

"I think the problem is that it doesn't." Blaine just stares at him in silence and Wes rolls his eyes and makes a show of sighing. "You're no fun!"

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Kurt stares in horror at his computer. He can feel Blaine is just as frozen in shock.

"No," Kurt finally lets out, because it's all his brain can formulate.

Behind him he can't even hear Blaine's breathing. He can only feel the hand on his shoulder gripping tighter and shaking.

"I'm going to kill him."

"Oh my God," Wes breathes next Kurt.

"I'm going to kill him."

"I don't... I can't... oh my God." Kurt can feel his voice cracking and his throat tightening.

"I'm going to kill him!" Blaine's hand is gone from Kurt's back.

"NO, Blaine!" Kurt and Wes both jump to grab him, but Blaine struggles at once, yanking his arm free of both their grasps.

"No!" he shouts. "I need to find him, and I need to kill him!" In two large strides he's at the door and Wes barely makes it in time to block the way.

"Blaine, fuck, stop it!" Wes gasps. "You can't- It's not-NO! Blaine, just no!" he tries to reason, his own voice desperate. "It'll just bring more attention to everything! Don't!"

"Fuck, Wes! Look at *that*!"

That is Kurt's twitter homepage, where right at the top they can read:

'Sebastian Smythe (SebSmythe)

Thank you rihanna for teaching me how to deal with cheating sluts. (link to Take A Bow) #OnLoop
#FuckHeartbreakers

10 minutes ago'

Kurt's still having a hard time yanking his eyes away from it long enough to join Wes' efforts in stopping Blaine from making everything infinitely worse. "Blaine... please... just... stay here..." he sighs with tired, pleading eyes. He watches as Blaine considers everything and finally drops his hand from the handle.

"Fine."

"Thank you..." Kurt mutters, before dropping his head to his hands and trying not to let himself be overcome with sobs.

Wes is kneeling in front of him at once and putting both hands on Kurt's shoulders. "Hey, Kurt, hey... don't... don't be like that. It's not the end of the world."

"No. Actually it is," Kurt snaps, annoyed both at Wes for being so calm, and at himself for the thickness in his voice and the tears already blinding him "He called me a slut... to the whole world. He said I *cheated* on h-him. And he made the first move. He was n-not respond-ding to anything from me. No. The *first* tweet came from him. So ev-very thing I do now will just look like *d-damage control*! And when they ask him who I cheated with he w-will either say Blaine or say he's not allowed to say so everyone will just guess it's Blaine anyway." He buries his face back in his hands.

"I just... Shit... I... What do you need?" Wes sounds desperate. "What can I do?"

"I... Honestly... I just... Keep Blaine from doing something stupid. I need to call my dad," he says before he grabs his cell phone and locks himself in the bathroom.

Burt answers on the second ring.

"Hey Kurt. I just saw it."

"I'm so s-sorry, dad!" Kurt sobs.

"Kurt, hey, Kurt, none of that, kiddo."

"This is go-going to r-ruin your campaign, and, hmm, you w-were doing so w-well..."

"Hey, this isn't... you... I got my people working on it, OK?"

"S-slut, dad, ch-cheating slut," he cries. "And everyone's just... g-going to ass-ssume it's B-Blaine..."

"Hey, I said, I got people working on it. OK?"

"I..."

"Kurt!"

"OK..." he murmurs.

"OK, here's what's going to happen. You and Blaine are going to do absolutely nothing unless I tell you to."

"OK"

"And the two of you are going to take a deep breath and stop panicking and keep calm. You've still got the house empty on Friday, so... go there, just enjoy a peaceful evening and don't stress over it. Blaine can stay over for the weekend if he wants, because I suppose his parents won't be home either, and you can even watch the debate together, see?" Burt sighs. "It's not the end of the world, Kurt. Trust me, there are worse things that could happen."

"I just... It's all my fault... and I..."

"Hey, Kurt, hey... It's not your fault. It's his fault. Only his fault. He's a bad person, and that's all there is to it." He sighs, "I love you, OK?"

"OK," Kurt breathes. "I love you, too, Dad."

"Glad to hear. I'm going to go now. The first articles are starting to pop up."

"Oh..."

"Stay calm, son! Just let us handle this, OK? Now, I'm gonna go. I'll call you tomorrow, or later... or whatever. Bye, kiddo."

"Bye, dad," he mutters.

He sits there in silence, turning everything he's ever said to Sebastian (or anyone else for that matter) over in his head, and seeing all the million ways in which things could turn into absolute disaster and make his father lose the race. He wants to bury himself in pillows and covers and stay hidden for months. He can't believe this is happening. They're this fucking close to all of their fears crashing down on them like an avalanche.

And it's not just Burt and his campaign.

Blaine.

He can feel it. He can practically read the articles, speculating and throwing out the name Blaine Anderson like it's fucking guaranteed knowledge. Blaine's going to be outed – just like that. And as many public statements as both campaigns might make, or even Blaine himself, it'll just be a ridiculous attempt. And the thing is, Blaine's ready for that, of course he is. But Blaine's dad isn't. And their relationship had been improving so much. This is the kind of thing that could undo all the work they'd achieved so far. Blaine had been so happy, lately.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!"

"Kurt?" There's a knock at the door and Blaine creaks it open. "Kurt, are you OK?" He sighs, walking inside and sliding to sit next to Kurt on the floor.

"No..." he shrugs. "Where's Wes?"

"Called an emergency Warbler Council meeting... It's stupid." He shrugs. "Talk to me."

"I just..." Kurt breathes, defeated. "The first articles are popping up, and I just... I... Blaine... they're going to talk about you. And... things were good for you. And..."

"Hey, Kurt, whatever happens, I'm ready for it. OK?" He leans in close, taking Kurt's face between his hands. "I don't care if the whole world finds out. This is more important, OK? It's fine. I want to kill him for calling you a cheating slut and making this whole mess, but whatever might come out of this we'll handle it."

"You sure?"

"Of course." Blaine sighs.

"I love you..." Kurt mutters, and Blaine leans in to kiss him.

"What did your dad say?"

"He told us to not do anything stupid. His campaign staff's working on it, already, and we're not supposed to do anything until he says something... I guess." He shrugs. "And he said you could spend the weekend in our house, if you want to. Finn will be there, though, so..." he gives a feeble attempt at a chuckle.

Blaine laughs too. "Actually, Wes was organizing a Warbler party for Saturday, to watch the debate... We thought it might be fun."

"But no Sebastian, right?"

"No Sebastian," Blaine agrees at once.

"We could do it at my place, though..."

"I'll run that by Wes," Blaine nods.

They're silent for a while before Kurt lets his head fall back against the wall. "I can't believe this is actually happening."

Blaine's hand finds a comforting place on Kurt's thigh and he squeezes gently. "I know I wanted to kill someone. But now that I've had a chance to calm down, I can safely tell you, it'll be alright, Kurt. It will."

"I'm going to hold you to that." Kurt gives him an exhausted smile.

"Fine!" Blaine shrugs and then smirks. "Just like I'm holding you to the last of my birthday present on Friday."

Kurt actually laughs and shakes his head at Blaine's silliness. But Blaine's right, it's not like they can make it any worse.

"OK, come on, my little sex beast," Kurt sighs, hopping to his feet.

"I resent that. I'm not *that* short." Blaine groans as he stands up, and Kurt laughs again, and damn if Blaine isn't the best at making him feel better.

It's almost bearable when they do look over the few articles that have already come up – most of them are still from pretty sleazy entertainment websites, but of course there's the one from – the celebrity on-line gossip column that Kurt has come to hate the most. Just as predicted Blaine's name gets thrown out in 90% of them, and 75% of those hint at a relationship between the two.

Kurt tries his hardest not to let it get the worst of him, he even makes a joke or two about the most outrageous articles and he does wait patiently for his dad to call. When Wes gets back to the room (with the news that there's nothing to do about Sebastian because he didn't really violate any code of conduct since he never actually mentioned Kurt's name), accompanied by David, the four of them even get some homework done.

But dinner. Dinner is hell.

"We should've just ordered pizza..." Wes sighs.

The moment they enter the cafeteria dozens of heads turn their way, and there's a single moment of absolute silence before the unmistakable sound of gossiping erupts in full force. He resists the urge to

scream, "I did not cheat on Sebastian!" and merely goes to get some food, with his head held as high as humanly possible.

It feels like the words 'cheating slut' are branded onto the back of his head and it burns. He eats his dinner in complete silence. Actually, they all do. Even David gives up after two failed attempts at starting a conversation, and Kurt thinks he catches him sending dirty looks to whoever he catches staring. It makes him feel a little better and he smiles over to David when their eyes meet.

"Oh!" Wes starts as they finish dessert. "I forgot. We've decided that taking away Sebastian's solo would probably just call more attention to the whole thing, and anyway we're hardly over a week away from Regionals..."

Kurt just shrugs and nods wordlessly.

There's a second moment of silence when the door opens and Kurt looks up to find Sebastian walking in. Kurt's pretty sure this would count as something stupid but, once Sebastian's eyes look his way and he actually *smirks*, he just pushes his chair out, standing and grabbing his juice bottle, walking briskly over to Sebastian and pouring the contents on top of him before the boy could even so much as realize he'd moved.

"You worthless, pathetic, selfish son of a bitch," he snarls. He knows this counts as stupid, as he can see from the corner of his eye several cell phones raising, but he can't help it as he says, "Do you ever stop to think about anyone else other than yourself? Have you ever even considered that there are more important things in life than a name in a stupid magazine?!" He glares, well aware of how loud his voice is, but completely unable to stop it. "My dad could very well lose the election because of your little stunt today, and he could been a great President for **YOU**, you fucking asshole, and you blew it for what? For an extra five minutes of fame on the papers? You know whose name is in bold in those articles? Mine, not yours! Yours will be forgotten this time next week!"

"Oh plea-" Punch.

Absolute silence.

"And I did not fucking cheat on him!" Kurt snarls to the whole cafeteria before he stalks off, leaving too many open mouths and wide eyes, and Sebastian clutching his chin.

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Blaine leans against the door frame with a small, fond smile playing at his lips.

"How bad does the hand hurt?" he asks as he finally steps inside and Kurt lifts his head to look at him from where he's sitting at the head of his bed, back against the wall and legs in a pretzel, hurt hand cradled in his lap.

"Pretty bad," Kurt sighs.

"I brought you an ice pack." Blaine says, holding out the item. "Well, frozen peas, but they serve the purpose."

"Thank you," Kurt murmurs as he takes them and immediately presses the bag against his knuckles.

"You shouldn't have done that," Blaine says as he sits next to Kurt on the bed.

"I know." Kurt rolls his eyes "But..." He just shrugs.

"I know..." Blaine nods and squeezes his knee. He understands, he really does. "The way he just... pranced inside, smirking... and... well... let's just say you beat me to the punch." Kurt shoots him a weak smile and Blaine returns it, shrugging. "I was hoping for at least a chuckle, but I'll take what I can get."

"No. I'm fine, Blaine. I am. I just... I'm tired, I guess."

"I bet." Blaine nods. "You should sleep. Long day of classes tomorrow."

"Why can't it be Friday, already?!" Kurt groans, letting his head fall against the wall. Blaine refrains from making another joke about how much he wants it to be Friday, because there are more important things to do right now. "Do you think he'll... report me...? For punching him?"

"I hope not," Blaine sighs, dropping his head to Kurt's shoulder.

"It'll be alright, right?" Kurt asks in a whisper after a long silence.

"Yes."

"OK."

Sebastian doesn't report Kurt. They don't exactly know why, but he doesn't. So, if the teachers notice the large bruise on Sebastian's chin, and the way Kurt keeps flexing his hand and spends the day without taking any notes at all, they either think it's a coincidence or they choose to ignore it – and taking into consideration that everyone in the whole world already knows about the tweets it's probably the latter.

Blaine spends most of his day avoiding questions and uncomfortable stares. He wishes he could just yell at all of them to mind their own business and storm off, but that's just bound to make everything worse. Burt had called Kurt the night before and told them to keep living their lives normally and deny both the cheating and the rumored relationship with calm and easiness.

As the day wears on it gets harder and harder to do so, and he can see the strain on Kurt's face as well. The bright light of it all is that it's Thursday and so they only need to survive the next morning before they can just go hide away and bury themselves in each other.

So when the day is over Blaine is a big pile of nerves and exhaustion and as he opens his blog and sees the question the only thing he can bring himself to do is sigh and answer the first one.

'Anonymous asked: Do you think Kurt and Blaine are really dating?'

He types back

'Do you think it matters?'

And publishes. It's probably the shortest post he has on his blog, and it's probably the stupidest, too. But he can't bring himself to care, because he's just so tired of everyone thinking they have a right to meddle in his business.

His dad calls too. Asks him about it because apparently the problem's finally big enough to get back to him. Blaine can only tell him that there's nothing he can do except ignore it, and not make a bigger deal out of it, to which his dad agrees but also tells him to just cool it with the social networks for a while. When Blaine asks if that wouldn't look suspicious neither of them have a satisfying and ready answer, so they both just take a deep breath and Blaine's dad promises to get his own staff on it, too.

On Friday, as they close the door to Kurt's apartment he sighs in relief and says, "You have to promise me that today is all about us. Please, please, please tell me that we're not going to worry about any of that shit!"

Kurt gives him a sort of sad smile and kisses his cheek before saying, "Right after I call my dad, I promise."

Blaine nods and goes to the kitchen to make them an afternoon snack, while Kurt picks his cell phone up and soon enough he's pacing around the living room and asking a lot of questions.

"What did he say?" Blaine asks, as soon as he hears Kurt stepping through the kitchen door.

"Says that things are a bit messy, but mostly OK." Kurt sighs. "He sounded so tired. He said there's not a chance in hell they'll let it go at the debate, and he seemed kind of upset about that. He hates it when my name gets put under the spotlight like that."

Blaine nods. "My dad called, too, you know? He's got his own staff working on it, too. But... Well, I suppose they're pretty much only going to be worried about taking my name out of the equation, so..."

"Figured. But it's fine." He sighs. "Well, Dad says it might not have as much impact in the votes as they thought at first because the lack of response from our side kind of threw Sebastian for a loop and he hasn't said anything again." Kurt picks up the plate of toast Blaine had prepared. "Dad says people might actually forget this sooner than we thought, so..."

"You guys need a new and better scandal on another campaign. Maybe I *should* come out," Blaine winks.

"Blaine..." Kurt admonishes.

"I'm kidding, obviously." He shakes his head and follows Kurt out of the kitchen with two glasses of orange juice. "I know perfectly well that's not even how your dad likes to do things, anyway."

"Exactly. So, can we please move on? I seem to remember you asking to forget all about this?"

"Of course!" Blaine beams, sitting down at the couch next to Kurt, tucking one leg under him and angling his whole body towards the other boy. "So, what is on the agenda today, then?"

"Well... we could watch a movie and order some food, I was thinking Chinese? Yes...?"

Blaine laughs at Kurt's teasing smirk and shoves at his knee. "Skip ahead."

"Ahah..." he chuckles. "Tsk, ts, ts. You'll have to wait and see."

"You're horrible."

"Pff, I'm amazing!" Kurt scoffs with an eye roll. "So, since today still falls under 'Blaine's birthday extravaganza', what do you wanna watch?"

Blaine beams and skips his way to the collection of DVDs to choose one. They cuddle while they watch *Moulin Rouge* and it's not weird at all that they sing softly along to *Come What May* sharing kisses between verses, because they actually mean those words. Kurt ends up lying with his head on Blaine's lap, humming quietly in appreciation as fingers run softly through his hair. When the movie ends and Kurt sits up, placing a short, but purposeful kiss on his temple, there's a damp circle on Blaine's thigh from Kurt's tears and Blaine smiles and Kurt just shoves his shoulder and says, "Shut up!" which only makes him laugh.

They do order Chinese and spend their dinner talking about the Warblers and their chances of winning Regionals, and what ideas they should suggest for Nationals. Blaine makes Kurt promise that he'll audition 'Feeling Good' again, and then they wishfully discuss the perfection that would be the two of them performing *Come What May* on a National's stage (or even just auditioning it).

"I think we would break the audience with our adorableness." Blaine shakes his head. "It would be a catastrophe, over how good it would be."

Kurt laughs and nods, swallowing the last bite of his *chao-min*. "The people are not ready for this jelly."

"Nope. I don't think so."

"Let them have their mediocre straight duets, then." Kurt shrugs. "I swear to god, if I had to sing backup for Finn and Rachel again, I would rather cut my tongue out with a spoon."

"It couldn't really be that bad," he reasons.

"It was." Kurt scrunches his nose up and exaggerates a shiver. "Anyway," he announces with a deep breath, perking up. "I have ice-cream, do you want?"

"Yes!"

"Of course you do," Kurt snickers as he stands up.

"Oh please, you're a bigger sugar addict than me!" Blaine says as he follows Kurt to the kitchen, plates and empty Chinese boxes in hand.

Kurt presses his lips into a thin line and glares back at him and Blaine just looks at him pointedly, daring him to tell him otherwise. The blue eyes squint even further before he wrinkles his nose and looks away and Blaine grins triumphantly.

Kurt moves swiftly through the kitchen picking up bowls, spoons and ice cream, and Blaine just watches his grace and finesse with anticipation, impatience kicking back in. He bites at his smile as he follows Kurt back to the living room, watching the pants cling to his ass and reveling in the fact that he actually does know what it looks like under them, and as much as it looks fantastic right now, he knows it gets better. So much better.

They sit on the couch again, and Blaine pulls Kurt's legs onto his lap, running a hand up and down his thigh as he drops spoon-fulls onto the bowls.

"I'm not sure you deserve this..." Kurt teases as he drops the serving spoon and picks up Blaine's bowl.

"I do."

"Hmmm..."

"I wasn't even making fun of you. I was just stating a fact. Simple as that." Blaine squeezes Kurt's knee
"This is just a classic case of Kurt, the sore loser."

"Oh no you didn't!" Kurt gasps.

"What are you going to do?" Blaine smirks.

"First of all, no ice cream for you," Kurt says haughtily. "Second of all, no third birthday present."

Kurt's teasing, Blaine can see the playful twinkle in his eyes, but he plays along. "Oh no!" he gasps. "We can't have that! What must I do?!"

Kurt considers for a moment before saying, "Close your eyes."

Blaine does, trying to keep his smile in check, and when there's movement from Kurt he's actually surprised to feel soft lips on his own, but he kisses back at once, eager. He's even more surprised when ice-cold goo splashes on his cheek. He pulls back with a gasp, and Kurt's doubling over with laughter, ice cream bowl still in hand.

"Not fair!" he breathes before he pushes his fingers inside the bowl and in one swift movement takes them, covered in Belgian chocolate ice cream, towards Kurt's nose and mouth and chin, who stops laughing at once to let out a high pitched squeak, and it's Blaine's turn to laugh.

Kurt plunges his fingers inside again but Blaine snatches the bowl away with one hand and raises another in surrender "Alright, alright!" he pleads "I give up! I'll clean it up!" He says, before lunging on top of Kurt and attacking his chin at once. Kurt lets out a yelp, and gives a chuckling struggle until Blaine's wide swipes of tongue turn into open mouthed kisses on his jaw line, and that's when he just hums appreciatively and fists Blaine's shirt (he can feel the ice cream on Kurt's fingers seeping through his shirt, and he grabs Kurt's hand to suck and lick each of his fingers clean.

"Appeased?" he asks, just as he wraps his lips around Kurt's middle finger, sucking and twisting his tongue around it in obscene movements.

"I... huh... I guess." Kurt feigns a shrug and Blaine laughs before he moves on to another finger, or he would if Kurt didn't pull him closer to kiss and lick at his own face, effectively cleaning the line of ice cream he'd left there and had started melting in a straight line down his neck, which Kurt seemed more than happy to follow with his tongue.

They have long since dropped the pretense of cleaning ice cream off each other and are purely making out on the couch, erections brushing against hips and legs, when Blaine breathes into Kurt's ear "Do I get that- mmm – huh, third birthday p-present now?"

"God yes!" If it's in response to his question or to his thigh slipping between Kurt's leg, Blaine doesn't care, he just kisses deeper and harder. "Bedroom," Kurt moans into the kiss, pushing against his shoulders until

Blaine's stumbling off the couch, pulling Kurt with him and they stumble their way through the living room and hallway to Kurt's bedroom.

They fall onto the bed in a mess of arms and legs that somehow they manage to make sense of without even breaking the ridiculous kiss happening between them, all spit and tongue and teeth. Between their mouths working furiously at each other and the way they're moaning every two seconds, the noises they make are positively obscene and they don't even stop for a minute to think that this is the first time in a long time that they actually can be that indecently loud. Kurt's sucking on Blaine's tongue in that way that drives him impossibly wild and he presses his hips down onto Kurt's with frantic need and a deep, throaty moan. He feels Kurt's smile as his legs wrap around Blaine's hips and thrust up as well as his hands work out Blaine's tie with wild movements. And then, just as he pulls it out with a triumphant gasp he flips them over, moving over Blaine as he straddles him, grinding his ass down over Blaine's erection and making him let out a surprised scream.

As Kurt works at his own tie his lips hover over Blaine's, more than kiss, as they breathe into each other's mouths, and Blaine tries to lift himself enough to chase them back, but Kurt's ass moving over his rock hard cock makes him throw his head back in pleasure one too many times for that to happen. When he's finally done with the tie he plunges back in for the kiss and Blaine eagerly pushes his tongue back inside Kurt's mouth with a grunt, one hand flying out to keep Kurt's ass moving right there, and another to desperately work his shirt's buttons out. Kurt's hands, still clutching the ties, come to help Blaine in his mission, and the mess of fingers is probably the least helpful thing, but they're pretty past caring about that now. Or Blaine is, at least. Kurt moans harder as he moves a hand back to where Blaine's hand is grabbing a fistful of ass to make it grab harder and as Kurt's hips grind deeper too Blaine cries out a broken, "Kurt!"

"Blaine!" Kurt breathes back against his lips, just before he moves his own to trail down Blaine's bare throat, and as he moves down and down, still further down, to Blaine's chest, popping button after button open, his hips leave Blaine's and he is left thrusting up into thin air, and he wants to take Kurt's waist in his hands and pull him back where he belongs when he notices Kurt's got both his hands pinned to his sides, a tight grip on his wrists. He makes to free one but Kurt just grips tighter and he moves his mouth to Blaine's nipple, brushing it with his tongue and a teasing smirk, before taking it into his mouth and sucking, Blaine's back arching off the bed as he gasps. "What... Kurt... Oh..." He looks at Kurt with wide eyes as Kurt does let go of one hand, only for Blaine to notice the silky fabric of a tie wrapped firmly around it, and he watches in awe as Kurt pulls it up towards the headboard, and when did that happen? Kurt uses both hands to tie the knot, but Blaine's so dumbstruck by it all that the fact that he now has a

free hand doesn't even occur to him, and by the time it does Kurt's already taking it to the other end of the headboard. And then, there lies Blaine with both hands tightly tied to Kurt's bed.

Kurt sits up, hands sliding along Blaine's partially bare torso as he does, and smirks. "Happy Birthday..." he whispers, before sliding his hands to where the shirt is still buttoned and working those few out. Blaine can only watch him without even so much as a coherent thought going through his mind. Finally the shirt is open wide and Kurt dips down to take the other nipple in his mouth and Blaine regains his speech to spiel out the dirtiest string of words he can muster. He thinks he can see Kurt smiling as he mouths over his nipple and he wants to curse the damned bastard for it, but the only thing he can do is gasp and moan and squirm as his erection strains on the side of painful. "Kurt – fuck – Kurt... I... shit! Kuurt!"

Kurt hums soothingly (pointless, of course) before he pulls away from Blaine's nipple, blowing a soft breeze over it that makes goose bumps spread all over Blaine's body. He kisses a straight line down to Blaine's navel, hands holding his torso tight, fingers spread wide, touching as much skin as possible. He dips his tongue into Blaine's navel in a long swipe that has him twisting with want and need. And as his lips linger there his hands move further down, and his finger tips trail lightly just above the edge of his belt, sending shivers up Blaine's body. "Jesus..." he breathes, uselessly twisting and pulling at his hands "...Kurt..." he whines brokenly. Kurt nods against the bottom of his stomach, muttering, "Be patient, babe" before he nips at the skin there, and his hands finally settle on the belt buckle, unfastening it with quick movements. Once the pants are unbuttoned and unzipped, and Blaine's cock is only straining against his briefs he sighs with relief, and he barely notices at all as Kurt tugs the pants all the way down his legs before coming back up.

"God, Blaine!" Kurt gasps as he sits back, straddling only one of Blaine's legs, and takes him in. "You look..." he swallows in dry, and Blaine watches his throat work around it and he wishes he could reach up to kiss it, instead he just lies there completely undone, sweat beginning to shine off his skin, and already leaking, wetting his bright red briefs. He breathes out a broken string of "please, please, please" as Kurt hooks his fingers under the elastic of his underwear. Kurt tugs them down at once, before moving up again to crash their mouths together.

"Tell me what you want, baby, tell me what you need," he breathes against Blaine's lips, and Blaine can feel him unbuckling his own belt and unfastening his own pants.

"You... I... fuck... your mouth... your... I dunno... I don't care. Anything!" he breathes.

Kurt's teasing smile has long disappeared and as he tugs off his shirt in a quick, harsh movement he looks almost as done for as Blaine feels. He crashes down over Blaine again, and their teeth clash and there's too much tongue, but holy fuck, there's finally friction again as their cocks finally meet and rub together, and Kurt's panting into Blaine's mouth, "Shit, shit, shit, shit..."

Blaine manages to at least wrap his legs around Kurt and press them closer and they both cry in satisfaction, but then Kurt's shaking his head against the crook of Blaine's neck and muttering, "No, no, not yet, babe, not yet." And he's pulling his hips away, and lowering himself back down, kiss by kiss onto a squirming and panting Blaine. A few open mouthed kisses to the inside of his thigh are pretty much all the warning Blaine gets before Kurt's warm, wet lips are sinking over him, enveloping him in warm moist, and sucking, and Blaine's curling his toes, opening his legs wider, and thrashing as much as he can. "Fuuuck!" he chokes out, and Kurt hums around him and he almost comes just then. "Kurt! I'm... Shit!... I'M-" he stops short. Just as the heat in his belly is about to explode Kurt pulls off, and without a moment's hesitation goes back to pressing open mouthed kisses to his thighs, and navel, and lower stomach. "Oh my god!" Blaine gasps once he's calmed down enough from his almost orgasm, and can at least breathe.

He watches through half lidded eyes as Kurt crawls over him again, bright, swollen lips finding his for a hard, deep kiss before he breaks again and reaches into the nightstand, coming back with lube and a condom and Blaine's already squirming in anticipation, knowing that he's desperate enough to beg for Kurt, all of Kurt, already, damn the fucking preparation.

Kurt does slip one finger inside first but Blaine gasps at once, "No! More!" Two fingers are still not enough, and even with three Blaine finds himself pushing down onto Kurt's hand, fucking himself on his fingers and screaming once they graze the prostrate, and all he knows is that the moment that Kurt's inside of him, filling him and stretching him – finally, he's going to make enough noise to wake up the whole of Washington DC and he could not care less. "Youyouyouyouyuyou!" he groans, and watches Kurt nod eagerly at once, and roll the condom onto himself, the gesture alone making him moan and bite his lips and damn if Blaine doesn't replace Kurt's hand with his own. But then Kurt's placing his hands on the back of Blaine's knees and he's pushing his legs up and apart, hooking them over his shoulder, and Blaine's never been this... open or exposed and shit if it isn't the hottest thing in his life, as he watches Kurt align himself with his hole, and then finally he's pushing in, and it's too-fucking-slow.

"Hard!" he whines, voice breaking with desperate need, through gritted teeth, but Kurt doesn't seem to need telling twice and slams his hips hard into Blaine. "HAAA!" he cries, drowning out the noise of the headboard slamming into the wall, and then again, and again, and again, and then Kurt lowers his torso

closer to Blaine's, so he can mouth at his jaw, and the angle shifts, and it hits just the spot, again and again and again, and the headboard on the wall's harder and quicker with each thrust and Blaine's probably going to be hoarse the next day, but he can't help it, and Kurt's moaning too – no, he's grunting, deep and throaty, sweat dripping down his forehead, as he slams in over and over, eyes screwed shut, and mouth open in a constant silent scream, and Kurt's hand wraps around Blaine's cock, and pumps once and that's all it takes for his vision to blur with white all over, and his back to arch up, and his hands to almost rip the ties apart, and his toes to curl, and his whole body to tense up with the strongest wave of pleasure he could have ever imagined, and it's almost a sob when he cries, "KUUURT!" and Kurt's still slamming into him, thrusts erratic and desperate and as the aftershocks of his own orgasm are still hitting Kurt screams and twists his head, buries his nose against Blaine's knees and thrusts one last, deep time.

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They pant against each other for a long time before Kurt even has strength in his muscles to roll himself off of Blaine, and then they pant some more, side by side.

"You are... amazing," Blaine breathes after what's probably been over five minutes.

Kurt tries to smile, but he's still breathing too hard to do it properly, so he just lets a hand land somewhere on Blaine – probably his stomach, and pats once.

It's a long time before he unties Blaine, and he gasps at how red and raw the skin on his wrists is, but Blaine brushes his worries off with a hoarse, "Worth it..."

They do take a shower together, because they can use the bigger bathroom this time, and, even though the original plan was just a simple scrubbing, it's not long before Blaine's down on his knees, water running down his back, and lips wrapped tightly around Kurt, tongue working its magic and making Kurt's legs give out.

They climb into bed naked, figuring they might as well save work in the morning, and they're right. Not five minutes after he's awake, Blaine's buried inside Kurt, legs wrapping around his waist, and arms tight around his shoulders as he moves gently in and out in slow, drawn out movements. It takes them longer to come that way, but also makes it remarkably worthwhile.

"I don't think I'll ever get tired of having sex with you..." Blaine mumbles into Kurt's temple as he peppers kisses over his face when they're finally properly showered and dressed and presentable to the world. "Or making love to you..."

"Or *fucking* me..." Kurt adds, and even though his cheeks turn a violent shade of red, he's still smirking.

"Or fucking you."

"I wish today wasn't the debate."

"Oh God, me too!"

"Can you imagine what it would be? A whole weekend in bed. Just the two of us? Only stopping for meals and bathroom breaks."

"Oh, god, don't tempt me. I'll call Wes and tell him the party's canceled!"

Kurt laughs, stepping away from the intoxicating presence of Blaine, and Blaine's hands and mouth and body and all he can do to make Kurt the biggest, neediest mess. "No... Finn should be here any minute now..."

"We'll give him some headphones," Blaine teases and Kurt laughs.

Of course in the end they don't cancel anything. And if Finn notices the empty carton of condoms (let's be fair, they didn't use all of them this weekend!) in the paper-recycling bin he doesn't say anything. But he does stay clear of Kurt's bedroom (which is probably a good thing because it reeks of sex, even after they left the window wide open).

Wes and David are, of course, the first to arrive, but others start trailing in soon after, and they all sit around in easy, friendly banter, not even bothering with picking sides for the debate.

It starts with a half an hour delay, and it takes five more minutes to get the boys to settle down and start paying attention.

Fifteen minutes in everything seems good and Kurt can even ignore just how tired his dad looks because he's still kicking it with his answers. Blaine's dad hasn't had a chance to speak more than once, but when he did, it was good – even if Kurt didn't agree.

It's thirty minutes into it that it happens. Kurt barely notices how it starts though. Someone made a comment or a question about it. Kurt's name is brought up. Cheating and slut, too. And Burt looks pissed and he's talking fast and loud and he's giving just as good as he's receiving and then suddenly he stops. He frowns. Deep. Deeper. Deeper still. And then he clutches his chest, and then he drops to the ground.

And then Kurt doesn't know what to think, do or say. The world has both stopped and slipped from right under his feet.

All he knows is that his father's right there, lying on a stage, unconscious.

Chapter Nineteen

Blaine's pretty sure he should be looking anywhere else rather than at the TV – there's a lot going on around him, or at least it sounds like there is – but he's stuck. There's Burt Hummel lying on the stage floor, right next to his podium. There was even a dull thud when he fell because his mic was on. And he had his back to the cameras so it was impossible to tell if he was conscious, but if the lack of movement was anything to go by, he probably wasn't. The complete rush of voices and people was absolutely overwhelming, and all Blaine could think about was, "Give him space! Give him space! Call 911, please, call 911!"

Burt Hummel is lying on a floor, on national television.

And then it cuts. And the news lady is filling the screen and talking and "more information" and "not certain yet" are coming out of her mouth but Blaine doesn't care because finally he can look away, and around him is controlled chaos. Everyone is exchanging horrified looks and David's fumbling around for the remote, and Dom's gasping "Was that a heart attack? Was that a stroke?!" to Wes, who's pointedly ignoring him as he just looks frantically between the TV and Kurt. And Kurt.

Kurt's still looking at the TV. His eyes are wide and unfocused, still glued to the screen – even if it's the woman talking – and he's sitting on the edge of his seat and his hands are grasping his knees and his knuckles are white. And then a phone rings. Kurt's phone rings.

The absurdity of the song – *Born This Way* – isn't even close enough to cutting the tension or softening the air.

When Kurt remains rooted to the spot, Blaine's the first to move and grab the thing, he sees the name *Jenny (dad)* on the monitor before he swipes his finger over it and presses it to his ear with a shaky hand. "Hello?"

"Kurt?" The voice is breathless.

"Not Kurt, Kurt's not.. huh... this is Blaine."

"Right. Are you with Kurt? Can you give him the phone? Tell him it's important."

"I... wait," Blaine finally says, and he goes to kneel right in front of Kurt, blocking the TV from his eyes. "Hey. It's... um... Jenny. For you. She says it's... important. Probably about..." He cringes because he can't exactly just say it, he can't exactly just spill out 'it's probably about your dad dropping to the floor like that.'

Kurt stares blankly at Blaine for a second before there's some kind of flicker of understanding in his eyes and he snatches the phone from his hand and puts it to his ear. "Jenny? What happened? What's happening? Have you called 911? Is he cons-"

Blaine watches him take in what he can only understand is fast-paced, though not enough information. Kurt's frustration is growing with every word of his that's interrupted and every question that goes by unanswered.

Around them everyone's gone dead silent, but their presence has become ridiculously obvious to Blaine and he can't take it, so he just finds Wes' eyes and mouths "Go."

Times like this make him well aware of how amazing Wes is. In a matter of a minute each of them is being ushered out of the living room, till Blaine and Finn are the only ones left. Finn has come to sit right next to Kurt, knowing better than to interrupt the phone call with his own questions, but looking more impatient by the second.

Blaine sits far enough to give them space, but close enough for Kurt to know he's still there.

When he does hang up he ignores Finn's urging questions, burying his face in his hands and taking long, deep breaths. Finally he raises his head and sighs. "They don't know what happened yet. They called 911 and they'd just gotten there when Jenny hung up. She says she thinks it was a heart attack, because she's seen it happen, but she wasn't sure. They'll call again as soon as they know anything." His voice is weak and tired, and so much unlike what it was just ten minutes ago.

"Was he awake?" Finn asks.

"No. I don't think so." Kurt shakes his head and goes back to holding his head on his hands, fingers grasping hair.

It's another ten minutes before a text arrives that says *'Paramedics said heart attack. He's on his way to the hospital. Carole is with him. I'll buy you and Finn tickets for the next plane.'*

Then just five minutes later, *'Be ready in a hour. A car will pick you up.'*

Blaine fixes them dinner, and packs both their bags because apparently Finn has lost the ability to do anything other than pace around and speculate, and Kurt's just frozen on the couch (and barely even touches his dinner). T-shirts and sweatshirt, and jeans, and enough underwear for three days, Blaine figures. Kurt's bound to be a little too preoccupied to notice the lack of proper fashion. He puts both bags in front of the door and makes sure his own things are all packed up and ready to go, and then it's just waiting. The three of them, sitting on the couch, waiting for the phone to ring.

Blaine pulls Kurt's hand into his own and squeezes his fingers tenderly. Kurt turns to look at him with dull eyes and gives him a sort of sad smile, half crawling, half letting himself be pulled into Blaine's embrace, tucking his head to the crook of Blaine's neck and curling up against him.

As they wait, there's only the sound of sighs and deep breaths – the speculation on the TV was only making it worse, and as far as information goes Jenny and Carole's phone calls were enough (well... at least better than infuriating and mortifying speculation), so they turned the TV off. There's a call from Carole saying they've arrived at the hospital. Then again, not ten minutes later, to say he's going into surgery, and confirm the heart attack diagnosis. And then, Jenny saying she's booked them rooms at the hotel nearest to the hospital, and that she'll call when their ride to the airport arrives downstairs.

Blaine runs fingers soothingly across Kurt's hair, and ignores completely the numbness growing on his left leg, from having Kurt's knee digging into it.

Finally the phone rings and everyone is up. Blaine takes Kurt's bag for him and there's a half assed glare when he does and he just pulls Kurt towards the elevator, ignoring his unenergetic protest.

It's only when Blaine's opening a car door for him that Kurt finally speaks. "Thank you," he mumbles as he takes the bag.

"Of course. Call me when you land, please. And – huh – update me when you know anything else."

"Of course." Kurt nods and throws his arms around Blaine, hugging him tightly.

Blaine squeezes back, breathes in Kurt's scent and kisses the side of his ear before drawing back just enough to press their lips together and mumbling, "I love you."

Kurt nods and his eyes are suddenly bright red before he gasps out, "It'll be alright, won't it?"

"I..." Blaine wants to say 'yes', but knows he shouldn't. He can't say 'no', either, and 'I don't know' seems so ridiculously unsatisfying and completely not enough. "I... I love you, ok?"

Kurt smiles weakly – he understands completely at once, Blaine knows – before he nods and mutters, "I love you, too." He kisses Blaine again and says, "I'll call you as soon as I can."

"Thanks." Blaine calls after him as he slips into the car.

"Bye, man," Finn surprises, pulling him in for quick, but tight hug.

"Bye, Finn."

He watches the car leave and even stands alone on the street for a long while before walking to his own car and driving home. The drive is excruciatingly silent. There's no music he thinks could ever fit the seriousness of the situation, and for some reason he can't even bring himself to find a news radio-station in hopes of information. He finds himself practically praying for Burt not to die, when he's finally pulling into his driveway.

His house feels cold. He can hear the TV sounding off and he practically runs to his bedroom, shooting off a hurried "I'm home!" before his grandfather even has the chance of saying anything even remotely horrible about Burt's heart attack.

He buries himself in open tabs on his laptop – every news website open, constantly refreshing, as he stares and wills his cell phone to ring.

When it finally does he picks it up instantly.

"Hey," Kurt's voice says. "We just landed and we're on our way to the airport."

"OK." He can't exactly say 'good' or 'great'. "Do you have any more news?"

"No. Finn's talking to Carole right now." There's shuffling, Kurt's voice directed at who Blaine guesses is Finn. "News?"

Finn's voice from afar, "Still in surgery."

Blaine nods to himself, despite them not seeing him. "He's still in surgery," Kurt repeats, voice back towards Blaine. "I can't decide if that's a good or a bad thing..."

"It means he's still alive, right...?!" Blaine offers.

"Or that there's complications..."

"Kurt... just... don't... shit. I don't know. I can't tell you not to overthink it. Of course you will." Blaine breathes, pinching the bridge of his nose in frustration, feeling a migraine growing. "I just... this sucks. I don't know what to tell you."

"I know..." Kurt sighs.

"I just... I need you to know, I'm here for you, Kurt. You know that, right? Just call me if there's anything."

"Of course, Blaine, I know, you know I know."

"Good. Listen, I know you don't believe it, but... I'm going to pray... I don't- I haven't... prayed in a long time, but I think... If there ever was a time to try it again..."

"I..."

"I'm not saying you should do it. I'm saying I'm going to do it." He sighs. "It's not like I can do anything else from over here, is it?"

"Yeah, no, you're right. Of course. He'd like that, I think."

"Good."

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The hallways are wide and long, white with too much light. They're cold. They have that smell about it, like ethylic alcohol and medicine mixed together. There are stretchers being pushed around by people dressed in white, and there are other people dressed in more white running and jogging and walking through the corridors, opening and closing doors briskly. Nobody ever stops long enough to so much as glance at the group of people sitting in the waiting room.

There's Jenny pacing around, chewing on the top of her cell phone whenever she's not talking quickly into it or typing furiously away.

There's Finn, rubbing circles into Carole's back and staring blankly ahead.

There's Carole, alternating between sniffing and wiping discreet tears off her eyes and trying to assure everyone that everything's going to be all right.

And then there's Kurt, who can't decide if he'd rather sit down or get up, if he'd rather stand still or walk around. Punching the vending machine when it didn't accept his coins for a bottle of water didn't do anything to calm his nerves, nor did distracting himself with anything else for that matter.

The truth is, everything about this place and situation is much too familiar for him. As much as they tried to shield him from all of it, there's no way you can go through a mother dying of cancer without having that completely sterile smell and feel of a hospital engraved into your brain. Everywhere he looks, and every sound he hears, and every scent he catches, seems to scream, "your mother's dead and your father's dying."

It's equal parts depressing and scary. His heart hasn't stopped hammering against his ribcage for one second since his dad fell on that stage. Every doctor that passes by without a smile on his lips only serves to make it beat harder and faster, because any of them could stop and face them and say, "I'm sorry, we did everything we could." Each time they don't, his heart still doesn't slow down.

His lip is about to fall off from too much worried chewing, and he's pretty sure he'll have his own heart attack soon if he doesn't calm down. There's a small kid sitting at the corner table of the waiting room (Kurt thinks that's his older brother sitting a few chairs away with head phones in his ears, dozing off), so he figures he could at least give it a shot. The kid's immersed in crayons and coloring books, tongue sticking out in concentration as he colors Donald Duck's beak blue.

"Isn't it supposed to be yellow?" Kurt asks softly, as he sits on the other side of the table. "Do you mind if I join you?"

"No, not at all," the kid says. "And I know it's supposed to be yellow, but there are so many options it seemed silly to go with the easiest."

Kurt huffs out a weak laugh. "I guess you're right."

"I'm Jim," the boy announces.

"I'm Kurt."

"Are you waiting for news from a doctor?"

"Yes..." Kurt nods. "And you?"

"Yeah." He shrugs, like it's no big deal. "My mom fell and broke her leg and the doctor said she needed to have some nails on her bones. Which seems gross and silly, if you ask me, but mommy said the doctor always knows best..."

"It is gross and it is silly, but it also works." Kurt sighs. "Sometimes it's the improbable things that works best – like your fantastic blue beak."

"It goes with the shirt."

"I noticed." Kurt winks.

"What about you?"

"Oh, huh, my dad's having a little problem with his heart, actually. They're trying to fix it, but I don't know anything else."

"Will he be alright?"

"I hope so."

"I hope so, too."

"Thanks."

"Is that your dad's doctor?" Jim points towards the double doors to the restricted access area, where a man in scrubs is scratching his head and looking around with tired eyes. Kurt straightens at once.

"I don't know," he says, but then he notices the way Carole jumps up from her chair. "I think so. Bye Jim, good luck with everything," he adds hastily before he hurries to the doctor.

Kurt's chest tightens impossibly, and his heart might have actually stopped, or maybe it's just beating so fast that he can't even feel the thumps anymore, and all he can hear is a continuous rush of blood through his head. The doctor's not smiling.

"Mrs. Hummel?" he asks, Carole nodding at once, just as Kurt and Finn reach them.

"Yes. How is he?"

"He's alive," the doctor hastens to assure and there's so much weight lifting off Kurt's shoulders that he might as well float. "And he's stable and under control, now. But he's not awake yet. His heart attack was brought on by an arrhythmia which caused a lack of blood to his brain. We're not able to determine whether there's any damage, unless he wakes up, which might not-"

"Wait," Kurt gasps, heart dropping as fast as it rose. "He's not waking up?"

"He might. We can't be sure. At the moment he's comatose."

"I don't understand..."

"We've done everything we can, so far. And now we need to wait."

"So... how long until he wakes up?"

"It could be tonight, it could be tomorrow... next week?" the doctor sighs. "I'd say if he doesn't wake up in a week, the chances of it ever happening are practically zero."

"Practically." Carole repeats. "Not zero..."

"I..." the doctor stutters. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Hummel, but you *are* a nurse, I'm sure you *know* what I mean."

The fact that she remains silent, like her voice has simply gone out, is like a punch to Kurt's stomach, and he feels breathless and so utterly weak. It's possible that he stumbles, because a strong arm wraps around his waist and he looks to his side to find Finn frowning and biting his lip – an expression that Kurt's come to know means he's trying to be strong.

"Can we see him?" Finn finally says.

"Yes, yes, of course," the doctor says, turning around. "Follow me."

Kurt's never seen someone look so small and fragile, let alone his father. It's crushing. One day he's Burt Hummel, strong and big and so incredibly immortal, filled with life and laughter and energy, and suddenly there's an old man, lying on a hospital bed, with his eyes closed and his sickly pale face asleep and so exhausted, each line carved deep and dark.

At first he thinks he should probably keep a straight face, and stay calm for Burt – panic would do them no good – but then it strikes him, again, that he's not awake at all. The tears start pouring, and his face is screwing up, and the sobs erupt from his chest so fast he can't even bring his hands up to clasp over his mouth before the first one is out.

It's not that he thinks his father is dying – though he might very well be – and it's not even that he's sick. It's that it's irreversible now, that his dad will die, and that his dad is just as mortal and *fragile* as any other man or woman lying on all the other hospital beds in the building. He would've thought he'd had that knowledge pegged the moment he buried his mother – that his dad would get there, too – but the way it feels like his lungs are being ripped out of his chest tells him otherwise. For something so utterly obvious as 'everyone dies one day' it's completely ridiculous how we can keep on believing, day after day, that we are the exception to the rule, that the people we love are the exception, too, and that we are untouchable.

So, when we are touched – when Death shows up at our door, either because she really does need to come inside, or just for a quick visit to say 'hey! How you doing up here, folks?' – and we're jerked awake to the realization that we were childish and silly at believing such fairytales, it's not just someone dying, whether

it's you or a loved one, it's your whole world shifting – it's everything you've ever believed, and will believe again, once the pain numbs and eases, crashing down around you like a mansion of lead bricks. It's not just that first time – that first sting of death when your great-grandmother, who you once had a lovely tea party with and who used to give you five dollars every time you saw her 'for an ice-cream or some candy you like, sweetie' – it's every time after that, too. It's not a lesson you can learn. It's not just, "My mom died when I was young, so of course I know all about mortality and the frailty of life!". No, it's not a lesson you can learn once and retain for life – it's a lesson you learn every time it happens, and forget just as many. If that wasn't the case, no one would ever live.

If we didn't forget about dying and all of those possibilities, how would we ever get up out of bed in the morning, and face the world and fall in love with people that will die, too – maybe right in front of us, maybe far away, maybe before, and maybe after, and maybe even because of the pain of us dying first? How would we even live if we *knew* about death?

So, it occurs to Kurt in that moment, he hadn't known his father was all too human, like everyone else. He thought he knew, but he didn't. And in a way... maybe that's a good thing. Sometimes blissful ignorance is truly better. At least when the alternative is crippling fear.

And of course there are a thousand things Kurt would've like to make sure he'd done with or said to his dad. More than a thousand, actually. A million. A billion. A gazillion. The possibilities are as endless as the infinite stream of thoughts and emotions racing through him at that exact moment. But, had he *known*, how would he be able to choose? How would he be able to say 'this is the better idea'? Or would he just end up wasting his time – *their* time – posing possibility over possibility, weighing pros against cons?

There is a way to waste your life with the small things. But there's also a way to waste it with the big.

The sobs have subsided, and he can actually take small, measured steps towards the bed where his dad is lying. He leans over and kisses Burt's forehead and whispers, "Hey dad." He takes his hand and squeezes it, hoping he would feel Burt squeezing back, but no. "If you wanted out of the race all you had to do was say..." He gives a dry, half hearted chuckle, and is startled by the silence that answers.

A hand squeezes his shoulder and he glances to find a teary-eyed Carole, standing next to him, and reaching for Burt's leg.

He hates how the three of them just sit there in silence for two straight hours. It feels like the opposite of what Burt Hummel is all about, but there's also the fact that everything else seems wrong, or at the very least uncalled for.

When the nurses finally come to announce that visiting hours are over, they only find a meek protest from him because in truth there is no real reason to just stand there and watch the slow and steady rise and fall of his father's chest.

Kurt begs to be left alone in his hotel room and despite Carole's worries he does get his way, sighing to himself as he finally climbs into his bed and pulls his covers up to his chin, feeling a tear roll down the bridge of his nose and fall onto the pillow. He presses his phone to his ear and only has to wait a couple of rings before Blaine picks up.

"Hey..."

"Hi. I'm sorry I'm only calling now."

"It's ok, Kurt. Don't worry, how is he?"

"He's... his heart's stable. But he's not awake, and the doctors say they don't know if he'll ever wake up."

"Oh..."

"He's in a coma."

"Oh no..."

"I think they're... they're going to wait a while before they start talking about... unplugging machines. But they didn't really sound very hopeful, so."

"Kurt... I... listen. I can't tell you it'll be alright, and I really can't tell you that he'll wake up, because I don't know. But. For what it's worth, I'm here and I will be, so if anything does happen you still have me..."

"It's worth a lot." Kurt smiles sadly to himself "Can you tell me you love me?"

"I love you."

"Thank you."

"Always..."

"Blaine?"

"Yes?"

"If he... if he doesn't wake up soon... do you think I... should... unplug?"

"I think you should save that question for if and when that happens... but." There's a long sigh and a beat before he continues, "I definitely don't think Burt Hummel would be one for machines."

"I don't think so, either." Kurt nods.

"Are you scared?"

"Like I've never been... And I think I'm most scared of having to make *that* decision..." He shuffles, tightening the covers around him.

"Do you want me there?"

"Of course I do, but don't come." Kurt smiles. "Just... make sure you answer your phone, and tell me you love me a lot, ok?"

"I love you..."

"Mmm...see, the blanket already feels three degrees warmer."

"I love you."

"Three more..."

"Do you want me to sing you to sleep?"

"I'm not going to sleep, Blaine, but... I'll never say no to that and you know it."

"Good..."

xXxXx

Blaine fiddles with the piano keys. Tries to find the right melody, and catches himself playing Cough Syrup, catches himself humming out the words. *Life's too short to even care at all.*

He laughs bitterly before he punches the keys, racing through music with violence and anger he's not used to hear pouring out of himself. That's an easy thing to say. Life's too short to even care at all.

Like you could ever stop caring. Like it'd be so much better if you did. Sure, you'd breeze through it, but isn't that a problem in itself – breezing through things without them ever meaning anything? Life without meaning isn't much of life, and meaning without caring is simply a paradox. Of course, for there to be meaning you *have* to care.

It hurts right now – his boyfriend's dad is in the hospital, might be dying soon, and there's nothing he can do about it – but he has to believe that for every painful day like these, there's another one bright and full of beauty and happiness. That's the only way he can be sane.

Doesn't hurt any less though.

Especially the helplessness.

That's easily the worst. Feeling so absolutely useless, or even futile in the middle of everything. Singing lullabies and saying 'I love you' without restraints isn't enough to feel like he's doing enough. He's never been through anything like that, so he can't even help Kurt though it with wise words – and even if he had, who is kidding? No one wants 'wise' words, no one wants condescendence.

He's never felt this angry with himself, and he's certainly never felt this angry at the world.

He punches the keys, spits out lyrics like they're venom he needs to pour out, and feels himself both tightening and expanding.

By the time he stops, not because he's finished, but because he can't physically sing anymore, he's heaving and his throat is thick and hard, and his eyes are burning. He stands to leave, to try and find another way to calm down because obviously not even music is helping, and he finds himself looking at Sebastian.

He's standing by the door, wide eyes and slacked jaw, clutching a stack of sheet music too tight.

"What do *you* want?" Blaine grits out.

"I... was going to practice. For regionals."

"Right." Blaine nods "All yours. I was leaving, anyway," he says and starts towards the door, as Sebastian cautiously enters the room, going towards the stereo. Blaine has his hand on the doorknob when the volcano bursts inside his chest. "No, you know what? I can't do this. I can't stand here and look at you and not tell you how much of a horrible person I think you are."

Sebastian looks at him, speechless and taken aback.

"How can you just stand there and... and... and... I saw you laughing, this morning, at breakfast – you were laughing and eating... and Burt Hummel is in a fucking coma, because of you!"

"Because of me?!" Sebastian gasps. "Excuse me?!"

"Listen... I try. I try really hard not to judge and not to point fingers, and to understand that sometimes we're just young and stupid, and we all make mistakes. But not now, not with this. Don't pretend you don't know what happened."

"I have absolutely no idea what you're talking about." Sebastian frowns. "You're insane."

"I hope no one ever falls in love with you, because, God damn, that will be the most miserable person on this planet. You are, without a doubt, the most selfish person I have ever met, and you can't even admit to it."

"You're being ridiculous!"

"You took someone as honest and decent as Kurt and you twisted his name, you put a bounty on his head, and on his dad's head! For what?! Five minutes of fame?!" Blaine gasps out. "Well, guess what, genius? Your name's long gone and it was already long gone even before the heart attack. No one cared to know who he cheated on, they just cared that he did, so congratulations on managing to screw up a perfectly solid campaign with your megalomaniac delusions of grandeur and self-importance! And actually getting to put him in a *fucking* coma and putting a whole family through hell!"

"It's not my fault!"

Blaine eyes him with contempt. He's never been this openly hateful before. Not even with his grandfather. He knows in a few hours he'll regret everything. He'll relive every word he said and he'll regret their harshness and their strength, but for now he can't make them stop, because he needs this. And if Sebastian gets to be selfish, so does he. "Of course it's not your fault," he says with dripping sarcasm and acid. "You didn't fire the gun. You didn't even provide the gun. You just gave them the bullet."

The door slams behind him and he runs to his room, hoping to find it empty so he can just scream into pillows and punch walls without having to worry Wes that he's losing it. But no such luck, and Wes is just sitting there, headphones in his ears looking at his laptop.

"Hey." Wes glances up. "Your phone was ringing."

Blaine blanches. He can't believe he forgot his cell phone!

He grabs it and whimpers at the four missed calls from Kurt. He pushes it against his ear and locks himself in the bathroom.

"I'm so sorry!" he gasps just as Kurt answers. "I didn't have my cell with me, I can't believe I forgot-"

"Hey, shh, it's ok, Blaine. It's fine."

"Ok," he says with a steadying sigh. "So, any news?"

"Not really. It's all the same. But hum... I'm on my way to a press conference. I'm pretty sure it'll be live on any channel, so..."

"Oh, right."

"I just wanted to give you a heads up, anyway, you should probably watch it. I have to go now. It's really about to start."

"I love you...!" Blaine breathes, hurriedly.

There's a short pause before Kurt's voice says, "I love you, too." Blaine wonders if he was smiling, and he hopes he can at least put a smile on Kurt's lips, weak as it might be right now.

Blaine scurries out of the bathroom, grabs Wes by the shoulder and pulls him toward the common room, despite the protests and questions. There are a couple of guys watching an episode of Walking Dead but he unceremoniously changes to CNN, and shushes every complaint hastily. The moment the TV shows a conference room, and there's a table with microphones and people moving to sit there, including Kurt, silence finally settles over them. An eerie sense of anticipation takes over.

There's movement at the door and the reporter's shooting quick-fire speculation about who's going to take which place at the conference table.

There's a man in a white lab coat, who's obviously a doctor; there's Jennifer Landon, Burt's campaign manager; and then there's Kurt – looking absolutely exhausted with dark circles under his eyes and a kind of sick paleness – so very different from his usual porcelain glow.

He rubs the bridge of his nose, before he adjusts the microphone in front of him and clears his throat. The off-screen reporter makes a quick announcement of who is about to speak, before Kurt leans in and says, "Hi. Hmm. I'll make this announcement short and concise. Due to his current condition, Burt Hummel's candidacy for the presidency of the United States is hereby withdrawn. We thank everyone who has thus far supported this campaign. Personally, I am very sad to announce this news, because I truly believe that my father would've been a great change in American politics, for the better. However, I'm sure everyone will understand this decision. My family and I would also like to thank everyone for their kind thoughts, and you should know that no prayer or caring wish is going unappreciated."

Blaine knew this already. It was obvious, actually. There wasn't even any need to say it. The moment Burt Hummel fell unconscious on the floor, was the moment his campaign was over. Even if he'd just fainted, the rumors the opposition would suddenly make up were more than enough to end it all.

But somehow, even if he already knew it, it was still a blow to hear it.

There's a swarm of raised hands and shouted questions, but as they start calling on reporters it's always Jenny or the doctor who answers. ("Burt's support goes to Mrs. Tilet's campaign as of now"; his condition is "stable but not improved"; it's "uncertain" if he will wake up.) Kurt just sits there, back straight and chin held high, but gaze lost and unfocused, lips set to an almost frown of a thin line.

Blaine wants to call him and make sure he's okay – which is ridiculous because of course he's not, and he doesn't even need a ghost of Kurt on a television screen to remind him of that. But there's something about seeing the person you love in such obvious anguish that makes you entirely irrational.

He controls himself, because obviously, now's not the best time to call him. But when the press conference is over and Blaine goes back to his dorm room, he pulls out his cell and dials.

"Hey..." he sighs. "you looked exhausted, babe. I wish you'd sleep."

There's a bitter chuckle. "So do I."

"Right... Maybe you should talk to somebody..." he says softly, as he closes the bedroom door behind him.

"I'll be fine..." Kurt says in a tone that makes it clear the topic is over. "Any worrying homework today?"

"No..." Blaine answers, climbing to sit on his bed, pulling a pillow onto his lap and hugging it. "I'll send you an e-mail with it, but it's easy, and either way, I could do it for you, if you need," he offers to which Kurt hums. "Warbler practice wasn't exactly great. I think morale is low... everyone's worried... and I think they've finally understood just how much of an ass Sebastian is, and clearly his number isn't working all that well anymore... I don't know." He sighs.

"That's not good..."

"I know. I don't want to worry you with any of this... don't... don't feel like you need to come back or anything. We'll be fine. Even if we don't win on Saturday, there are... more important things to worry about, I guess. It seems kind of small..."

There's a sad little laugh on the other side. "I wish I could tell you to worry about Regionals all you want, because I'd understand, but honestly, I really agree with you, and I couldn't care less right now. I'll probably be there for Regionals, anyway, but..."

"No, of course, don't even worry about that." Blaine shakes his head and lies down.

"Hmm..." Kurt hums. "You know... I'm looking at my dad right now... he looks... peaceful, I guess."

"That's good."

"Yeah... At least he's getting some rest." Blaine can almost see the shrug and the quick, hard smile.

"Maybe he just needed some holidays..." Blaine offers with the hint of a kind, softening joke.

"Oh well, I guess Hawaii is kind of clichéd by now."

"Exactly." He smiles into his pillow.

There's a soft kind of silence before Kurt sighs and whispers, "I wish you were here with me."

"I could be..."

"No. You can't. But thank you. I'll be fine, Blaine."

"Yeah, but I want to be there, too. There's only so much I can *say*. If I was there I could at least hold you, or hug you... I dunno..."

"Yes, well, just... sing to me or something..." Kurt laughs a little, and Blaine smiles too, even if he complies at once.

Tuesday goes the same way, and he thinks he can hear a soft snoring on the other side, once he finishes the song that day, which is a small victory, but a victory nonetheless.

On Wednesday, he's just about ready to call Kurt, the minute he's out of Warblers practice, but as he does he finds himself face to face with the actual boy, leaning against the door to Blaine's room. It takes a lot of self-control for Blaine not to jump forward, hug him tight and kiss him in every available surface of skin.

"Kurt!" he gasps.

Kurt gives him a smile – which is still weak and tired – and raises his hand in a half wave. "Hey there, handsome." He blinks, slow, and he really does sound exhausted.

"Oh my god, what're you doing here?!"

Kurt smiles again and tilts his head towards the door. "Let's go inside, yeah?"

"Oh right!" he stutters and unlocks the door in hurried sloppy movements. They scramble inside and he miraculously remembers to shoot Wes a text saying, *'Kurt's here, could you not come back to the dorm right away?'*

"Dad's been transferred to a hospital here in DC..." Kurt explains barely a second after Blaine's closed the door, and he's walking slowly towards the bed, sitting down in drawn out movements, like he's half asleep. "Carole kept insisting Finn and I couldn't miss any more school, but of course I refused to leave, so once the doctors said it would be safe to transfer him, we did."

"Why didn't you tell me?" Blaine frowns, as he sits next to Kurt and takes his hand in his.

"Surprise...!" he tries for effect, but it comes out without any energy at all, and he sighs to himself, hanging his head with a halfhearted chuckle.

Blaine smiles sadly, before leaning in to kiss his cheek. "I'm really glad you're here," he mutters and kisses the corner of his mouth. "Come here," he says, wrapping his arms around Kurt and pulling him closer as he maneuvers them to lie on their sides.

"Can you come with me tomorrow? I'm going to see him at the hospital after school... you could come."

"I'd love to, thank you," he says, holding him a little tighter while Kurt just hums and nods against his chest, nuzzling closer and taking a deep long breath.

"I missed you," he mutters, voice muffled by Blaine's shirt.

"I love you," Blaine breathes. Rubbing soothing circles in Kurt's back he adds, "Maybe you could try to sleep...?"

Kurt nods and immediately curls up even more against Blaine's body.

Blaine sighs and smiles a little. It's nice to at least be able to do this now – of course he wishes he didn't have to – but it just feels easier to do his part now. It's so much easier to be physical about his support, rather than rely on treacherous, empty words. Not that he didn't mean those words... but... it's not like they were very helpful. Not like a hug, or a safe embrace.

And when Kurt's breathing evens out, and his grip on Blaine loosens just slightly, and there are soft little sounds coming out of him every once in a while, Blaine's sure it makes all the difference to *be* there.

Wes does come in after a while, but thankfully he's wary as he opens the door and Kurt doesn't even stir.

"He's asleep, try not to wake him..." Blaine whispers.

Wes nods. "What about dinner?"

"I'm not hungry... just... bring something back in case we wake up later. You don't mind, do you? If we just... sleep here...?"

"Of course not." Wes rolls his eyes, not even bothering to make his usual 'as long as there's no funny business' joke. "I'll be sure to bring you some snacks, then."

Eventually Blaine falls asleep as well and he only wakes up to the sound of Wes climbing into his own bed. With a yawn he figures it's probably best if they at least get more comfortable, so he gently nudges Kurt.

"Kurt, hey, Kurt?"

"Mmm..."

"Wake up, Kurt..." Kurt blinks his eyes half open and Blaine smiles. "I'll get you a T-shirt and some sweatpants... better than sleeping in those jeans."

"Oh," Kurt half gasps, half yawns. "Yes please," he mumbles, sitting up. "Oh. Hi, Wes."

"Hi Kurt," Wes nods in greeting from where he's reading, already tucked into his bed.

"I'm sorry I invaded your room."

"No worries, man."

"Awesome."

Wes just smiles.

Blaine hands Kurt the T-shirt and pants and Kurt takes them with a sleepy smile before going into the bathroom. Blaine changes too, as he takes half a sandwich and chews on it. When Kurt returns he makes sure he eats the other half, before they both brush their teeth – too sleepy to even be phased by the fact that they have actually reached that point in their relationship where they just don't care about sharing toothbrushes – and climb wordlessly into bed again, seamlessly returning to their previous positions and falling asleep as soon as their eyes closed.

When they wake up in the morning Kurt kisses him sweetly before making his discreet way to his own room to get ready for class. That day Kurt does look better. Sure, he's still mostly numb, and easily drifts out of conversation to stare into nothing, and he doesn't eat half the food on his plate, and he's still pale, and there are still bags under his eyes. But it's not as bad. It's not enough to scare Blaine.

They both beg out of Warbler practice and Wes acquiesces. The drive to hospital is silent and kind of heavy. Blaine takes Kurt's hand and squeezes it every time they stop at a red light, to which Kurt always squeezes back. Once he's parked the car, they pop the collar of their jackets and make their way inside as discreetly as possible. Kurt seems to know the way already and his steps are fast and hard – Blaine nearly jogs just to keep up. Everything about Kurt's posture screams defensive, actually. From the hands buried in pockets, to tight shoulders and lowered chin. Blaine wants to reach out and take his hand, maybe even rub his shoulder, or circle his waist, but there are people in the corridors.

They pass a nurse's station but Kurt breezes by with just a slight nod, and then they're at a door. Through its small window Blaine can already see the foot of a bed and his heart starts racing. Kurt pushes the door open, after a quick glance and a sad smile.

"Hey," he hears him say, and as he follows him inside he finds Carole already sitting on the right side of Burt's bed, book in hand.

"Hi, Kurt. Hi, Blaine," she says softly, but Blaine barely manages a smile in response because there's something about seeing such a man in such a state. Everything about it screams frailty, and it's a stark contrast to the memories Blaine has of the man.

He feels his throat tightening but he keeps it under control with long, measured breaths.

"Hey Dad..." Kurt sighs, sitting on the side of the bed and reaching out to take Burt's hand. "I talked to Dr. Roberts yesterday. She caught up with us, just before we left," he says softly. "She said we should keep

talking to you and stuff... said it might... help. I don't know. But I trust her to know." He breathes. "So... I was thinking I could sing to you, if that's OK. I don't think I ever did, which... thinking back seems kind of stupid. So... huh, remember at mom's funeral... when they were lowering the casket... and I was really scared because... well, that was it. I remember you took my hand, Dad, and... I guess you were probably scared, too... but at least we were scared together, so... what I'm saying is... I really wish you'd hold my hand right now."

Blaine has to wrap his arms around himself and bite his lip to keep himself from reaching out. This is a moment between Kurt and his father.

Kurt starts singing without much warning, and it's soft and hesitant at first, but each word gets larger and stronger.

"Oh yeah, I'll tell you something

I think you'll understand

When I say that something

I wanna hold your hand

I wanna hold your hand

I wanna hold your hand"

As the boy keeps singing his heart out, Blaine can do nothing but watch in awe of such heartfelt vulnerability that makes his own heart start racing and his eyes start crying. He's never seen such love and emotion in a song, and it's as beautiful as it is heartbreaking. If there are people outside, trying to watch through the small window on the door, Blaine can't even bring himself to wonder, his eyes are glued to Kurt. To the way that tears are streaming down his cheeks, the way his eyes don't ever leave his father's face, the way his hands hold Burt's tightly, the way he almost smiles when he sings of feeling happy inside, the way he almost breaks as he belts that he can't hide his love (and he really, really can't), the way every bit of emotion going through him is in plain view.

When he finishes the room is in complete silence, save for the soft beeping noise from the heart monitor.

"Please wake up..." Kurt whispers with a cracked voice.

There's a change in the beeping. The rhythm's off for a beat or two, faster than it should be. They share frantic looks before Blaine shakes himself to reality and sprints to the door, calling for a nurse. She comes but everything's normal again.

"Dr. Robert has just gone into surgery, but I will make sure she checks on him afterwards," the nurse promises before leaving reluctantly.

After that, they're all too scared and emotionally exhausted to do anything else but stand there.

All of it is possibly one of the most depressing experiences of Blaine's life. Burt's unconscious state. Carole's kind smile tainted from sadness. Kurt's absolute silence as he just sits there, with his legs pulled up to his chest and he holds himself together, just staring at his dad, like that alone could make him wake up. And the overwhelming knowledge that there is absolutely nothing they can do.

Blaine asks about five hundred times if either of them needs anything to eat or drink, but the answer is always negative. But he does go out and gets them a couple of sandwiches, making Kurt eat half of his, and Carole save hers for later. Other than that, he just sits next to Kurt on the small couch pushed against the left side wall, and pulls him close. Kurt immediately curls up to his side, lays his head on Blaine's shoulder and keeps on staring.

He's thankful when Kurt's breathing evens out and he looks down to find his eyes closed and his face peaceful. He presses his lips carefully to the top of Kurt's head and mouths 'I love you'.

It's pitch black outside when there's a knock at the door and a nurse comes inside to tell them, "Visiting hours are over, I'm sorry."

Blaine and Carole nod at once and she leaves with a polite smile.

Blaine nudges Kurt awake, as softly as he can and Kurt's almost pliant as Blaine maneuvers him into his coat and wraps his scarf around his neck. Kurt smiles and uses the tug of Blaine tightening it to lean in and press their lips together. "Thank you," he whispers into the kiss.

Blaine just nods and bites his lip into a tight smile. "Come on, let's go before we break curfew."

Kurt nods and follows Blaine back through the corridors this time around. As a result they end up at the main entrance to the hospital.

Blaine doesn't see them in time, doesn't stop Kurt in time. Their signs can be read from the other side of the road. Blaine's seen them a thousand times on the Internet, they shouldn't hurt or burn as much as they do. The words are searing through.

GOD HATES FAGS

YOU'RE GOING TO HELL

HOMOSEXUALITY IS A SIN

FAGS BURN IN HELL

"Oh my god." Kurt's gasp is what yanks Blaine out of his stupor, and he doesn't even say anything before he grabs Kurt's arm and pulls him around, briskly making his way to the back door. Nothing but the word 'fuck' is going around in his head. He's shaking with anger by the time they're in his car. But it's not enough. He needs to get away. He needs it now.

"Why didn't I know about this?" Kurt asks shakily at they're pulling out of the parking lot. "They had to know this was happening, why didn't anyone tell me?! All they told me was to use the back door. I assumed... oh my God... I can't... oh my God."

Blaine had absolutely no words, but he should probably say something. Preferably not that he wanted to kill someone.

"I'm sorry I got the wrong door... I'm sorry you had to see that," he mutters after a while.

"I-it's not your fault."

The rest of the ride is completely silent, save for the roar of the engine as Blaine shoots through the streets, silently berating every red light or slower driver. He needs a pillow to scream into, or something like that. There's a burning feeling at the back of his eyes, and his throat is thick, and his whole body is shaking by the time he's turning onto Dalton's street. But it all stops when he hears the choked sob next to him, and he looks to find Kurt's face buried in his hands as his shoulders shake with silent cries.

"Fuck," he mutters and speeds even more, pulling to Dalton's parking lot at probably the most reckless speed he's ever allowed himself to drive, and not giving a shit about taking up two spaces as he parks the car and kills the engine.

He climbs out of the car and runs around it.

"Shh, come on, babe, let's get you inside."

He pulls Kurt outside with him, but Kurt's shaking so uncontrollably that he merely slides against the side of the car onto the concrete, sobs unrestrained now. Blaine's pretty sure he scraped his knees as he dropped down so he could wrap his arms around Kurt and make sure to keep him together, but he's also pretty sure he couldn't care less.

He coos and holds him tight, he kisses his hair and his temples and his forehead – he kisses every bit of skin he can touch – but he never tries to get him back on his feet again. Kurt finds the crook of Blaine's neck to bury his face in it, as his arms wrap tight around his shoulders. Blaine holds the back of Kurt's head steady, safely, fingers splayed and threading through thick hair. "Shhhh..." he mutters against the top of Kurt's head. "It's ignorance... it's just... it's... shhhhh..." He pulls back just enough to kiss every inch of Kurt's face, from his lips to his tearful eyes.

In the midst of sobs and coos, the noise of a camera shutter is a foreign contrast that makes them finally freeze. But as they look up to find Sebastian not more than five feet away, he's dropped his arms to his side, camera barely held in a loose grip.

xXxXx

Kurt feels Blaine's arms around him shift from comforting to protective, but he can't take his eyes off Sebastian's. Even in the dark night he knows the other boy's staring back. He can see the actual surprise on his face, the look of complete confusion, maybe even panic, before he actually drops his camera and walks away.

Blaine doesn't let go at once, but when he finally does, slow and hesitant he makes sure to pull back just enough to ask Kurt, "You ok?"

Kurt takes a deep, stuttering breath before nodding once. Blaine slides a hand down to Kurt's and squeezes before goes to grab the camera.

Honestly, how do things continue to get even worse?

"There's only one picture..." Blaine mutters, frowning in confusion. "And it's blurry..." He shrugs. "I don't... I don't get it..."

Kurt just takes a deep breath and stands, wordlessly taking it from Blaine's hand. He searches for the memory card and slips it out before snapping it in two. "I just..." he sighs. "I just have other things to worry about..."

"I know, Kurt, honestly, I don't care."

Kurt gives a dry humorless chuckle. "You should."

"I don't," Blaine reiterates.

"Thank you," he sighs. "Let's go inside... I just need to sleep forever."

Blaine nods and they walk together to Kurt's room. He strips down to his undershirt and changes into a pair of sweat pants before he crawls into bed, resting his head on Blaine's chest and letting him wrap his arms around his shoulders, like the night before. And like then too, Blaine's soothing fingers, drawing senseless patterns on his scalp, and his soft kisses on the top of Kurt's head every once in a while, make it easier for him to fall asleep.

He's startled awake after what feels like five minutes by his phone ringing. Before he can even so much as sit up and rub his eyes, Blaine is already grabbing it from the bedside table and handing it to Kurt. It's from the hospital.

He swipes a shaky finger to answer and holds it up to his ear with a racing heart. "Hello?"

"Mr. Hummel, it's Dr. Roberts fr-"

"Yes, yes, I know."

"Right. Listen, you should come back to the hospital, if you can, Mr. Hummel. It seems your father is waking up. He's still pretty much disoriented and he can't keep his eyes open for more than five minutes

at a time, but it's quite normal for his condition, so I have every reason to believe he'll be just fine in no time." Kurt has honestly stopped listening after 'waking up'.

"What!?" he gasps. "He's... He's awake? Now?"

Next to him Blaine suddenly sits ramrod straight and his eyes are wide and he mouths 'awake', taking Kurt's hand and squeezing it, almost painfully tight.

"Well, *now* he's sleeping, actually, but he was awake not two minutes ago, right before I called you. So, maybe you should come back. I'm sure the nurses can bend some visiting hours rules, given the circumstances."

"Oh my God, oh my God, of course. I'll be there as soon as I can." He ends the call and practically throws his phone away before scrambling out of bed to find his boots and his coat. "He's awake! Blaine, he's awake!"

"He is?!" Blaine breathes. "That's fantastic!" He jumps to his feet and wraps his arms around Kurt in a fierce, elated hug. "Oh my God!"

"I know!" he breathes against Blaine's neck before pushing away and saying, "Come on, we have to hurry!"

Blaine stops in his tracks. "Y-you... you want me to go with you?"

Kurt freezes with one sleeve of his jacket on. "Well... of course. Don't you?"

"I... Yes!" he gasps. "Of course!"

"Well then, *hurry!*" he urges, putting the rest of his jacket on and bending to shove his boots on. "You're driving, because I think I'll crash the car if I do."

Blaine just nods as he pulls his own coat on.

Blaine drives fast, and somehow it's still not enough for Kurt, because he wants to feel happy and excited, but he can't really do that until he sees it with his own eyes, until he can look at his father's eyes and see them filled with life. In the meantime he just grips his seat and feels the blood rushing through his ears and his heart hammering against his chest.

Blaine takes up two whole parking spots, but they couldn't care less as they jump out of the car and race towards the hospital door. They know better than to run through the corridors but they walk fast, almost jogging, and when Kurt turns the corner to his dad's room's corridor he practically crashes into Finn.

"Kurt! You're here! Great!" He beams.

"Is he awake?!"

"We just got here, too. Mom's talking with Dr. Roberts over there." Kurt stands on his tip toes to look over Finn's shoulder as he and Blaine say hi to each other. Carole and Dr. Roberts are standing barely five feet away, and the doctor seems to be explaining something. Kurt hurries over.

"Dr. Roberts, hi," he breathes.

"Oh, hello, Mr. Hummel. I was just telling your, huh, stepmother that he's still fragile and tired, so don't expect him to be able to engage in animated conversation and don't be scared when he can't. He'll be needing a lot of sleep for a while now, and I'll be sure to give you all the dieting recommendations I have soon."

"OK..." he nods, wondering why she's not ushering him inside.

"He's asleep right now, but I've cleared it with the nurses and the administration for you th-four to have permission to stay over for the night, and make sure he has someone there if he wakes up again. The next few times might still be a little confusing, and it's important that you explain everything calmly and patiently, and as much as you might want to, don't crowd him too much, or excite him..."

"Oh, ok." Kurt agrees at once.

"Right. So, I'll be going now. I'll be back tomorrow to check up on him." She smiles, before reaching out and squeezing Kurt's arm "Have a good night, Mr. Hummel."

"Good night," he says before he all but dashes inside his father's room, followed closely by Carole.

Sleeping Burt and Comatose Burt look surprisingly different. Sleeping Burt has his head turned to the side, for one, and he's breathing is also much heavier, with a slight snore, and sometimes his hand twitches, or his face changes expression. Kurt realizes with tears of relief he doesn't even need to talk to him to know

things are so much better, because he *knows* this man, he's *seen* this man before – this man that's so different from the ghost of a person that was lying here, this man whose arms he's slept in a number of times before he grew up and decided it was embarrassing to still sleep with his parents, or dad.

"Dad..." he mutters, as he strokes a soft hand through Burt's sparse hair.

The older man shifts in his sleep, but doesn't wake up. Behind him Carole laughs slightly and he looks to her smiling through tears. In a moment of pure, blissful relief he wraps her up in a tight embrace. "It's going to okay!" he murmurs against her tickling hair. "We're going to be okay!"

She nods fiercely against his shoulder and hugs back with enthusiasm, before a different pair of arms circle them both and Finn's crushing hug gets them all laughing.

"Oh God...!" Kurt sighs as they part. "I don't think I've ever felt this much relief in my life..." He jumps around and shakes his arms a little, because frankly he feels like he's about to take flight with the amount of weight that's just lifted from his shoulders.

Carole laughs and nods as she hurries over to take her usual seat beside the bed and reaches for Burt's hand.

Kurt's about to climb onto the bed, when a soft tentative hand slides into his and squeezes. "Hey Kurt..." Blaine mutters, and Kurt had almost forgotten he was still there, with so much going on in his mind, heart and, well, world.

"Oh!"

"I'm gonna go." Blaine says with an honest smile "You should stay here with your family, don't even worry about tomorrow's intensive Warbler rehearsal or whatever... I'll tell everyone he woke up," he assures him. "They'll be thrilled..." he says softly before adding, "And I am, too, Kurt. I'm so happy for you, but especially for him. He's a great man, Kurt. I... I really like your dad."

"Good!" Kurt beams. "Because he likes you, too, and I like him, and I like you, so we can all like each other for a while longer now." He laughs before pulling Blaine into a hug. "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

"Of course, Kurt. There's nothing to thank me for." He sighs into Kurt's hair before pulling back. "I'll leave you guys now. Have a good night." He kisses him softly, once on the mouth and then on the forehead,

before hurrying over to Carole and hugging her briefly with a genuine smile which is obviously returned and giving Finn's back a manly pat.

Kurt watches after him, as he closes the door with one final wave and smile, and he sighs at how much in love he is with his boyfriend, and how there's space in his head for him to think about that again.

Unable to keep a smile from his lips, he sits on his father's bed and just stays there watching him sleep and loving every tiny movement that reminds him he's going to be just fine.

Burt wakes up close to seven AM. He stirs a little first and then makes a low, grumbling noise at the back of his throat before frowning and blinking his eyes open, and it's with Kurt's best efforts that he doesn't just spring up from where he'd been sitting and just wrap his dad up in a fierce hug while chanting, "You're awake! You're awake! You're awake! You're awake!"

Instead he stands carefully and bends only enough to be in his father's line of sight before whispering, "Dad? You awake?"

"Mmm...Kurt?"

"Yeah, it's me, Dad, I'm right here."

"Mmmkay," the man says closing his eyes again, pressing them tightly shut before opening again, and raising a clumsy hand to rub at his face.

"You OK, Burt?" Carole asks from where she's standing on the other side of the bed, eagerly smiling. "Do you need anything?"

"Huh...." he says, as he starts looking around himself. "Water...?"

They call a nurse, who gets him water, and he only stays awake long enough to drink it and say, "I love you, too" with a sleepy chuckle, when all of them make sure to say so through their happy tears.

'Dad woke up just now! Only asked for water! Seems to be doing fine! :)))) - K'

':D tell him I said hi when he wakes up again, ;) - B'

When Burt does wake up again, it's around midday and he manages to stay up for enough time to actually eat his lunch (which is some sort of mild soup) and talk to them for a little bit – enough for them to gently tell him they'd had to withdraw his candidacy and that he'd been out for almost a week.

'He says hi back! :D – K'

'Awesome! The Warblers are really happy about the news, btw! And they totally understand if you want to stay with your dad tomorrow, instead of going to Regionals. – B'

'I'll go to Regionals. Told dad I wouldn't and he got pretend-angry and made me promise I'd go so he could watch me perform. Finn's going and recording the thing or whatever. – K'

'The guys are ecstatic about the news! – B'

Kurt can't help smiling. He even tries not to, when Burt's awake for dinner time and the nurse comes in to say that visiting hours are over and they definitely have to leave and let him rest. But even then his bitch face to the nurse is completely ineffective because he can't go five seconds without smiling.

The next day, early morning, as they gather to take the bus to Regionals he can't even bring himself to be nervous about the performance – not even taking into account that it's been more than a week since the last time he's rehearsed any of it, and he hopes to God he'll be able to concentrate enough during dress rehearsal when they get there.

"You nervous?" Blaine asks, walking up to lean against the bus, next to Kurt.

"No." Kurt beams. "I'm too happy to feel anything but that."

"Good!" Blaine beams. "Maybe this news was just the thing the team needed to get back on track. Yesterday's rehearsal went pretty good, for a change."

"Really?!" Kurt asks hopefully.

"Really." Blaine nods. "'Heroes' has never sounded better, actually, and 'I Did It' is pretty awesome, actually – I'm pretty proud to pull that one off..."

"What about Sebastian's?"

"Well... it wasn't... horrible. But he seemed kind of... lost, yesterday."

"Hey!" David jogs up to them, looking slightly panicky. "Have you seen Sebastian? He hasn't shown up yet, and we'll be late if we don't leave soon."

"Huh, no, have you check-"

"FINALLY!" Wes's voice sounds from the other side of the bus. "COME ON GUYS! INSIDE, NOW!"

Sebastian looks kind of zoned out as he's shoved inside and Kurt's almost worried at how out of it the boy seems. He exchanges a look with Blaine who looks as surprised as him, and mouths 'shit', with raised eyebrows and wide eyes.

The whole ride everyone's asking Kurt about his dad and making sure he knows how much they prayed or wished for his improvement. He beams as he thanks them all, and finds himself close to tears once or twice.

So he barely notices Sebastian sitting in the corner, by himself, head pressed against the glass and eyes closed, but most certainly not sleeping. The few times he does, though, he's surprised to find himself wanting to go over and ask what's wrong. Not because he feels worried about Sebastian (that'd be rich after all that he'd put them through), but because something's s very obviously wrong and he wants to know what it is.

He doesn't get to find out until they're standing on the stage, the very moment they finish dress rehearsal (and Blaine's right, they might actually have a chance, if only Sebastian manages to find his mojo in the one hour they still have before performing).

"I can't," Sebastian says, once they're finished with the whole act – his song last.

"What?" an assortment of voices gasps at once and everyone turns to look at him horrified.

"I can't go out there today and sing this song. I can't. I'm sorry, guys. I'm sorry. I don't deserve this solo, I never did. It should be Kurt's. I know that, you know that. Everyone knows that. I can't. I just. Can't," he says defeated, voice breaking and eyes clearly burning with tears.

There's a long stretch of silence, when everyone just stands and stares, before something in Kurt finally snaps and he grabs Sebastian's wrist and drags him away, not stopping until he's locked a bathroom door behind them.

"Spill it. What's your angle? What're you trying to do?"

"No angle..." Sebastian sighs. "I just... you were right... I'm a selfish person, and... sure that gets me what I want... but. On Thursday... I had you. If I WANTED I could've just... exposed you. Those photos would've sold for... I don't know... millions." He laughs bitterly before letting his back slide against the wall, until he's crumpled on the floor. "But then... I got closer and... you were crying. You... you were sobbing. And it... just looked like the only thing keeping you whole was... Blaine's arms around you. I've never seen anything like that. I'd never seen someone so broken, and... all I could think about was how you were right, and all I could hear was you crying, and Blaine trying to calm you down, and then there was his voice yelling at me, telling me it's all my fault, and... I tried not to think about it, when he told me that, but... that night... I couldn't not think about it. I just... he was right..."

"What...?"

"If I hadn't messed around with you guys... none of this crap would've happened, and... I know heart diseases are hardly my fault, but... the stress doesn't help... and..."

"Oh..."

"Right." Sebastian gives him a hard smile. "I'm sorry, Kurt, I really am. For everything I've... said and done. I promise I'm not playing at anything here... it's... it's all fun and games... until it's not." He sighs. "And right now... I just... I don't feel very... *inspirational*." He lets his head fall back against the wall. "So I can't just go out there and sing about standing up and walking again, or whatever... because what I really need to do is... sit down and think about myself for a while."

"Oh..." Kurt breathes, feeling the ground shift a little beneath his feet. He sits next to the other boy, trying his best to collect his thoughts before he speaks again. It's a while, but he finally finds his words. "You didn't cause my dad's heart attack," he says softly and calmly. "An arrhythmia did. Or if you want to go the stress route... a presidential campaign with all that is entailed did, including other candidates that think my love life is a worthy subject for a public political debate."

"It wouldn't be if I hadn't..."

"Hey. Listen..." Kurt sighs. "You shouldn't blame yourself, for that. Really. It's too much responsibility..."

"Right..."

"But I do agree that you could probably use some... soul-searching," he agrees and adds with a teasing smirk he can't hold back, "If you *have* a soul, that is."

Sebastian gives a humorless chuckle.

"You can be driven and ambitious without being completely selfish and corrupt, Sebastian. You don't have to give up who you are in order to be a good person."

"I hope so," he nods.

They sit there in silence for a while longer, probably too long, but Kurt's past hurrying things.

"So about that song..." he finally sighs.

"You do it." Sebastian sighs. "I mean it when I say I can't. As productive as this little chat was I still feel pretty shitty, so..." He trails off with a shrug before adding, "Besides, your audition that other time was amazing. If you could do... that... we'll definitely win."

Kurt laughs and shrugs. "Well, then if it's all the same to you, I *will* take that solo."

The other boy gives the first ever genuine smile Kurt's seen on his face before hopping to his feet. "Come on. Wes is probably having a heart attack right now," he says before stopping short and looking at Kurt with wide eyes. "Sorry, I didn't..."

Kurt laughs and shakes his head. "It's fine."

They find the green room filled with panicking boys and Kurt pulls Wes, David and Thad outside, as the room becomes suddenly silent with their arrival.

He closes the door, just as Wes crowds him. "What the fuck's going on?!"

"He's grown a conscience, apparently..." Kurt says dismissively. "But that's not important right now. Listen, he says he really doesn't feel capable of going on stage."

"So what now?" David asks, clearly scared, which is, for as long as Kurt's known him, a first.

"Do you trust me?"

"That depends," Wes mutters.

Kurt gives him a glare. "I have the song. I have the talent. I know I can... win us this. I have... I have... enough emotion inside of me right now to burn a forest, so... if you get me on that stage right now, I will win this competition."

"Promise?" Thad breathes, hopeful.

"Yes!" Kurt swears. "Let me go first. Then 'Heroes', then 'I Did It'. Trust me, Wes, we're going to win this shit, or so help me God, I will let you all punch my nose repeatedly."

There's silence for a while as the three councilmen seem to consider their options. It's Wes who finally speaks. "I will hold you up to that," he says before turning on his heel and bursting through the door. "ALRIGHT GUYS, WARM UP TIME!"

Kurt smiles and takes a deep breath, the nervous butterflies finally starting to fill his stomach as he just watches the group gather round for warm-up, knowing full well that they're putting a ridiculous amount of trust on him.

He catches Blaine's eyes, and smiles with a soft shrug, mouthing 'tell you after'. He wishes they could sneak away right now, though, because he could totally use a good luck kiss or at the very least a word of courage, but there's absolutely no time before the light's flickering and Wes gets them in a show circle.

Kurt's soon standing right behind the curtain, feeling all too alone in the middle of stage. He looks to the side, where the rest of the Warblers are standing to watch him perform before coming up to join for the other two numbers, and finds Blaine's intense gaze, holding it as nerves melt a little and he manages to smile. Blaine's eyes are soft as he raises his fingers to his lips, discreetly pursing them and tilting his hand just so. Kurt's smile grows and his nerves melt away completely, just as the curtain finally opens and he tears his eyes away to look ahead, not even blinking as the spotlight lands on him, effectively wiping out

every face in the audience, which is a good thing, because he's not singing this for an audience. He's singing it for... life itself.

Someone to hold you too close

Someone to hurt you too deep

Someone to sit in your chair

And ruin your sleep

And make you aware of being alive

The worst week of Kurt's life. That's how he'll always refer to it in his mind. He'd never felt this scared, not even when his mother had died, because back then he was smaller and he knew it was bad but he couldn't have known how bad. But now he did, now he had. Now he'd known full well, day after day, what he'd been too close to losing. So. The worst week of Kurt's life.

Someone to need you too much

Someone to know you too well

Someone to pull you up short

And put you through Hell

And give you support for being

alive - being alive

It wasn't the fear of becoming an orphan, even. It was, pure and simple, the fear of losing someone he loved. Of never being able to look at his father again, to share a hug, a laugh, a smile or even just a look with him. Of never being able to hold his hand, or having his own held by the one man that had always, *always* been there for him. Of suddenly being left with a hole in his chest too big to ever be filled again, because how do you even begin to replace someone like that?

Make me alive, make me confused

Mock me with praise, let me be used

Vary my days, but alone is alone,

not alive.

And of course it's terrifying to feel like that. To feel like there's nothing you can do to feel safe again, because it's real now, it's a possibility, it can happen, if not now, then later. He'll die. *They*'ll die. Holes can be carved in Kurt's heart until there's nothing left to keep beating. That's what happens when you love someone. When you open yourself to love like that. You put your heart on the line, and you hope that when it's left with a hole, you can still pull through.

Somebody hold me too close

Somebody force me to care

Somebody make me come through

I'll always be there

As frightened as you of being alive

Being alive, being alive

The solution is never to stop loving. You can't do that. Kurt can't do that. What would be the point in being alive if all you're ever going to do is hide behind walls and play with dolls? No matter how many different ingredients may go into building a life, love can't ever be missing from the list. Yes, it's a risk, always. Yes, it's fragile, always. Yes, it's volatile, always. And yes, it's even mortal, always. But it's also the only thing that makes it worth it.

Someone you have to let in

Someone whose feelings you spare

Someone who, like it or not

Will want you to share a little, a lot

of being alive

The solution is not to be safe, but to keep making your heart larger. To keep loving. Loving people, loving life, loving yourself. The solution is to never shy away from love, no matter how big a hole it may leave behind if it ends. Without it, everything pales, and the world shrinks and there's no color to the world, no rhythm to life. If you let your fear of destruction keep you from building things, then what's the difference anyway.

Make me alive, make me confused

Mock me with praise, let me be used

Vary my days, but alone is alone,

not alive

It's okay to be hurt, it's okay to feel pain. Because if you do, that means at some point you've been happy, and you can again: if you feel pain, then you sure as Hell can feel bliss as well. You just need to learn to accept that one can't be without the other. In the end everything is about balance and contrast and if you don't know ugly, then you don't know beauty. If you don't know fear, then you don't know courage. And... if you don't know loss, then you don't know life.

Somebody crowd me with love

Somebody force me to care

Somebody let me come through

I'll always be there

As frightened as you to help us survive

Being alive, being alive,

Being alive, being alive.

Kurt's tears are of happiness, of sadness, of fear and courage, of catharsis, of epiphany, of laughter, of relief, of awe, of... of feeling completely and utterly overwhelmed with life.

Chapter Twenty

Blaine's eyes never leave Kurt as he pours his soul out in song. He's never seen anything quite like this. He's seen Kurt sing before, yes, he's even seen him performing and performing really well, too. But this is a different level. This isn't the kind of shy boy Blaine had met, the boy who'd refused a solo because he thought others might be jealous and mad at him. This isn't the boy desperately trying not to step on anyone's toes. This isn't a boy who feels like he can't show his emotions because someone might think they're wrong or weak. This is a boy who is walking his own path, toes or no toes. This is a boy who knows himself, who's sure of his talent, of his goals and of himself. This is a boy who knows life and how to live it and everything it entails – good and bad.

Blaine's chest warms at the realization that maybe he helped him get there, in some way.

He ignores the tears that are pooling in his own eyes – hey, at least for once they're the good kind of tears (of happiness, pride, affection, astonishment and love) – and just keeps watching the performance of a lifetime, or at least the first of many, shaking from head to toe with how much awe he has for this boy he loves so very much.

The final verse is starting when he's yanked out of his reverie, bodies hurrying past his. He looks to find Wes taking a place right next to Kurt, holding his hand out to squeeze Kurt's softly. Blaine also loves Wes very much.

He makes his way to stand next to Wes – both because David has taken Kurt's left side and hand (and yes, Blaine also loves David) – and takes his hand with a beam. Wes smiles back, gives a small, barely perceptible shrug and winks before looking back to Kurt, who's belting out the final note with the broadest grin possible and shining, tearful eyes. All the Warblers are standing in line holding hands at the front of stage when he finally falls silent. That's the only thing keeping them from breaking into applause right that very second, and they do untangle their hands at the minute he's done. But the audience is somehow quicker as they stand and applaud with a fervor Blaine has never experienced before.

Kurt's laughter isn't even audible as he throws his head back, tears rolling down his cheeks. Blaine can't see much else, because Wes, throwing a pair of arms around Kurt's neck and hugging him close, blocks his view. Blaine smiles to himself and wishes he could do that, too, but he doesn't. Instead he ignores the

butterflies in his stomach at how perfect this moment just was and starts urging everyone to take their place for Heroes.

If his own performance of Heroes is the best one he's ever given it is purely because he's high on love and inspiration. He's completely breathless and feels like laughing and jumping and dancing when there's cheerful applause and a lot of whistling and whooping at end of it but he doesn't even stop to grin and acknowledge it, knowing full well he can't miss a single cue. He sings I Did It with an intensity he's never had before – or at least double the usual, because there's never a way to sing that song without fierce intensity. He finds himself hopping off stage and dancing up to people in the first few rows, so it isn't long before they've got everyone on their feet, dancing and clapping along and dammit if they don't have this in the bag.

They finish in perfect synchronicity, back to their initial formation with hands clasped in front of them and heads bowed. The applause is outstandingly thunderous. It's unlike anything Blaine has ever lived through, or might ever again.

He's having a hard time even grasping his emotions and the way his heart's practically jumping out of himself with adrenaline soaring through his veins. Not even the arms grasping at him can snap him back to reality, but he has enough muscle memory to return the hugs just as fiercely.

Then his nose buries in a skin that smells like no other, a scent he's come to know by heart and would follow to the ends of the world. He wraps his arms around Kurt's shoulders and buries his face in the crook of his neck, kisses it and revels in the musical laughter it elicits from Kurt, his own hands grasping Blaine's back.

"Let's go guys!" Wes's voice calls from further down stage and Blaine manages to pull himself out of Kurt's embrace and exit the stage. But as soon as they're backstage again he hugs him, quick, but tight this time. Kurt laughs again, loud enough to drown out Blaine's whispered 'I love you' that makes Kurt's breath hitch and his laughter stop altogether and then it's Blaine's time to throw his head back and laugh.

He's surprised when arms wrap around his neck, from the back, and legs around his Jeff's howling right next to his ear "Woohoo!"

It's crazy. They're crazy.

By the time they're taking their seats in the audience for the next performance the buzz still hasn't worn off, everyone's still fidgety and gigglish.

Blaine sits between Kurt and Wes, and alternates between telling the first one that he's made of magic and the second one that the first one is made of magic.

The other performances are great, but it's still not that tough a choice to make. Back on the stage waiting for the results Blaine's pretty sure the butterflies in his stomach are probably there because they were summoned because his brain hadn't somehow caught up with how easy a win this was going to be and decided to stick around regardless of not actually being needed.

The host tries and fails to create suspense because pretty much anyone in the room knows the card reads 'the Warblers' and so when he calls out the name the applause makes everything else go away. They even manage to be the least bit graceful about it, indulging in blissful celebration for barely a moment before going over to shake hands with the competition.

Back on the bus there's never a moment of silence – between recounting every single moment of their performance and singing themselves hoarse. Blaine's shouting, more than singing, along with every guy when he feels a hand slipping into his and squeezing it. He looks to find Kurt grinning, so he laughs and sighs happily "God! This is the life!"

Kurt chuckles and nods. "Hey...!" he says. "I'm going straight to the hospital afterwards. Come with me?"

Blaine feels his smile growing at once. "Of course!" he nods. "Thank you!"

Kurt shakes his head with laughter before mumbling "Oh, yes, it's such a sacrifice to let you come along!"

"Shut up!" Blaine whines, rolling his eyes and biting his lips to keep himself from grinning too hard.

"Make me!" Kurt teases, quirking an eyebrow and running a tongue over his bottom lip.

Blaine follows the movement, catches the small smirk playing at his lips. Keeping himself in check, he finds Kurt's eyes and glares for a while before whispering, "You think you're so funny..."

Kurt just shrugs and puts on an expression of comfortable superiority that makes it really hard for Blaine not lean up and kiss that smugness off his face. Instead he turns back towards the rest of the bus, who's moved on to the next song with alarming enthusiasm.

"Hey guys!" Wes turns from his seat in front of Blaine's "how about some celebratory pizza or something?"

"You guys go ahead..." Kurt says with a soft smile "I need to go straight to the hospital when we get to Dalton, and I was really looking forward to sleeping in my own bed, tonight..." Blaine feels Kurt's fingertips carefully brushing the side of his knee "It feels like forever, since I have."

"Right, of course, of course...!" Wes nods at once "Blaine?"

"Huh... I was... I'm going with Kurt." He shrugs.

"Oh!" Kurt says "You should go, Blaine, I don't-"

"No, really Kurt..." Blaine interrupts "I want to see your dad. And... I guess I'm a little... tired. As much as I feel like a good party's in order I just... I... I'm much more in the mood for a movie and some takeout..." he offers, watching as Kurt's distress softens and a small smile appears on his face.

"Ok." Wes says "I'll count both you guys out, then. Not a problem." He nods, before turning to the seats ahead of them "Hey Dom, how 'bout a celebratory pizza party?"

Kurt squeezes Blaine's knee gently and briefly before muttering "That was exactly my plan, by the way."

"What?"

"Movie and takeout..."

"Oh..."

"And you'd better come over for it," Kurt smiles shyly and his cheeks become scorching red when he adds in a whisper "because I don't... I don't think....my bed feels like my bed anymore without you in it."

"Oh...!" Blaine gasps and damns all the other boys in the bus with them. He just takes Kurt's hand briefly, running a gentle thumb over his knuckles and says "I can live with that."

When they finally reach Dalton the two of them only stop to get out of their uniforms and for Blaine to, at least for once, pack clothes for the next day.

They take Blaine's car and park in the back of the hospital as usual. They still catch sight of a couple of signs at the front entrance. It's a lot fewer than before – it's barely enough to be called a group of people. And yet, it's enough to make Blaine's heart tighten just the tiniest bit. His hands on the steering wheel grasp harder and he locks his jaw.

As he pulls over to the first free parking spot, a soft hand lands on his knee and squeezes gently "Hey..." Kurt murmurs "Don't..."

"I..." Blaine sighs with an apologetic smile and shrugs without words.

"Don't let them do that..." Kurt smiles. "Don't let them touch you... or us. We love each other, and that's all that matters, right?"

Blaine smiles to himself and nods as he kills the engine. With a chuckle he turns to Kurt "When did you become the optimist in this relationship?" he beams and rolls his eyes at himself.

Kurt laughs, too, before shrugging and saying "Well, I do have a great boyfriend to learn from." He climbs out of the car and waits until Blaine's caught up with him to continue "And today is a very good day. I'll be damned if I let those ignorant, pathetic people ruin it."

"Mmm." Blaine hums with a smile "I agree. Tell me more about that wonderful optimist boyfriend, though." he teases with a laugh.

"Oh!" Kurt sighs dreamily "He's just so positive about the way he faces the world, so brave despite the fact that he's never really going to measure up to anything unless he's cast as a hobbit in Lord of the Rings..."

"Ohhh!" Blaine gasps in horror "That was *mean*!"

"Hee hee hee!" Kurt chuckles evilly before pushing in the back door to the hospital and holding it open for Blaine with a smirk and twinkle in his eye. Blaine glares as he passes through and keeps walking in a fast, brisk pace, Kurt cackling behind him.

When they reach Burt's room, Kurt is still snickering and Blaine is trying very hard not to laugh.

"Hey! Burt!" he beams, pointedly ignoring Kurt and letting the door practically slam on his face with a self-satisfied smirk "I'm so glad to see you awake!"

Kurt pushes the door open "Are you serious?!" he gasps with a chuckle, and Blaine just shoots him a 'you bet I am (but no, of course I'm not)' glare before turning back to the grinning Burt, who looks so much healthier than the last time Blaine had seen him.

"How do you feel today?"

"I'm fine!" Burt asks "It's great to see you, kid!" the man enthuses, reaching out for a manly, one-armed hug, which Blaine is thrilled to give into and turn into a real hug "So, what's with you two?" Burt quirks an eyebrow when Blaine pulls back – and Blaine thinks he can see him blinking extra fast and wonders if maybe Burt wasn't expecting such a heartfelt greeting from Blaine.

"He made a height joke." Blaine drawls, faking a serious offense.

Burt laughs heartily "That is low!"

"I know, right?! Such a low blow..."

"Yeah, he really had to reach down there for that one to hit you, didn't you, Kurt?"

Kurt cackles and Blaine gasps again "You, too?!"

Burt shakes his head, still grinning and raising an apologetic hand "I'm sorry, it's just too easy!" he shrugs with a wink.

Blaine rolls his eyes "Well, I like to think I'm travel size, for your convenience!"

"I got that reference," Kurt says quickly "And it's not helping your case quoting a children's movie to defend your height!"

With a roll of his eyes and faux-annoyed sigh he mutters "Whatever!" but then he laughs and shoots Kurt a fond smile, shakes his head and says "Anyway, really, how *are* you feeling?"

Burt makes a show of how much that question annoys him "I told you I'm *fine*! Even the doctor said so!" His eyes are wide with the emphasis of trying to get his point across "So, I need you to tell me how the show was, because all I know is that you guys won."

Kurt seems to consider pursuing the issue of his father's health before giving in and regaling him with a blow-by-blow recount of the whole thing, Blaine adding detail here and there, and interrupting for a full five minutes tirade about how absolutely fantastic, mind blowing, magical and beautiful Kurt's solo was. This makes Kurt blush and actually preen, while Burt smiles and clearly tries not to tease the two of them too much, which Blaine is so thankful for, even if he can't help himself at expressing just much he loved Kurt's performance and... well, how much he just loves Kurt in general. Carole comes in halfway through it, and listens just as eagerly.

"You boys should eat something," Carole announces when a nurse knocks and asks Burt if he's hungry.

"Oh...!" Blaine startles, only now realizing that, yeah, he's actually starving.

"I'll go get you both something to eat from the vending machine!" Carole smiles.

"Oh, that's ok" Blaine says at once "I'll go, don't worry!"

"You don't even know where it is." Kurt shakes his head "I'll go!" he says, picking up his wallet "I want to see what my options are, anyway." He shrugs and leaves and suddenly Blaine can feel all the awkwardness in the world, because he's standing alone in a hospital room with his boyfriend's parents. Sure he's been to a lot a Friday night dinners, he knows them really well by now, and he's actually pretty sure they like and approve of him. He just can't remember ever being alone with them.

He can see them becoming aware of how he's suddenly standing there without an idea of what to say or even do with himself, hands held close to his sides. Instead of trying to ease his pain he can actually see Burt's teasing smirk growing, and Blaine's torn between dying of mortification or bursting out laughing at his own silliness.

He does neither, and instead decides to trust on his ability to actually carry out intelligent conversations, to smile and say "I was really disappointed to see you dropping out of the race, by the way."

"Oh, well" Burt sighs "I didn't drop out, obviously!" he says with a bitter chuckle "But I know what you mean."

"I'm not just saying this," Blaine reiterates "you were, by far, the best for the job I think."

"Thank you." Burt smiles genuinely "I guess we'll just have to go with second best then, hey?" he winks and shrugs, trying not to look too disappointed "I'm actually curious, though. What do you think about Ms. Tilet?"

Blaine's surprised at the question, touched that Burt actually seems to care about his opinion because his eyes are focused and interested, so he clears his throat and tries to find his words "Well... she is my second choice, I guess. But... She's not a compromise I'm that eager to make, actually."

"How so?" Burt frowns, clearly intrigued.

"Well... she seems... apologetic about the fact that she's a woman, for one. I mean, of course I know it's a challenge and all that, but she should just own that and... well... not lean her campaign on it... and at the same time shy away because of it...? Am I making sense?"

"A little, keep going..." Burt chuckles.

"She uses her womanhood as a platform for her campaign, but then she – clearly – compromises every single opinion she should have because she's... I guess... too afraid to loose any more votes than she has by being a woman. I mean, she's trying so hard not to lose the male vote that she's barely a Democrat anymore!" Blaine sighs and scrunches his nose "What's the point in claiming to be a strong feminine candidate if you're just gonna act like you have to compensate for having a vagina?"

Burt bursts out laughing and nods "That is a good way to see it, actually." He shrugs "But I understand her side of things, as well, I suppose. Sometimes we just have to be realistic about things. Let's be honest here. If she were running the exact same campaign as me, I would still win – not because of the quality of the ideas, but because I'm a man. So, I understand that she tries to level the field a bit and not come across as a crazed feminist. Hopefully, if she wins, she'll have enough breathing room to be a little more... true to herself."

Blaine considers that for a moment before nodding "Yeah, you're right, and she is still, after all, my second choice. I just wish she was... able... to cut the crap and just... not justify her gender. But I guess that's not just her fault, so..."

"Exactly." But nods "And let's not forget what the other options are."

"Oh, God!" Blaine gasps with a half laugh "The spawn of a fundamentalist Satan, the limp noodle, and the man *clearly* on the moon."

Burt throws his head back in laughter and Carole joins in, still beaming as she asks "Who exactly is who? Do we even want to know who your father is?"

He grins despite the blush covering his cheeks now "My dad's clearly the limp noodle, because the man does not have one single opinion he isn't ready to throw out the window the moment one of his 'sponsors' tell him to." he explains "Lee's the spawn of Satan, obviously, and I refuse to live in a country with him as a President. It'd be a Bush times fifty level of second-hand embarrassment. Johnson... well, I don't think he has any idea what country he actually lives in... so..." he cringes and waves his hands around him "most of the time he's talking I have no idea what he means..."

"So... the apologetic vagina is clearly second best." Burt concludes.

"So it seems." Blaine nods with a mildly embarrassed smile "But she's actually good... I think I'm just being too harsh on her, sometimes."

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Kurt enters the room, already munching on his *Kit-Kat*, and tries not to grin like an idiot when he finds the three of them completely engrossed in easy conversation. He doesn't announce his entrance with the half-bitchy comment about the lack of diversity in salty snacks the machine had, like he'd been planning. Instead he just sits calmly at the foot of his dad's bed, and hands Blaine a *Snickers* bar before continuing to watch them talk, waiting until he has a full grasp on their conversation before jumping in with his own two cents.

The four of them are having a surprisingly happy, or at least cheerful, conversation about the future of the election now that Burt's out of the race, and Kurt's practically torn between being an active member of the whole thing or just sitting back and watching how well his dad and Blaine actually get along – like they'd be friends even if they didn't have Kurt in common. It makes him smile and breathe with blissful relief that at least something in their relationship is this easy.

A knock at the door interrupts them, and Kurt turns to gasp and beam "Rachel!" He lunges at her, wraps her in a tight hug. Finn trails after her with a smile and holding a oversized pink bag.

"Hey!" he beams and goes to clap Burt's shoulder and bends down to kiss Carole's forehead.

"What are you doing here, Rachel?" Kurt gasps "I thought you had Regionals today!"

"We did, and we won!" she beams "I came straight from Regionals- nearly missed my plane, actually." She hugs him again, quickly, before starting to make her way through the people in the room, starting with Burt "I just couldn't wait to check up on Mr. Burt Hummel, here!" she grins and throws enthusiastic arms around him "How are you? Much better?"

"Yes!" Burt beams "You kids keep me young!"

"I'm glad to hear that, we're going to want you around for a long while!" she says cheerfully before leaning over to hug Carole as well "Hi, Carole!" she grins before continuing toward Burt "Gave us all quite a scare, though. Let's not repeat that, shall we?"

"I'm not planning on it."

"Good. I brought some books I thought might help you with adopting a new, healthier lifestyle. You should really look into the option of a vegan life – I speak from experience when-"

"Rachel!" Kurt breathes "Let him breathe!" he laughs "And don't worry, I've got his diet covered, thank you."

"Oh, right!" Rachel breathes and then smiles again at Burt, eyes shining strangely "Well, I just... Well, I'm sorry I haven't been here sooner, but I had to wait until Regionals were over, you know, but I defi- Blaine! Oh, my God, I totally ignored you!" she gasps and throws her arms around him. "It's so good to see you!" she announces "Finn told me you guys won, too, congratulations to both of you! I want to hear all about it tonight!"

Kurt watches as Blaine just smiles charmingly and waits for a chance to speak, keeping the surprise and confusion practically off his face.

"Thank you, Rachel!" Blaine finally says "It's fantastic to see you, too! You'll be staying for the weekend?"

"For the next few weeks, actually!" she announces brightly, sitting herself on the foot of Burt's bed next to Finn. She takes his hand, absently "I won't be missing anything important in school this week, since it's the

last before break, and so my dads let me come over early.. And I'm spending the whole break here, obviously." She explains "They send their best, by the way." she adds towards Burt.

With butterflies in his stomach and warmth spreading over him at how safe this room feels, Kurt settles down on Blaine's legs, wrapping an arm around his shoulders, so there's enough sitting room for everyone. The conversation starts again as Rachel launches off into telling them all about New Direction's win at Regionals, and Kurt alternates between listening to her and paying attention to the way Blaine's hand is resting on his hip, arm circled around his waist, thumb sliding underneath his shirt rubbing small, relaxing patterns over his skin.

It's half past eight when the nurse knocks (and Kurt manages to scramble off Blaine's lap before the door is actually pushed open) to tell them that visitation hours ended forty-five minutes ago. They all have the decency to smile guiltily and pretend they didn't know, as they nod, pulling on coats and hooking bags over their shoulders, before, one by one, stooping down to kiss or hug Burt and telling him "Good night."

Carole waves goodbye at the end of the corridor because she has the night shift at the ER in twenty minutes, and she might as well just go grab something to eat at the cafeteria before it starts.

"I'd almost forgotten how intense Rachel is..." Blaine chuckles as he climbs into his car.

Kurt laughs "That's not really something I could ever forget."

"So, our quiet night of takeout dinner and a movie and..."

"Will still happen." Kurt interrupts at once "Just throw Moulin Rouge into Rachel's hands and she quiets down like you hit her snooze button." he shrugs "And besides, there are two couches, and *we* only need one."

"Of course."

"It'll be nice. It'll be like the carnival in Ohio, only... a movie and Chinese or Pizza..."

"Uhhh, Chinese, Chinese, Chinese!" Blaine enthuses, smiling brightly, which makes Kurt giggle and sigh.

"Alright, Chinese..."

The boxes of Chinese are open, practically empty, and long forgotten on the coffee table. Blaine and Kurt won the battle for the bigger couch (well, Kurt did, because Blaine is such a push over he actually thought that it made sense for Finn and Rachel to have it, *just* because Finn's taller), and Kurt's lying on his side, wrapped up in Blaine's arms and legs his back pressed against Blaine's chest, sandwiching his boyfriend between himself and the back of the couch. Satine's coughing up blood and it's kind of sad, except that Kurt's not really paying that much attention to the movie. He's just realized that it's been... well... too long since the two of them were... intimate, and he can tell Blaine's thinking the exact same thing because since the moment they finished eating and snuggled up to watch the rest of the film wrapped up in each other, Blaine's lips have been attached to the back of Kurt's neck, moving with slow, barely there kisses as his hands press tight against Kurt's stomach over the thin layer of his cotton shirt.

He moves his foot up and down along Blaine's calf and pulls Blaine's arm a little tighter around himself. Blaine responds with more pressure in his kiss and Kurt just hums his approval, threading their fingers together and bringing Blaine's hand up to kiss his wrist, palm, and knuckles.

Blaine's other hand sneaks up under Kurt's shirt and presses directly into his rapidly heating skin. It moves in sure movements, fingers splayed open as it runs through bare flesh from chest to navel to the very top of his jeans. His kisses turn open mouthed, with tongue and sucking, fingers dipping teasingly under denim, and Kurt pushes his ass back against Blaine, only to feel an already half hard cock pressing back. He bites back a moan, feeling himself getting hard, too, tenting his jeans, before rolling over in Blaine's arms and pressing a quick, hard kiss to his lips "I really love this movie..." he mutters against Blaine's lips "And I can't tell you how many times I've fantasized about us singing Come What May together while watching it... but I've seen it like a hundred times, I know it by heart, and I really, really, don't care about it right now..."

Blaine nods, pressing their lips back together with heat "Me neither!" he mumbles, which makes Kurt smile. Just as Satine leaves Christian's house in tears from having broken up with him, Kurt springs off of the couch, grabbing Blaine's hand and pulling him behind, practically running towards his bedroom.

"What the hell, guys!" Finn yells after them "At least try to be subtle about it!"

Kurt laughs and ignores it altogether as he slams his door shut behind Blaine and presses him against it, at once diving in for his lips, letting his tongue invade the warmth of Blaine's mouth, and relishing the way Blaine's arms wrap tightly around his waist, hands grasping desperately at his back. His leg slides up

between Blaine's, making him gasp and moan and move against it, his own upper hip connecting with Kurt's groin and offering relieving friction.

He makes quick work of his buttons and Blaine yanks his shirt off the second the last one's free, his hands returning to grasp Kurt's now naked back again. Kurt pushes his hands underneath Blaine's polo shirt feeling his taught stomach, loving the way there are goose bumps on the skin, and the trembling muscles as Blaine's breathing becomes labored.

"Come here..." he mumbles, grabbing Blaine's shirt and pulling him away from the door. He walks backwards until the back of his knees hit the bed and he lets himself fall on his back, Blaine landing on top of him, seamlessly tying the movement into a searing kiss. He positions himself between Kurt's legs and thrusts down, making Kurt arch up and grasp at his ass to make him do it again and harder. They grind their way to center of the bed, torn between moving and just keeping up with rutting against one another.

Kurt yanks Blaine's shirt away just as Blaine's hands move frantically to unclasp Kurt's jeans, making quick work of them, only stopping for the split second it takes to get Blaine's shirt completely off of him. He pulls Kurt's jeans down, lowering himself with them, making Kurt miss the friction all too much. "Come back, come back, come back!" Kurt sighs out, sitting up on his elbows and trying to reach out for Blaine's shoulder so he can pull him up again. Blaine nods and smiles "Wait a sec..." He breathes as he finishes pulling off Kurt's jeans and socks, and attaches his lips to the back of Kurt's knee, spreading moist warmth over the skin there with his tongue and making Kurt squirm. As the kiss starts moving upwards, leaving a wet trail over his inner thigh, getting closer and closer to his groin, a hand reaches out to move deft fingers against a hardened nipple.

"Blaine..." Kurt moans out brokenly.

"What?"

"Just...!" he sighs "Something...!"

Blaine nods and then smiles as he palms Kurt through his underwear, the feeling sending a spark of pleasure through Kurt, to which he throws his legs apart, arches his back and thrusts up against Blaine's hand as his fingers mold themselves to the outline of Kurt's clothed cock. Then there are lips kissing his navel and a tongue, hard and then soft and then hard against his skin, moving in circles as it lowers, following a thin trail of hair until it disappears underneath the elastic band of Kurt's briefs. Blaine's hand

leaves Kurt's nipple and the other his cock, only to strongly grasp both sides of his hips, mouthing hotly over Kurt's straining erection. In a drawn out movement Blaine finally slips his fingers under the elastic band and pulls it down, slowly releasing Kurt's cock and pushing the underwear to the middle of his thighs before moving his hands back to the side of his hips and kissing his way up his inner thigh.

Kurt shouts out and holds on to Blaine's hair the moment a hand wraps safely around the base of his cock and a tongue trails, hard, against the shaft, dipping into the slit, before lips wrap around the head and sink painstakingly slow and begin to suck, as his tongue moves in sensual circles around the sinking cock.

"Blaine, Blaine, Blaine, Blaine..." Kurt hears himself moaning out, both hands now buried in Blaine's curls, releasing them from product, and grasping hard. Blaine sinks down all the way to where his hand is covering the rest, twisting at equivalent teasingly slow rhythm. He sucks harder as he pulls back up and swirls his tongue around it as he sinks back down, repeating and reducing Kurt to strings of nonsense in the process.

A hand leaves Kurt's hip to trail his up Kurt's body, stopping for a second at his nipple, before continuing up to his lips. Kurt barely gets the idea, wrapping his lips around Blaine's fingers making sure they leave wet and hot, his heart beating furiously against his chest and his legs falling wide open without so much as an actual formulated thought. Blaine's fingers rest for just a short while at Kurt's balls, massaging them softly before teasing their way backwards, until a wet, warm finger is pressing in careful, soft circles against Kurt's hole.

Kurt's not quite sure how he even manages the good sense to do it, but a shaking hand leaves Blaine's head to open his bedside drawer and fish around for a small bottle of lube and a condom, dropping them in the general direction of Blaine, who opens his eyes at the sound, finds the items, and looks to Kurt with swollen, glistening red lips grinning around Kurt's cock. Kurt could practically come from just that sight alone, but he keeps himself in check and instead pushes against Blaine's finger, burying it deeper.

After a few pumps of his finger, when it's buried deep into Kurt, Blaine's mouth pulls entirely away from Kurt's cock, letting it fall out with a solid pop. Kurt whines at the loss and pushes himself into Blaine's hand, despite the fact that his already knuckle deep. Blaine croaks out "Two?"

"Yeah." He nods frantically, and Blaine's hands leave him entirely as he takes the bottle of lube from the bed and coats his fingers generously.

Kurt sighs in relief when two fingers push gently inside and he moves with them, soon needing more. "Three... Three, three please!"

Blaine kisses the crease of his thigh tenderly as he adjusts his hand and starts pushing, slow and careful again, until he's deep inside and Kurt's squirming to get movement, grasping Blaine's shoulder hard to urge him to move faster. He does, too, thrusting harder and faster, and dipping down to lick and suck at Kurt's cock, making him thrash and gasp out, fisting the sheets, practically yanking them off the mattress.

"Stop-stop-stop-stop!" he breathes "I'm gonna-I'll-Don't want- You! Please! You!"

Blaine doesn't even hesitate before he pulls away and yanks his own pants open, and pushes them mid-thigh along with his briefs, ripping the condom wrapper open and rolling it on himself quickly before coating his cock with lube and pumping it a few times to spread it, the movements entrancing Kurt entirely. He only manages to look away when Blaine takes his ankles and hooks Kurt's legs over his shoulders, aligning himself with Kurt's entrance and pushing in. The movement is once again to slow and measured for Kurt, so he just reaches around towards Blaine's ass, grabbing it hard and forcing it forward.

"F-fuck!" Blaine whimpers, but he pulls back again and thrusts inside with just as much energy, making Kurt gasp out a broken "Yes!"

Blaine's thrusts are fast, but deep, and when he lowers himself to press open mouthed and panting kisses onto Kurt's lips, the angle shifts perfectly and Kurt screams out in ecstasy "Blaine! YES! Right there! Yes!" He moves his hips, as much as he can, to meet Blaine's and his movements are becoming frantic and erratic. Before he can even try to control himself or wrap his hand around himself, Blaine's fingers are curling around his cock and pumping fast, the fire in Kurt's lower belly building up fast and colossal until his muscles clench and everything releases in a crushing tidal wave of pleasure "Blaine!" he cries, as he feels his own warm come landing on both their chests. Blaine keeps driving into him, having just enough presence of mind to let go of Kurt's softening cock before oversensitivity kicks in, and braces himself, one hand splayed on either side of Kurt's head, face pulled tight, eyes closed, and lips pressed into a fine line. His thrusts start becoming less and less accurate and his rhythm becomes increasingly desperate. Kurt's hands come to grasp at his ass and help him thrust as hard as he needs, and in a quick, barely considered decision, he licks his own finger and presses it into Blaine, eliciting a completely broken "FUCK, Kurt!" from Blaine's gritted teeth, pumping it inside barely three times before Blaine is actually crying out and burying his face into the crook of Kurt's neck, collapsing altogether on top of him – Kurt's legs sliding over his arms until they're resting on either side of his hips – hips still thrusting as he rides out his orgasm.

Once he's completely still, hands coming to hold either side of Kurt's head, he breathes out against Kurt's neck "fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck..."

Kurt huffs a spent chuckle, wrapping a lazy arm around Blaine's waist and letting his thumb rub sweetly against his sweaty skin.

"God, I love you so much!" Blaine sighs, finally pulling away to look into Kurt's eyes, and Kurt can't help the laugh that escapes him, at the way Blaine's still completely flushed, hair sticking out in every direction, eyes shining bright and earnest and lips completely wrecked and bright red.

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It smells terrific as Blaine steps inside the house and his stomach churns in appreciation. "Hey guys! I'm home!" he hollers, following the smell into the kitchen, where his mother stands with Anita, finishing up a pie.

"Good morning, Blaine." his mom says with a quick smile "Lunch is almost ready, you should go put your things in your room and come help set the table..."

"Sure, be right back." he says, after a quick kiss on her cheek and a warm smile towards Anita.

He sticks his head in his father's study, says "Hey, dad" and receives an acknowledging nod "Blaine", before jogging upstairs, purposefully ignoring the TV in the living room. He's quick about things and then hops his way downstairs and grabs a pile of plates and silverware.

They're sitting down to eat in a matter of ten minutes.

"So, congratulations on winning Regionals, Blaine." His mother says conversationally, with a warm, wide smile.

"Thanks!" he beams.

"You went straight to Wes' to celebrate?"

"Yeah, yeah, right after the hospital. We just ordered a bunch of pizzas and watched some movies."

"Hospital?"

"Oh" *shit* "Yeah... A bunch of us went over to visit Senator Hummel..." he says, trying to sound casual about it "Did you know he just woke up?"

"Yes, of course." His dad nods "I imagine your friend Kurt was much relieved."

"Yes." Blaine agrees, and keeps a straight face even though this is probably the most understated conversation he's had in a long time. "He was pretty happy. He sang, too, at Regionals. He was great. I think he was singing about his dad."

"That's nice..." his mom says with a measured tone, as if she wasn't sure she was allowed to say that. Blaine smiles encouragingly, and his dad hums in indifferent agreement.

His grandfather clicks his tongue, but says nothing.

"So you went to visit the senator at the Hospital...?" again, his mother, trying her best at keeping things light and natural "I trust he looked well?"

"He did." Blaine refrains from adding 'much better than last time' "We talked for a while, told him all about Regionals and stuff – it was nice, actually."

"Would've been nicer with cameras there, I bet." his grandfather says with acid in his voice. "Just so all those magazines could have one more reason to say you're screwing his son."

Blaine frowns and drops his fork before sighing, "We were actually having a nice meal. Thanks."

"I'm sorry I can't appreciate my meal when the biggest disappointment in my life is sitting right here."

It stings like a knife wound, but Blaine doesn't even bat an eyelash "Well, mine's here, too. I don't see why you shouldn't be able to put just as much effort into ignoring me as I'm putting into ignoring you."

"I don't"

"Dad, don't." Blaine's father interrupts with a tired, but steady sigh "Now, Blaine might actually have a point. First of all, the man's not even competition anymore. Second, I've been thinking, and I need to reach out towards the moderate vote, too..."

"Sweetie, no politics at the table, please."

"Just two minutes, honey." He raises a finger as if putting her on hold before continuing "A good way to do it would be to show some... warmth towards the opposition, I think. Maybe?"

"You did send out a public statement, didn't you?" the older man drawls.

"Everyone did that..." Blaine shoots back in the exact same tone, to which his father glares at him but doesn't reply.

"Which is why visiting the man isn't such a stupid idea, after all."

Oh. Wow. Blaine did not see that coming.

"A show of fair play never hurt anybody." the man shrugs, as if it's the most obvious idea he could've ever had.

"You'll look like a fag supporter."

"Could you not use that word?" Blaine frowns, doing his best to keep his eyes strong against his grandfather's.

"Anyway," his father interrupts just as there's about to be a rude comeback "I was just on the phone with Jim, and we were talking about the fact that I have the lead on things for now, but that I do need to broaden my horizons, reach out to more people – namely moderate Republicans. I really think this is a good idea!" he smiles and nods to himself, looking as excited as that man can ever be. "I'll call Jim after lunch. Do you think we could go over there this afternoon, Blaine?"

"W-what?"

"My week is going to be absolute hell. I don't think I'd have time any other day, and this way we can tip off enough people that it'll get coverage and people will know we went there, but not too many that it'll be an

obvious publicity stunt!" he grins, clearly satisfied with himself, while Blaine tries not to let his horror show too much.

The words 'publicity stunt' are etched onto Blaine's head for the rest of the meal and it's one of those moments when he just has no choice but rethink the choice of pursuing a political career – but then again, isn't it the opportunity to help bring back clean politics the whole reason he even wanted to do it? He doesn't speak again, instead lets his dad ramble on about his brilliant idea, and commits this to his memory, so he never even considers doing something similar.

After lunch, at the same time his dad scampers away to his office to phone Jim (and it's obvious the decision that's about to come of that) he goes to his bedroom and buries his face in his pillow with a long drawn out sigh.

He opens his laptop and, after a bit of moping, he starts working on a small statement to post after the inevitable news coverage of this afternoon's visit to the hospital for his blog, and then shoots a quick text to Kurt.

'Might be getting an interesting and probably super awkward visit today at the hospital. – B'

'No way. – K'

'Way – B'

There's a knock on his door and he looks up to see his dad stepping only halfway inside, with a smile "Get dressed. Suit and tie. We need to leave for the hospital in an hour."

Blaine takes a long shower, a lot more thorough than the one he'd taken at Kurt's, and does his hair to perfection. Chooses a good suit (but not the best, though – there's no need to look like election day) and almost wants to go with a purple tie, but knows better than to think they wouldn't notice it, so he just goes with his favorite olive green one.

The ride to the hospital is ridiculously silent and awkward. His dad's driving with a self-satisfied smirk on his face, his mother's smiling as well, her hand on its usual place at his dad's knee. John Anderson senior has his arms crossed over his chest as he stares out the window, and the resemblance to a sulking teenager is quite uncanny.

As they finally arrive, there is the expected small collection of paparazzi, cameras and flashes shooting away at them, and his dad stops for a couple of seconds to answer a quick question.

"Are you here to visit Senator Hummel?"

"Yes, but I hardly think that's newsworthy, so if you could respect his and my family's privacy that would be terrific." he says briefly before ushering all of them inside, his hand at Blaine's shoulder. Blaine makes an effort not to laugh at the irony.

They stop at the counter to ask for directions, and a slightly startled, probably star-struck, nurse points them the way. Blaine, of course, wasn't going to let them know he knew it well "I didn't memorize it..." he'd lied when they asked.

'The eagle has landed. I repeat, the eagle has landed. – B'

'Dork – K'

They stopped at the counter for the correct floor to get their visitor's badges, and the nurse was still getting them when Kurt and Carole rounded the corner with polite, diplomatic smiles on their faces.

"Why, the Andersons!" Carole sighs with almost genuine disbelief "What a lovely surprise!"

"Oh, hello, Mrs. Hummel!" Blaine's dad says at once, stepping forward and taking her offered hand for a quick shake "How are you?"

"Oh, I'm great. We didn't expect to see you, today – or any day at all!" she giggles at her own light hearted joke, and Blaine can see his grandfather straining not to scowl. His grandfather's eyes flick towards Kurt standing next to her, and he doesn't even *try* to hide his scowl anymore, so Blaine practically shoulders him aside as he steps forward and offers a hand to Kurt "Hey, man!"

Kurt smiles, and takes his hand and they do a sort of quick, one armed, "manly" hug. "Hi, Blaine. How was the rest of the party yesterday?"

"It was great, you should've stayed."

"I couldn't." Kurt shrugs and tilts his head towards his dad's hospital room door.

"Yeah..." Blaine trails, before turning to Carole and smiling "Hi, Mrs. H, great seeing you again, today."

"Oh, twice in two days!" she beams "I could get used to this, Blaine." Then she turns to his parents and keeps her grin in place as she gushes "You've got such a remarkable young man over here! It's always such a pleasure to see him."

"Thank you!" Blaine's mom takes a hand to her heart and seems to be genuinely pleased, "Kurt sure looks like a fine young man, himself." she says, and Blaine watches the way Kurt's lips twitch with amusement and disbelief.

"Here are your badges." the nurse interrupts, and when they all have them, Carole smiles and says "Shall we?"

They walk behind Carole and Blaine's mom, who chatter away about inconsequential things, possibly the weather, but Blaine's too busy sharing amused looks with Kurt and mouthing "Awkward!" to be sure.

The ambience in the room isn't much of an improvement, as everyone rushes to greet Burt and make sure he's been feeling much better. Blaine goes to stand in a corner with Finn, while Kurt offers his place, next to Carole on the two-seat couch, to Blaine's mother and silently make his way to stand on the other side of Finn – biting down a smirk.

Blaine wonders if, when (it's not if, it's definitely when) they do come out with their relationship this is going to be what awaits them for family dinners, and the thought does make him want to chuckle from how horribly awkward and stilted the whole thing is.

"Where's Rachel?" he asks in a quiet hush to the two teens standing next to him.

"You said your parents were coming, we figured it might get a little too crowded with her in here. She went ahead to buy some tickets to a play she's been wanting to see and I'm going to meet her in like an hour." Finn explains "I wanted to go with her, but mom said it would be rude if I wasn't here." he adds with a frown and an eye roll.

"Right." Blaine says "It is crowded..." he sighs.

Kurt nods in agreement "It is a smart move, though – not gonna lie." Kurt chuckles.

"Eugh..." Blaine rolls his eyes "Don't remind me. I've never felt dirtier – which, given last night, is saying a lot." he mutters making Finn blush and Kurt laugh and everyone's head turns to them.

"Sorry." he murmurs, still giggling a little and shrugs, while Blaine bites down his own smile. Carole smiles and resumes their conversation at once, while Blaine's grandfather keeps giving them the stink eye for the rest of the visit.

The doctor comes after half an hour – thank God – and says "Ohh! That's quite a party you have here, Burt. You sure you can handle all this excitement?"

"Of course!" the man beams.

"We were just about to leave, anyway." Blaine's father says with a polite smile.

"Alrighty then, I'll just let you say goodbye and I'll come back in five, then?"

"Sure thing." Burt says and she leaves.

The goodbyes are surprisingly quick and a lot less awkward than any other part of the visit, and Blaine does not miss the way his grandfather only shakes Burt's hand – and even that is brief - merely directing a nod towards Carole and Finn and downright ignoring Kurt.

It makes Blaine's blood boil and he goes out of his way to have an actual conversation with Kurt while everyone else waits by the door.

"I'll see you Monday," he says, "Oh, have you finished Mrs. T's essay? I haven't been able to finish mine for some reason, can't quite get around to a proper conclusion."

"Oh, hum, y-yes... I finished mine a couple of days ago... do... do you want to read it, maybe?"

"You wouldn't mind? That would be terrific!"

"Of course not. I'll e-mail you." Kurt smiles.

"Thanks, Kurt! You're the best." He grins and gives him another one of those causal, one armed hugs, before turning towards Burt, shaking his hand and beaming "Bye, Mr. H, get well soon!" ,then shaking

Finn's hand, too. He kisses Carole's knuckles with a smile and a wink, getting a load of giggles out of her as she sighs dreamily and puts a hand to her heart as she says "Ever the charmer, Mr. Anderson! Alas, I am a married woman..." she pretends to look half disappointed.

"And I'm right here!" Burt laughs.

"I'll never stop trying." Blaine jokes with a grin and then finally says "Have a nice weekend! See you Monday." and then shoots Kurt one last look " before joining his family at the door and leaving, his mother and grandmother looking surprised but pleased, his father slightly confused, and his grandfather downright pissed.

Inside the car again (after another shower of questions and photographs), Blaine's grandfather turns to him with a hiss "Are you screwing him? Is that who it is?"

Blaine gives him an affronted glare before saying "I'm not *screwing* anyone, and it's none of your business anyway." He mutters, to keep his parents from listening, and then he adds a final "and please stop talking to me. **Ever.**"

His grandfather is about to shoot something back, but Blaine shifts in his seat to shut him out entirely and asks rather loudly "Hey dad, do you have any ideas for what I should sing at your fundraiser?"

His father's soon off on a monologue about appropriate and inappropriate songs and the messages he wants to convey and whatnot, and it's not like Blaine's that interested in hearing that, but at least it got his granddad to shut up.

He gets a text after a while that makes it even easier to ignore everything going on around him.

'Dad's getting discharged tomorrow! Do you want to come over for dinner tomorrow and celebrate? :D – K'

Blaine's typing *yes*, but the strong presence of his grandfather next to him makes him wary enough of things to say *'No, I can't tomorrow, maybe Monday? Besides, I'm sure you could use tomorrow to spend as a family, just the four of you. – B'*

'I don't know if it's too soon to say something like this but, Blaine, the word family doesn't exclude you anymore. (Rachel will be there anyway). – K'

Blaine tries to keep himself from smiling too hard as he types back *'I'm happy to hear that. I am. But I can't. I really can't. I need to stay home this weekend. – B'*

'Monday it is, then. – K'

'I love you, though. – B'

'Ohh, I love you, too. It's ok, Blaine, I get it. No worries. – K'

xXxXx

"Stay there!" Kurt warns "I'm going to get you a blanket!"

"I can get a blanket on my own, Kurt!" Burt huffs and Kurt shoots him another glare before going towards the hallway closet.

"You know you're supposed to rest!"

"I was getting a blanket! It's not like I said I wanted to run the marathon!" Burt sighs and then turns to Blaine with impatience "Can you believe this?! It's like I'm a toddler all of a sudden!"

Blaine smiles sympathetically and opens his mouth to say something but Kurt's quick to interrupt whatever form of agreement might come out of it "Nuh-huh. You're my boyfriend, Blaine, so you're going to take my side in this, or you'll regret it." he says as he drapes the blanket around his dad, who snatches it from Kurt's hand and starts doing it himself.

"Oh. Huh. Ok." Blaine frowns and bites his lip.

"Wuss." Burt mutters.

"Not fair!" Blaine whines, blushing and pleading with his eyes for some kind of mercy.

Kurt keeps down a chuckle as he sits down between the two, snuggling up to Blaine who immediately wraps an arm around his waist, before saying "Dad, stop making Blaine feel guilty about being a good boyfriend."

"You might be the boyfriend, but I'm the father-in-law, which means he needs my approval so, Blaine, you're either on my side, buddy, or I might start throwing hoops for you to jump through."

"That won't work, dad, he's an Olympic gold medalist at hoop jumping." Kurt smirks and tightens his hold on Blaine "His specialty is charming the pants off anyone."

Blaine squirms in his embrace "could you both stop talking about me like I'm not even here?" he blushes.

"Alright..." Kurt sighs "You can have your own opinion."

Blaine smiles and rolls his eyes a little before saying, softly "Kurt, your dad's right – I think he could probably go get a blanket without working himself up." He squeezes Kurt against him before turning to Burt and adding "Burt, Kurt has a reason to be concerned and you should definitely listen to what the doctor said. And he said rest. So. Rest."

"Damn you and your gold medal..." Burt mutters and Kurt laughs.

"I should go start making dinner..." Kurt says after a moment of silence "We can't eat too late if we're going to get to Dalton before curfew."

Blaine nods and says "Do you need help?"

"No..." he sighs "Just stay here and watch the game with dad. Make sure he doesn't start yelling at the TV." He mutters, pecking Blaine's lips before shooting a self-satisfied grin Burt's way and leaving towards the kitchen.

He can hear their voices in the kitchen as he chops up vegetables, smiling to himself as he listens quietly to the easy conversation that starts about the game on screen. Then about Blaine's experience with sports and how he likes playing soccer but wishes he was taller so he could play football. Burt tells him about how he used to play baseball as a kid and how good he used to be. He tells how he met Kurt's mother at one of his games, she was on a date with one of his teammates, and he had his own date there, cheering him on. At the end of the day, when they all went out on a double date, she asked Burt to drive her home, instead of her date. Kurt had heard the story about a thousand times, but it never really got old, so he smiles to himself and pays extra attention as Burt talks about it like it was yesterday.

"I was actually pretty happy, she was way prettier and way smarter than *my* date, but... the other guy she was with – he was the star player, you know. Rich, too, and quite the lady killer. I thought she must've been crazy or something. I was so confused and thrilled I didn't say anything the whole drive to her house. Once we get to her house, I stop the car and I can't help it anymore, I just look at her and ask 'Why me?' She smiles – you know, Kurt has her smile - the kind of smile like she's the only one who's in on the joke, and she points to the radio and says 'John always changes the station when the Beatles come on. You turned up the volume. They're my favorite.'" There's a hearty chuckle from Burt "And of course I'm not going to question it further, not even if the only reason I'd turned up the volume was because I didn't want the silence to be so awkward, or the fact that she was already with me when I did that... I get home and by the next day I have a new date with her and I know all the Beatle songs there are to know, so when we're at the diner I go on to the jukebox and put on the Beatles and she laughs – Kurt has her laugh, too – and drags me off to the dancefloor, which was not my plan at all, 'cuz I can't dance worth a damn, but she was still giggling when the song ended and that was our first kiss, so I must've done *something* right..."

Kurt's smiling and there's a sting in his eyes that he wishes he could say was from the onions, as Blaine laughs "What was the song?"

"I Want to Hold Your Hand..." Burt says easily, making Kurt's breath hitch a little.

"Oh."

"Oh?"

"Kurt sang that to you... at the hospital. It was beautiful..." Blaine says softly, and Kurt stops his hands altogether, closing his eyes and putting the knife down before anything could happen because he can feel his hands start to shake a little. "I don't... I... I'd never heard anyone sing like that before... It was amazing, and... I'm just..."

"Yeah... Lizzie used to teach him all the Beatles songs when he was a kid, and she made sure that was the first one he learned, probably told him this story every time they sang it, too, on their pretend picnics at the backyard..." Burt gives a sort of a chuckle, soft and half sad "it sure wasn't his favorite... He hated having to hold our hands when we were walking, always trying to run off and chase the bugs and the birds in the park, but there she was, constantly begging and bugging him to sing a song about holding hands and *embarrassing* him. He didn't indulge her often!" he said with a laugh "I remember one time he did, though, on her birthday, and she was so insistent on thanking him and hugging him and calling him her baby boy

that he sulked through the rest of the day and said he would never sing it again – of course he did, though. It was their thing, I guess."

Blaine was laughing quietly "That's so cute."

"I know, right?" Burt says "I miss it, actually. Kurt never sang anything from the Beatles again after she died. I guess it just reminded him too much of her."

"Oh."

"So... Thank you for telling me that, Blaine. I didn't know... and it means a lot to me."

"Oh... it's, huh... it's ok. It really was beautiful, so..."

"I'm quite sure there aren't many things better than my son and a Beatle song left in the world, so I bet it was." Burt says "But... I get why he doesn't sing them anymore. I can barely stand to listen to a single one whenever they come on the radio... and I wasn't the one running and dancing around with *my* mom, singing them. Lizzie was just a ball of light and life that... when she left... well... I just... it's just hard to not miss her all the time. And to keep reminding ourselves of what we're missing like that... it just... it'd be too much, sometimes."

"If she was that great, Kurt must really take after her then." Blaine says softly, after a long stretch of silence.

There's a nostalgic sort of laugh from Burt before he says "You have no idea how much..."

Kurt wipes the tears off his cheeks with the back of his hand, trembling a little, as he hears the front door suddenly unlocking and Rachel's voice announcing her and Finn's arrival. He's quick to resume chopping up the last carrot, even if his chest feels tight and heavy and his hands are shaking to the point where's actually dangerous to handle a knife.

The voices from the living room are now excited as everyone greets each other and then Blaine and Rachel are walking inside the kitchen – she's holding a grocery bag and announces that she's cooking dessert before resuming to her previous gushing of Saturday's play ("Well, Blaine hasn't, he wasn't here last night, was he?" she explains when Kurt mentions how they've all heard it before). Blaine gives Kurt an amused smile and mouths 'let her be', before quietly taking the knife from Kurt's hand and saying "let me do the

rest" and turning to Rachel "Are they playing it next week? You think it's ok if I buy the tickets on the same day?"

Kurt manages a smile and goes off to fill a pot with water and put it on the stove.

The three of them make quick work of dinner and Carole arrives just as Finn and Burt (after much pleading) are finishing setting the table, announcing exhaustion from the crazy shift at the ER that day. She tells them all about the insane amount of patients at the hospital that day over dinner.

By the time they finish dessert Blaine gasps "Jeez, Kurt, we have to go! We'll be late for curfew."

"Go, go, go!" Carole practically pushes them out of the house, as they run around the house grabbing coats and bags "See you on Friday!"

"But-" Kurt starts, but Carole interrupts him at once.

"Kurt, I took the week off. I'll be home the whole day to make sure he doesn't do anything stupid." She says with amused and loving sternness "I think I can handle the Hummel stubbornness just as well as you by now."

He opens his mouth to protest but nothing comes out and finally he sighs and says "Fine... but you call me if he so much as tries to eat a bite of red meat!"

"Take away all my reasons to live, will you!" Burt shouts from somewhere in the living room.

"Don't even start!" Kurt shoots back, but Carole puts both her hands on his shoulders and pushes him towards the door.

"I can handle him, Kurt. I am a trained nurse. Don't worry and go. You'll be late." she warns, and Kurt feels Blaine's hand slipping into his and tugging, so he finally sighs and gives in.

"Call me with anything."

"Of course, sweetie." She says before kissing his cheek and then turning to Blaine and kissing his as well "Drive safe, boys."

"We will" Blaine assures her as he pulls the door open and they step outside. She says one last goodbye and closes it behind them.

"I hate leaving him..." Kurt sighs as they wait for elevator.

"I know..." Blaine squeezes his hand "But Carole's there, and Finn and Rachel... And then school's over for spring break, so... Relax...?"

"I'm not sure I know how..." Kurt cringes, and then sighs and drops his shoulders "But you're right... We're not... we're not alone anymore. It's fine. Carole's there and she's great. Of course it'll be fine. I'm worrying too much."

"You are..." Blaine agrees with a sympathetic smile as they step inside the elevator.

Kurt takes a few deep breaths and tries to get the fact that he has Carole there now wash over him. That she can take of his dad, make sure he eats according to doctor's orders, and not work himself up. When the time comes she'll make sure he exercises a little bit everyday... He tries to let the fact that he doesn't have to do it all by himself and that he can share his worries now settle over himself. It actually feels good to know that he's not the only one who loves Burt as family anymore.

He holds onto Blaine's hand, though, as there's still some worry he can't get out of his head and Blaine does make it a little easier to deal with it – like maybe he won't break completely if something bad does happen.

In the car they're silent, but Blaine's hand is still enclosed around Kurt's whenever he doesn't need it to drive. They're stopped at a red light when Blaine wraps his fingers around Kurt's more securely and turns to look at him with a sad smile "I know you were listening when your dad was talking to me... about your mom... and the Beatles..."

"You do...?"

"Yeah... I stopped hearing any sounds from the kitchen halfway through, and... well... you looked... I just... I know you were."

"Ok..."

"I'm sorry, Kurt... I know there's... there's nothing *I* have to be sorry for... but... I am."

"It's ok," Kurt says with a half shrug "It was a long time ago..."

"It still hurts..." Blaine guesses, with a soft sad smile.

"Sometimes." Kurt nods and then for some reason he adds "It hurt today."

Blaine looks at him for a while, his eyes shining with affection, and he only breaks contact after a long while to glance towards the light that's changed to green. He sighs and turns back to the road again "I... I... I think you're... amazing, Kurt." Blaine says after a stretch of silence, glancing sideways towards Kurt "Don't get me wrong – I wish nothing like this had ever happened to you, but... sometimes I just... I'm just amazed at how... beautiful you are despite everything. Your strength... your grace... the way you just... live your life with so much... beauty and... *meaning*... just... blows me away, Kurt."

Kurt closes his eyes and lets the words pour over him.

"If... If she was even just half as beautiful as you... she must've been a showstopper."

Kurt feels as his lips stretch into a slow smile "She was... She was... life. For me, she will always be the definition of happiness, gracefulness, bravery... and life. To see her smiling was to see what beauty was supposed to be about, and even when she was angry she was so magnetic – you'd be afraid of her but you wouldn't ever be able to look away. And... I remember watching her cry once... think it might've been when she found out about the cancer, but... I don't know, I didn't know then... It was heartbreaking... but she... she made pain look beautiful... it's like... she felt pain as a necessity of life and as something just as worthy as happiness, and she... she never shied away from a feeling. I get that now, I do, I truly do... but at the time I just didn't even understand how something so sad could be... well, beautiful... and it's taken me a long time to understand how and why and what was even happening in her heart... and I get it now... that song today... it was about her just as much as it was about my dad... or... or... you." he shrugs helplessly, before sighing. "But I couldn't... I can't... I don't think I've ever been able to be like that... she wore her heart on her sleeve and she never lied about the way she felt. She never hid anything because she wasn't afraid of... whatever that might mean."

As he talks Kurt comes to terms with the fact that, as much as everyone always compares him to his mother – you have her eyes, her smile, her laugh, her talent for song, her stubbornness – he didn't have

her way with truth. No matter how alike they were, he still couldn't bring himself to live like she did – to wear his heart on his sleeve.

"She sounds amazing."

And just like that, the reason why Blaine had stormed his way into Kurt's heart so fast and so well, and the way he never wants him to leave becomes clear. The way Blaine's eyes can never seem to lie, the way they always hold so much emotion; they were always crystal clear, they spoke more than most people could ever come close to saying in a two-hour speech. The way his smile would light up a room because of how pure it is, and the way his tears mean pure heartbreak because of how raw they always are. The way Blaine pushes through life's emotions fearlessly, enjoying happiness with a sort of effortless skill, and feeling pain like it's there to teach him, like it isn't something to be afraid of, but to *feel* and only then move past. Something that has taken Kurt so much to learn, something he's always wanted to be but never quite got around to until, maybe, now. Blaine just *is*.

"She would've absolutely loved you." he breathes. He realizes now just how much of a better person Blaine helps him be. The version of himself he's always wanted to be – the version of himself he knows his mother would be proud of.

Blaine looks at him with hopeful eyes and a breathless smile – as if he's been waiting to hear that forever-
"She would?"

Kurt's heart hammers furiously against his chest as he returns the smile "Of course!" he laughs with a tight throat and prickling eyes "And she would probably always take your side whenever we fought, too... which would be horrible and so annoying! And you'd always agree on everything and be obnoxious about it, too...! And you'd always win charades...!"

Blaine laughs, but Kurt sees the way his eyes are shining a little too brightly to be *just* happiness or relief, and the laughter dies quickly as he stops the car at another red light and he turns fully to Kurt and almost begs "You promise? You promise she would? Because... that means so much to me... that she would... I just... I know she's... I know you... I want to... I want to..." *I want to be it for you.*

And he is, Kurt thinks, he truly is. He *sees* Blaine and reads every thought that flickers through his face as he takes in the beauty that never fails to take his breath away. It's a moment for Kurt. A moment that almost scares him – because there's suddenly a lot more at stake. He thinks he might ready to handle it if

something bad were to happen again... but there's a reason this moment is happening. It's a cycle, feeding itself. He's having it because suddenly he can see, not that he loves Blaine, he knew that already, but *why* he loves Blaine, and that means if he loses him he'll know he'll break hard and heavy. The very reason he does love Blaine is telling him he needs to take that risk. It tells him that it's that exact risk, and the natural way they take it without a second thought, that makes people like Blaine and his mother so very beautiful, that make them grab life and make something extraordinary out of it. And he wants that – he wants to be like that, for himself, for Blaine, and for his mother. He knows better than to ever question his love for Blaine, and acknowledge why he loves and just how much. He doesn't shy away from it, even as it makes his eyes fill with tears and blur his vision.

"Of course she would, Blaine." he sighs and leans in to kiss him deeply, melting into the feel of Blaine's warm mouth, pliant, loving lips, and the arms that wrap around him like he's safe and nothing could ever come close enough to hurt him again, not while he's in those arms.

Chapter Twenty-One

Source: [www . people. com](http://www.people.com)

The Rumors Are Back!

A big, big, big, *tight* hug at show choir competition at Sectionals. That's all it takes for the mouths to start talking again, apparently. Of course the written apology by one, supposedly ex-boyfriend, Sebastian Smythe, in which he implies there was no cheating makes me wonder if there ever was any relationship to be unfaithful about to start with. I quote the last paragraph:

"What I'm most sorry about is, of course, tainting Kurt's reputation in such a crude, untruthful way. He's nothing like the word I called him and didn't do anything close to what I accused him of – to be at the receiving end of his affections must be terrific, as he is truly one of the most compassionate and understanding people I've had the chance to meet. He never deserved what I did, and I can only hope he will accept this honest apology."

Now, Sebastian, what do you mean "must be"? Didn't you get to experience that firsthand, even if for just a couple of months?

Which makes me wonder, if there never was a relationship, why even fake it? Could it be... a cover up?

Of course this could all be a bad word choice on Mr. Smythe's part but, then again, where's the fun in assuming *that*?

Besides, why would the Andersons go to all the trouble of visiting Senator Hummel at the Hospital? Don't tell me about political correctness, publicity stunts and vote-fishing strategies. It was just a meeting of the in-laws! And let's not forget, that according to a friendly source at the hospital, it was not the first time the younger Anderson ever set foot in that hospital.

So... Is it actually surprising that the rumors are back? I think not.

Is it a far off chance that there's actually something going on between the two no longer opposing households? I think not, too.

What do you think, though?

Comments:

Linda123: I ship it.

L0ki_rules: I think this is as relevant to these elections as what the peach I'm eating tastes like.

JimmyS: I think people need to get real jobs and stop making shit up about honest people's lives. The andersons know better than to let a fag scandal wreck their family.

Linda123: JimmyS Because this type of thing is a choice. Homophobic asshole.

Gottriplets: I shipped it then, and I ship it now. ^.^

Ginny_M8: I certainly hope it isn't true. Damn gays ruining everything for everyone.

Gottriplets: Ginny_M8 You and people like you are the ones ruining everything for everyone. Love is love, no matter what, and this should never matter to anyone except themselves.

Lucy641: If it's true then I hope they're happy! It must be hard for them being in love and not being able to show it! Hopefully, they'll get to be open about it soon :)

xXxXx

They resist the urge to walk hand in hand once they get out of the car, and they also resist the urge to just go to Kurt's dorm room and get lost in each other. They already came close enough to missing curfew; it wouldn't be surprising if there was a dorm room check.

Blaine checks the corridor before he gently kisses Kurt goodnight and continues on his way to his own dorm room, where Wes is sitting surrounded by open CD cases, music sheets and an open laptop.

"Wow."

"We need to start thinking about Nationals." Wes mumbles as an explanation.

"Huh.... That's like... months away." Blaine frowns "We just won Regionals..."

"Exactly. It's the first time we're ever gonna go to Nationals... We need to be perfect or we're just going to end up looking like a bunch of kids who got lucky once."

Blaine chuckles "Not once. We were amazing at Sectionals, and we were even better at Regionals. Of course we'll be great at Nationals, too. Stop freaking out."

"I'm not freaking out!"

"Yes, you are." Blaine nods, pushing some papers away so he can sit down next to Wes, "What did your dad do?"

Wes sighs and drops his head "I don't like this." He mumbles.

"What?"

"You knowing me too well..." he rolls his eyes with a weak smile, which Blaine returns before reaching out and squeezing his shoulder.

"Talk to me."

"He... accidentally sent me an e-mail that was meant for his lawyer, about filing for divorce."

"Oh, my god."

"It's fine really. It's good news. I just... I don't think mom knows yet, and I'm not sure how she'll take it. And then there's Abby to think about. But... I've been wishing for their divorce for years now. It's fine. I'm just nervous." He shakes his head, and Blaine gives him another sympathetic smile before standing up and walking to grab his laptop.

"Come on, let's just watch a movie and forget about it, ok?"

"Are you sure you don't wanna go round to Kurt's?" Wes teases.

Blaine almost shrugs the question off as silly, but then something in him catches and he turns back to Wes "I... no. Wes,... I'm sorry if... shit. Listen, I just... I don't want to be one of those guys who get a boyfriend and suddenly stop hanging out with their friends and stuff. I-"

Wes' laugh interrupts him "Relax, Blaine, it was a joke. You and Kurt are in the honeymoon phase and you can barely hang together in public, so of course I understand if you have to blow me off a few times to be with him, it's totally fine. And I actually like hanging out with the two of you, anyway –you don't really make me feel like an awkward third wheel like I say you do."

"Oh, good. I just... Suddenly I just thought..." he trails off before finding new and better words "I just need you to know you're like a brother to me, ok? I'd never just blow you off."

"I know that. Come on. How about that movie?"

They're settled on Wes' bed, halfway into the movie before Blaine turns to Wes and asks "So is it like... super insensitive if I ask you for set-list ideas for my dad's thing?"

"What?" Wes laughs "Rub your budding relationship in my face all you want, Blaine. I'm glad you guys are getting along."

"Awesome! Because I really need ideas. I'm afraid all of my favorite bands aren't exactly Republican friendly or anything..."

"You want to go classic." Wes says at once, like it's ridiculously obvious "It's not that hard, B. It'll be a room full of Republicans – they're going to want something old and smooth. Dip into the big old classics."

"Thanks, man, I will."

They continue to watch the movie for a while longer before Wes breaks the silence "I really like Kurt."

"Oh?" Blaine frowns slightly "Me, too...?"

Wes chuckles and shrugs "I felt like I should say it, you know. Just in case you thought the only reason I put up with him was because of you. It's not. I like him, both as a person and as your boyfriend."

Blaine smiles "Yeah, thanks, but I didn't think that..."

"Good." Wes nods "Besides, I couldn't ever not like someone who makes you so happy, right?"

"I guess not."

"I..." Wes takes a deep breath before blushing and trying to contain a smile "I have a date."

"Oh!" Blaine gasps "That's awesome!"

"I think so... I just... I realized... You're the... You're that person... for me. The one whose opinion matters, I guess." He sighs "Not my parents, just you."

Blaine feels an overwhelming warmth in chest for the second time that night and he's pretty sure it'd be impossible for him to ever feel unhappy again – which he knows is a silly, naïve thought, but one he is more than willing to indulge in for the time being. "You're that for me, too." He says at once and wraps his arms around Wes, who hugs back. As he pulls back he smirks "So will I get to meet her?"

"Maybe... Depends on how the date goes... But I hope so."

"What is she like?"

Wes opens his mouth to speak but falters and then gasps and looks horror stricken for a moment "Oh my god, I just realized she looks kind of like you!"

"What?!" Blaine burst out laughing.

"She does! She's got dark curly hair like you and light brown eyes, and thick eyebrows and everything!"

"Well, then, she must be beautiful!" Blaine singsongs.

"I'd be worried if she wasn't the exact opposite of yourself, personality wise." Wes rolls his eyes "She's a feisty little thing, she is."

They fall asleep to Wes telling him all about Cass, about how they met and how he was probably crazy to feel so strongly for her already, and Blaine couldn't control his own giddiness over his best friend's happiness. At least over this. At least some things were good in his life, even if others were as messed up as ever.

The next day Blaine tries not to tease him too much about it, when Kurt joins them after classes, so the three of them can draft out a setlist to e-mail his dad.

"Why don't you sing.... Any Which Way? Scissor Sisters is a must at any Republican party?" Kurt smiles. He's sitting between Blaine's legs, his back against Blaine's chest, arms around his knees and fingers drawing mindless patterns over denim clad shins.

"That's a brilliant idea!"

"Take me anyway you like it, In front of your fireplace, In front of your yacht, In front of my parents, I don't give a damn, baby, Just take me." Kurt drawls, sending hot shivers down Blaine's body.

"Mmm... I might just..." he mumbles letting his lips sink into Kurt's neck, before Wes' cough pulls him out of the moment.

"Just don't take him in front of Wes. At Wes' begging request. There are some things best left to the imagination."

Kurt laughs but blushes and Blaine just squeezes him a little tighter against himself before teasing out "You're just jealous you don't have a certain girl over here singing suggestive lyrics to you!"

"No." Wes says simply "I'm not jealous. Not really."

"What girl?" Kurt frowns getting over his blush in order to look curiously between the two of them.

"Wes has a date..." Blaine smiles and teases.

"He does?!"

"I do."

"And she looks just like me." Blaine grins.

"She does?!"

"No!" Wes says at once, shooting Blaine a murderous look "There are certain similarities, that's all."

"Oh, pff, just last night you said we were exactly alike. Come on, Wes, I think it's time to stop pretending you ever moved on from that kiss we had."

"What?!"

"*Years ago!*" Wes glared "We were *drunk!*"

"You have a crush on me and you're settling for the next best thing. It's not healthy Wes. You should just be honest. If not with the world, then at least with yourself."

"God. You're impossible. One good word and your ego swells up to fill up an entire stadium."

"A small-ish stadium..." Blaine smirks, while Kurt turns in his arm so he can ask with a confused expression "Is that true?"

"What is?"

"All of it?"

Blaine laughs "Wes does not have a crush on me, don't worry."

"No, not that." Kurt rolls his eyes "Of he doesn't have a crush on you." Wes bursts out laughing at that and Blaine shoots him a haughty though playful glare "Did you two kiss?!"

"Years ago. We were drunk. Experimenting best friends." Blaine shrugs.

"Oh, my god, gross." Kurt wrinkles his nose "It'd be like watching two brothers kiss."

Wes laughs even more while Blaine just squints and shoots back "Weren't you the one who had a crush on the person who is actually your brother?"

"Step brother!" Kurt gasps in outrage "And he wasn't then!" he slaps Blaine's leg, while Wes just keeps chuckling to himself, before turning back to his previous position, using a little too much force settling his back against Blaine's chest and making him sputter at it.

"Alright, I'm sorry!" Blaine sighs, but Kurt doesn't pay him any attention, instead directing his attention towards Wes.

"So tell me about this date?"

"Her name's Cass..." he sighs, as if talking about it was a big bore "And she's-"

There's a knock at the door but not enough time before it's flung open, and Kurt's barely even pulled away from Blaine's back, let alone disentangled from his legs before David's walking in with a grin "Guys!" he urges, not even blinking at the way Kurt and Blaine are now completely panic frozen, halfway through breaking their embrace "I have the best idea for Spring Break ever!"

"Uhhh..." Wes starts, looking almost as pale and terrified as Blaine and Kurt "I... huh... What...?"

"Disney World!" He jumps a little in excitement "Come on! It'd be so much fun! And I know last time there were some issues concerning photos and stuff... but it's Disney, it's family friendly! It's wholesome!"

"Ha-have you talked to anyone else?"

"No, not yet. But I think they'll like the idea. Just the Warblers, though." He muses "Although... if it was just the four of us... you two could be all couple-y and stuff and it'd still be fun, right?"

It's Kurt who breaks the silence that follows.

that "David... you... huh... you know?"

"Know what?" David shrugs "About you and Blaine and your epic gay Romeo and Juliet romance?"

"Huh-huh."

"Sure." He shrugs as if tis' the most normal thing ever "I've known since... like... Christmas break...?" He frowns and then nods to himself "Yeah, since then... There was a lot of heart eyes going on and you two kept running off together, anyway..."

"What?!"

"And then there were the few times I walked into a room and you two were sitting *way* too close..." and then he chuckles and nods towards them "Exhibit A!" he adds dramatically, outstretching hands and arms for effect.

"Does anyone else know?" Blaine somehow has the good sense to ask.

"Mmm..." David seems to consider it for a while, and the fact that there's a need to even think about it gets Blaine's heart speeding in his chest "Jeff's pretty sure, he told me about his suspicions at Regionals. I know Dom suspects it because Jeff said he'd talked to Dom about it and he'd said he thought so, too, and Jon jokes about it sometimes, but I can't tell if he believes it or not."

"Shit." Kurt gasps.

Blaine's about to answer in the same fashion before it dawns on him. David's known since *Christmas*. Jeff's known about since Regionals, probably before, and Dom, too. Yet, they had never said a word about it. Not to them and not to *anyone*.

"Thank you!" he sighs out, scrambling out of the bed to launch himself at David.

"Huh... you're welcome?"

"Thank you for not... telling anyone!"

He always thinks he gives enough credit to the Warblers for being awesome, but moments like these remind him that he really, really doesn't. They're his family - they're his big, fat, amazing family.

"Of course I wouldn't tell anyone!" David laughs "I might not be the brightest bulb in the box, but I'm not brain dead." He rolls his eyes as he pulls away from Blaine's embrace "And neither are the rest of them."

"I know, I know...!" Blaine gasps "I'm sorry! I'm just... so scared all the time, and I never even thought... I know I can trust you! I'm sorry if you thought I didn't!"

"No, it's fine. I get it!" David says at once, with a hand to his arm "We all trust Dom, and yet apparently we can't trust his sister... I get it, Blaine – the less people that know the better, even if you trust them with your life doesn't mean they should all just know."

"Oh, but you *are* the brightest bulb in the box!" Blaine says again before pulling him into another hug, which David laughs into and reciprocates at once.

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Knowing that other people know is kind of weird. He catches Dom staring more than once during Warbler practice; he feels self conscious as Jeff grins and tells him "Hey, Kurt!" as he stands next to the locker rooms waiting for Blaine and Wes to get out to head to lunch after their soccer practice; and he feels his face burn hot when Jon asks him, out of the five other people sitting with him in the library, where Blaine is – the answer falls gracelessly out of his lips as he mumbles it, but Jon merely grins and says "Thanks dude!" before speeding off.

He knows Blaine doesn't feel all that worried about it – but Blaine's had three years with the Warblers, Kurt's had barely over half of one. Blaine trusts them, but to Kurt trust isn't something that comes all that easy. Every time one of them smiles towards Kurt it feels like they're telling him they know – and it's the last week of school, so there's a lot of smiling going on.

It's maddening to think that any moment now one of them could just choose to blab.

He tries to calm himself down. It's not like they'd have more than speculation to go on with, he tells himself. Other than Wes and his own family (and Sebastian, that one time) no one has ever seen them do more than hug – and even then it was in celebration, during competitions. Heart eyes and mysteriously disappearing aren't enough to make a solid case.

Then again, the tabloids aren't exactly made of solid cases, are they.

"I can practically see the stress dripping off of you." Blaine teases, climbing on top of Kurt. They're in Kurt's room, alone. Kurt's lying on his bed reading (or trying to), and Blaine's on the floor, music sheets sprawled around him and computer open. Well – he was, up until three seconds ago, when he decided to abandon his search of songs, get on the bed and pepper the back of Kurt's neck with kisses.

"Blaine!" Kurt gasps "Someone might come in."

"You're too worried. Besides, school's out *tomorrow*."

"And you're not worried enough." Kurt says, but he turns to lie on his back, welcoming Blaine's lips with his own "And that doesn't mean anything if someone walks in right now..."

"I *am* worried." Blaine says "But I trust my friends. And you should, too. They're your friends as well."

Kurt nods "But what if-"

"Kurt, think about how long they've known or suspected it... If they haven't said or done anything yet, what makes you think they will now?" He says gently "I know you haven't known them that long, but I have. And you trust me... so trust me when I say you can trust them."

"You're just trying to smooth talk your way into my pants, aren't you?"

Blaine chuckles "Only a little bit." He says with a wink, before dipping down and kissing Kurt deeply.

"We really shouldn't... Not at school... Not this much."

"Then when?" Blaine sighs "Come on. I promise I'll make this fast if you're worried about getting caught... But you're crazy if you think I can look at you everyday and only be with you on the weekends."

Kurt feels himself blush. What is it about Blaine that makes him still feel like this months after the very first compliment? "You make a good point..." he sighs, a little breathless as Blaine kisses down his neck.

"Can I elaborate?" he mutters against Kurt's skin, as his leg slips between Kurt's and his thigh presses hotly against an already half-hard cock.

"Please do...!"

And that Blaine does. His kiss is deep, and his hands are strong on Kurt's arms and waist, and hips, and shoulders, and neck. Kurt loses himself in their bodies and melts into Blaine and his kisses. Wraps his arms around Blaine, spreads his fingers to take in as much as he can, moves his hips against Blaine's and sighs into his mouth at the feeling it gives him. They both smile into it, and then Blaine starts descending along Kurt's body. Deft fingers unbutton his shirt as he goes, and warm lips and a moist tongue leave a hot trail of kisses behind.

"Where you going?" Kurt asks, half teasing, half gasping.

Blaine grins, his hands on Kurt's belt buckle "Making my way into your pants..." he shrugs cockily "So I can make you relax."

"Oh!" he sighs and he meant it to be teasing, but it comes out breathless "Well, then! Be my guest...!"

"Humhum..." Blaine hums against the rise of his hipbone, peeking out of his pants as his fingers unfasten his belt and work the button of his pants.

Kurt buries his hands in Blaine's hair, completely ignoring the product holding it together as his boyfriend pulls his pants down and starts mouthing at Kurt's erection straining against the cotton of his briefs. It's not long before his hands return from where they left the pants halfway to Kurt's knees, and as one replaces Blaine's mouth, the other hooks a finger under the elastic waistband and starts pulling it down.

"Fuck..." Blaine mutters, as he finally pulls the briefs down and one hand wraps around Kurt's cock "I just... sometimes it's just..." he stutters, looking up towards Kurt's eyes, who has no idea what he's trying to say, but needs to hear it very much "Sometimes... I can't believe you get hard for me..." he says finally "Like... I can do this to you..."

"You can...!" Kurt pants, because it is kind of hot, and it is kind of overwhelming, when he thinks about it, that he manages to get someone hard – he manages to get *Blaine* hard. The thought only serves to make him harder.

"I can make you hard...!" Blaine grins, looking the tiniest bit lunatic – so happy over this.

"You definitely can... Blaine, only you."

"How fucking awesome is that?!"

"It's so awesome that you should just get back to what you were doing."

Blaine laughs and shoots him a wide grin before saying "Right you are!" And then Blaine's mouth is on him, hot and wet, and sinking over his cock, and Kurt throws his head back and swallows a groan, tightening his fingers on Blaine's hair.

Blaine's not holding anything back, he's not teasing, he's not trying to draw anything out. He's sucking hard, and bobbing his head back and forth fast, his hand making up for what his mouth can't take (which is a lot less than it used to be, Kurt thinks, which makes the heat in his stomach grow wilder).

"Blaine!" he whines "Don't stop, don't stop!" He's panting. He feels Blaine half nodding, and humming around him – it makes his eyes roll back into his head. But the sudden swirling movement of his tongue around his cock as Blaine pulls back, as he's blinking his eyes open again with a gasp, stars starting to show up in his vision. He's starting to feel himself closer and closer to the edge when Blaine's hums around his cock start becoming more and more insistent, something almost desperate about them, and Kurt looks to find Blaine no longer lying on the bed between Kurt's legs, but actually on his knees, as his free hand's buried in his pants. "Fuck, Blaine, I'm gonna- I'm gonna...!"

Blaine groans in response and sucks harder – if such a thing is possible, and Kurt watches as the arm working on himself starts working faster, too. When the hand Blaine still has on Kurt's cock moves to cup his balls and his mouth sinks just that bit farther down, the whole world tightens for a second and then expands so completely that his back arches off the bed and he can't completely hold back his noises as he comes down Blaine's throat. He manages to register the way Blaine groans, still swallowing around Kurt, hand flying off Kurt's balls so it can grasp harshly at his inner thigh, and he looks to find, despite the dots and stars coloring his vision, Blaine sinking his hips into the mattress, hand still submerged beneath him, contorting himself, and finally pulling off of Kurt to whine, the sound coming from the back of his throat, completely trashed and lost in himself, as he buries his face at the crease of Kurt's thigh.

They relax into each other after a couple of seconds, coming down from their orgasms, and muscles completely melting away. Blaine turns his head from where he was practically biting into Kurt's skin, to rest his cheek against his hipbone, his thumb starting to move soothingly over Kurt's inner thigh. Kurt's fingers let go of their hold on Blaine's hair – now completely ruined – and massage it carefully.

"So, I assume you just completely ruined my bedspread..." Kurt says after a while.

"Hmmm-no..." Blaine shakes his head "Came in my pants..." he mumbles.

"I love you so much...!" Kurt sighs and feels as Blaine chuckles in response.

Kurt's moves his hand from Blaine's hand to caress his cheek briefly, before moving his face, gently, so he can pull his briefs up.

There's a knock at the door, and Kurt doesn't know how he doesn't freeze or drop dead right then. Instead he manages to pull his pants up and fasten them before the door clicks open to Wes "Hey Kurt, have you seen- Oh."

There's a long moment of silence when Kurt can practically feel Wes taking in his open shirt, his unfastened belt, Blaine's position between his legs, Blaine's completely red and swollen lips, their ruined hair and flushed faces. He wants to find a deep, dark hole, crawl into it and never come out. He supposes he should be grateful it was Wes who walked in and not anyone else.

"Wait! – The door wasn't even locked?!" Kurt hisses to Blaine when his brain finally registers that fact. His chest starts feeling hot and tight with a mix of panic and anger.

"I..." Blaine stutters but finds no words.

"My fault!" Wes says finally, his tone clipped and strained "I should've waited until you opened the door. But I really need Blaine right now."

"What for?"

"The principal's being an ass about the Warblers' flight to National's and I need the student body president, a.k.a. his favorite student, to help me stop him from being an ass."

"Alright, alright... give me five minutes... I need – huh – to change." He cringes before he gets off the bed and turns his back to Wes, fastening his pants with a grimace. Kurt just avoids Wes' eyes at all times.

"Hey... At least I caught the afterglow, right?" Wes tries to say cheerfully. Blaine gives him a small smile and turns to Kurt with a hopeful, semi-apologetic smile, but Kurt shakes his head.

"I'm not talking to you, right now." He says. When Blaine starts to bend down to kiss him he holds out a hand "No, I'm serious. Go get changed and talk to the principal. And I'll talk to you tomorrow, or something."

"What?" Blaine frowns "Because Wes saw us? Come on, Kurt... that's si-"

"It's not silly!" Kurt glares "What if it had been someone else, huh? What if it hadn't been one of our *trusted* friends? What if it had been my lab partner?"

"Kurt-"

"Blaine, this isn't a joke to me! The safety of *your* privacy isn't a joke to me!"

"What the hell does that even mean, Kurt?!"

"Huh guys..." Wes interrupts, but they both shush him.

"It means that if anyone does find out, your life-"

"Exactly! *My* life!" He snaps "I get to choose what I do with it, and if I choose to be with my boyfriend even though we might get caught, then it's my choice!"

"No! It's not! I'm your boyfriend! I get a say in it, too!" Kurt shoots back.

"Guys, you're being too loud." They shush him again.

"Well, I don't get what you're saying about it, then!"

"I'm saying that I don't want you to get hurt over this!"

"You not wanting to speak to me because I wanted to have sex with you hurts me!"

"And the possibility of the whole thing blowing up in your face and you losing your family over it doesn't?!"

"You're more important right now!"

"No, I'm not!" Kurt says "You *think* I am. But as much as I love you and you love me, we're just high school sweethearts! You can lie to yourself all you want, but I am *not* more important to you than your family, Blaine!"

"Guys, you're really being too loud!" Wes interrupts, practically shouting, and grabs Blaine's arm "Come on, Blaine, you guys can talk tomorrow. Or whenever. After school. *Alone*."

The fact that there are tears in Blaine's eyes when Wes pulls him away makes Kurt's heart clench and beat too fast. He wants to take everything he said back, but he can't because it's true.

He can't let Blaine do this to himself. He can't let him play with his future like it doesn't matter. Of course his family is important, and of course Blaine will be devastated if things go wrong. Kurt can't just ignore that, even if Blaine can. He won't be the reason Blaine has a fallout with his parents.

The next day, during classes, he doesn't talk to Blaine. If he did they would just start fighting again, and Wes is right – they need to do it outside of school. It's not even that he thinks they might break up – that's completely off the table – but they need to say things to each other that cannot be overheard.

He takes his things, hoists his bag over his shoulder, and on his way to his car he stops by Blaine's room and knocks.

Blaine opens the door. His eyes are still hurt when they find Kurt's, but he accepts Kurt's kiss when he leans in. "I'll call you tonight. So we can talk."

"I don't want to fight with you over the phone."

"We could meet up somewhere. If there's still a need to fight." Kurt says, squeezing Blaine's hand before starting to pull away.

"I don't like fighting with you." Blaine mutters when Kurt's about to turn and leave.

Kurt smiles and gives him another kiss "Me neither. That's probably why we suck at it."

Blaine gives him a weak smile and kisses him again, but they're forced to break apart when the sound of footsteps from around the corner start.

"Bye." Kurt says before he turns and walks away.

When he gets home he drops himself next to his dad, on the couch, with a big, deep sigh.

"Something wrong?"

"Blaine and I are fighting." He shrugs.

"What happened?" Burt says, perking up at once.

"He's being... kind of... irresponsible about us."

"Irresponsible how?" Burt frowns, suspicion growing.

"No – not like that. It's not... He's not..." Kurt sighs and finds his words again "He's being careless about the relationship being a secret."

"Ok..."

"And he doesn't get why I can't accept that."

"Why can't you?" Burt frowns "It's his life."

"He's being naïve to think I'm more important to him than his parents. If word got out, they would... kick him out or something. I know he'd be hurt, and I'm worried about that. I don't want that to happen, because I know this is just now... I just. I think he thinks it'll be really easy to move past it, because he has me and he loves me so much and..., but I don't think so." He sighs "We're just kids..."

Burt smiles and squeezes Kurt's knee "And you're sure he's not right?"

"What do you mean dad?"

"Are you sure you two aren't going to be fine, even if his parents kick him out? Are you sure he won't be fine?" Burt chuckles "He's got a pretty good support system. He's gotten into college, and has the money to pay for it. He's got a family right here, he's got you..."

"Of course he won't be fine! No matter how much he says he's grown out of them, they'll always be his family, and we're crazy if we think his teenage boyfriend is more important in his life than them." Kurt explains, half frantic "What do you think's gonna happen to us if they stop talking to him? You don't think he'll start thinking about the choices that he made? You don't think he'll regret them? He'll resent them?!"

"So you're afraid he'll resent you?"

"Of course I am!"

"Then this is really about you, and not about him at all." Burt says easily.

"No. I. Huh. What?!"

"Doe he love you?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe him when he tells you that?"

"Yes. Of course."

"Then trust him with that."

"I do."

"Not about this, you don't. You need to trust that he can separate you and your relationship from the whole situation that might lead up to him being kicked out. Because it is something completely separate." Burt sighs.

"You think I'm being selfish?"

"No!" Burt laughs "I think you're being reasonable, but so is he, in his own right and in his own way." He ruffles Kurt's hair and winks "You'll be fine, trust me. And now, go get my meds, please!"

Kurt shoots him a half hearted glare before he does so, and then lets himself sit next to his dad, not even paying the least bit of attention at the movie that's playing on the TV.

His dad's words start creating a volcano inside of him, and it bursts with the realization of what both Burt and Blaine meant to tell him.

This isn't about Blaine's high school sweetheart being more important to him than his parents. This isn't about *Kurt* and Blaine. This is about Blaine's life and the person he chooses to love, be it Kurt or someone else two years from now, having a place in his family, too. This is about him and his parents alone. Even if he wasn't with Kurt – even if he was single- this would still be the same exact issue. The fact that Blaine shouldn't have to hide remains even without Kurt.

Blaine isn't being irresponsible about them; Blaine isn't opening the door to the possibility of resentment and disappointment. Blaine just knows that the fact that he loves *someone* and that that someone loves him back is more important than his parent's fact remains just as important now as it will ten years in the future.

Of course, it would be better if he could be more careful about things, because the less stress they go through, the easier things will be, and the kind of pain he will undoubtedly go through (regardless of the effect it may come to have on them as a couple) could still be spared. But he's not exactly just being reckless for the sake of being reckless. He's just choosing to live his life the way he wants to, because, want it or not, his parents won't always have a say in it – especially if they're not going to accept him as the person he is.

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Blaine gets why Kurt's mad.

After all they've been through together to keep their relationship a secret, he gets it. It probably looks like Blaine's just trying to throw things out of the window, and make all that energy and effort a waste.

But that's not it. That's not it at all.

He just wants to be. Be in his life, like himself, like he wants to be. And he is so incredibly tired of being bullied out of it. The fact that things with his parents are getting better only serves to inspire him further into it. Because maybe it won't even be that bad, in the end. He'll probably get to keep both worlds and make a bigger, better, richer one out of them both.

He doesn't want to fight with Kurt because neither of them is wrong – but Kurt's just not really seeing things from his perspective.

He gets that Kurt cares – that he worries, and that he's probably worried Blaine's gonna get hurt. In that sense, of course Kurt gets to be mad, and of course Kurt gets a say in not wanting to be part of something that will ultimately hurt Blaine. He gets that Kurt doesn't want to risk putting that kind of strain on their relationship.

But this is Blaine's life. Blaine knows what he needs, and he knows what he wants. He wants to be with his boyfriend without constantly looking over their shoulders. It's not like he's going to go and shout from the

rooftops that they're together – he's committed to keeping it a secret for now, too. But his commitment can only stretch so far, and he just refuses to let himself get worked up over it anymore or stop himself from being Kurt's boyfriend in any way, shape or form. It's one thing avoiding PDA, another living in a constant state of vigil and concern. That's exhausting and Blaine's not going to do it anymore.

By the end of the afternoon he'd pinned down everything he needs to tell Kurt, and it's not until he hears the front door opening and his dad shouting his 'hello' that he thinks maybe there's a conversation he needs to have with him, too.

He takes a few deep breaths and goes downstairs. He greets his dad with a smile and says "Dad, could we have a word in your office?"

"Sure." His dad nods "Let just put these down." He gestures to his jacket and briefcase.

"Yeah, I'll go get mom." Blaine informs and then sticks his head in the kitchen "mom, could you come into dad's office? I need to have a word with you guys."

She frowns, but smiles and says "Sure, sweetie." before following him inside.

Blaine waits until his mother is sitting down before he closes the door and takes a seat, turning his chair to face both of them.

"So, I need to talk to you."

"Ok."

"About me being gay."

He tries not to see the way his father almost flinches. The way his shoulders sag a little. The way he takes in a sharp breath. "Ok."

"I'm going to come out as soon as the elections are over." He announces. His voice is firm and strong. He feels good about the whole thing, at once "I know the polls have you set to win the primaries, and after that we'll just have to wait and see, but regardless of you winning or losing the race, I need you to know that I won't wait longer after that." He inspects his parents' face. His dad looks half apprehensive; clearly trying to change his features into something blank. Blaine knows what he's thinking and the scenarios

running through his head, so he calmly adds "I won't make a spectacle of it. I'm not going to go and make a video about it and post it online; I'm not gonna call a press conference or anything. But I am going to stop living with any kind of secret."

There's a long stretch of silence when he thinks they might actually never speak to him again, but then his mother sighs and says "That seems... fair."

He feels a small wave of relief "I need to know you won't... cut me off... I mean – I-" and then he stops, because what the hell is he saying?! That's not right at all! The whole point of this is that he hopes that they can still get along, but that it won't define him or his life if they don't. So he corrects himself at once "Actually I don't. I'll do it, regardless of what you might do about it. But I really hope we can... continue to be a family. We've been... we've been better lately, and I'd really like for that to continue."

"Of course!" she breathes and even takes Blaine's hand in hers and squeezes. He smiles at her and then looks at his dad, whose expression is unreadable until he too takes a deep breath.

"Yeah, of course, Blaine."

He smiles, feels his throat thicken with relief "I just... that means a lot to me... And I... I really hope you can... you will... I..."

"Blaine?"

"It's just... I... One day I'm going to want to introduce... the person I love to my parents, and... it would mean the world to me if my parents would want to meet him, too..."

"Oh...!" she says, but says nothing else. It seems to hit them hard, the fact that all of this means more than just a blow to his father's career. It seems like they've forgotten that, more than an inconvenience, this means Blaine loves men.

"It's... It's just love." He offers, looking between the two of them and they've been building new bridges these past few months, but he still has a hard time letting his desperation seep through. There's still a loud voice in his head telling him that a son should never be desperate for a parent's approval. Especially when the only thing at stake isn't even a choice. Especially when it all comes down to just love. "That's all it is. Love. Like you two have for each other... And... well... for all that I disagree with the two of you in a lot of things even I can't deny that you do love each other and you respect each other, and that's great, that's

really, really great. I love that you have that. And I want that, too, for me. That's all... That's all there is to it."

"We... we can promise to try?" his mother gives him sad smile "Maybe when that day comes we'll be ready for that."

"Dad?"

"We'll try." He nods "I... This is hard for us, Blaine, you gotta... Well, we promise we'll try. And... we'll do our best to be a family to you, too – no matter what."

His mom takes his hand and squeezes – it's weird, nervous and even a little uncomfortable, but there's effort behind it, and at least they're trying, right?

He gives them a smile (and if that one's tight, well, he's trying, too) and stands to leave.

"Oh!" his dad interrupts "I should tell you, I have important meetings in California this Monday and Tuesday, and your granddad wanted to hitch a ride with me and go say hi to Aunt Rudy. So, we're leaving Monday morning and you'll have the house to yourself until Wednesday. We'd ask you to come, but... well, things with between you and your grandfather haven't been exactly-"

"No, I understand, it's fine." He says at once because obviously who wouldn't want the house to themselves for three days? "I'll use the time to practice my set-list for your function. Which is... Wednesday?" he frowns, suddenly confused. Had it been cancelled? Had he gotten the wrong date?

"Yeah. We'll meet you there – we'll be going straight from the airport. I'll get a car to pick you up, don't worry." His dad says, before adding "Oh, and could you e-mail your set-list to Pete, just so he can make sure the songs are good?"

"Sure." Blaine nods "I need to go take a shower." He excuses himself and, even though he doesn't exactly need to take a shower, he does anyway.

The hot water caresses his skin, and washes things away.

He gets where Kurt is coming from, he really does, but he just can't accept that. He can't accept such a compromise for something he should never have to compromise. He settles on telling Kurt exactly that,

when one of them finally gives and calls the other, and if it's not enough for Kurt then he'll ask him if they can take some time to think things through, until Monday, so that they can talk properly in the privacy of Blaine's empty house.

It's not like they're going to break-up or anything, there's no need to freak out over this – they can be mature. Blaine remembers the last time they fought, the stupid reason it was about, and how in the end it all came down to a complete lack of communication. So that's it. That's all there is to it: communication. If they talk about it, it'll be fine.

That's why he's not nervous at all when his phone rings and it's Kurt.

"Hey." He says.

"Hi!" Kurt breathes "Listen... I know you said you didn't want to fight over the phone... but... I don't think there'll be a fight. But if you still wanna meet up somewhere we can-"

"No, that's ok, Kurt, just talk to me."

"Alright. Listen. I, huh, well, first of all, I love you."

Blaine chuckles "I love you, too."

"Good." Kurt answers before taking a deep breath "I'm sorry I freaked out so much. I just. I'm scared things will go bad between you and your parents and that you'll get hurt about it. And then I'm scared you'll resent me for it. And... I thought about it, and... it is *your* choice. And it's not about me at all. It's about you and your parents, and... I'm just some kind of personification of what's wrong between you guys, so,... I shouldn't have reacted the way I did."

"Me neither. I totally understand why you feel the way you do, Kurt, and I'm sorry I overreacted. We both did." He sighs "But you are right, this is between me and my parents and the fact that I'm in love with you doesn't change that."

"I just... I really don't wanna see you get hurt, Blaine."

"Kurt, I know I said things are better now – and they are – but they've been hurting me since I came out to them. I'm... Feeling hurt is the norm and not the exception, ok? I can deal with it and leave our relationship out of it. I'm used to it."

"Ok... I believe you."

"Good, because you're my choice, you know? If I ever had to choose, I'd choose you."

"Blaine-"

"No, I don't mean in a naïve high school sweethearts kind of way. You mean more to me than just that, Kurt and you know it, and even if we break up one day and never even speak to each other again, you've given me things to make everything worth it; even if I knew that was going to happen, I would still choose you."

"I know, I know... It's not about me, it's about love... I think I get that now." Kurt sighs.

"And I know you think it's too early to tell, or something, but... just so we're clear, I'm in this for the long haul."

There's a pause on Kurt's side, but finally Blaine can hear him breathe in and say "Good, we're on the same page, then."

"Yeah?" he sighs and smiles, and then sits on his bed, allowing himself to relax a little "I just talked to my parents. I told them about coming out after the elections, and they seemed understanding enough, and also they promised they'd make an effort whenever I introduced them to... someone special."

"That's amazing, Blaine!"

They talk for a while longer. Blaine tells him about trying to find his footing in this new relationship dynamic and Kurt empathizes, and then Blaine asks him if he wants to come over for the few days the house is empty, which of course earns him a solid yes. Then Kurt practically makes him say yes to another double date with Rachel and Finn ("it can even be somewhere in public, if you want to, because I promise I will respect your choices!"). So the next day he finds himself waiting for the three of them at the entrance to a bowling alley.

Rachel hugs him the moment he's within arms reach and squeals "Hi!" right next to his ear, and then Finn high-fives him and says, "What's up?". Kurt smiles and visibly contains the kiss that feels so painfully natural. Inside they're careful enough that Rachel sits with Blaine, and Finn with Kurt – especially taking into account that there's a lane, in the middle of the alley, eyeing them up way too much to be comfortable.

Which is why Blaine spends most of the afternoon talking with Rachel, arm around her whenever one of them isn't throwing the ball, and coaching her carefully whenever she is.

It's fun, actually. Rachel actually is quite awesome, if a little too intense sometimes. And honest.

"I'm a little surprised we're here, actually."

"You are?" Blaine raises an eyebrow.

"It's my understanding you two were fighting just yesterday. Kurt and I are very alike, and I never speak to Finn for at least three days whenever we find, let alone come on dates."

"Except we talked it out..."

"Oh, you're so young and in love... Whenever Finn and I fight, I don't talk to him for at least three days."

"But what if he's the one who's right?"

"Then it's just enough time for him to miss me enough and overlook the fact that I was wrong." She shrugs.

Blaine laughs "That seems a little insane..."

"It makes perfect sense."

"No, it doesn't. Besides, I don't like it one bit. I hated fighting. I hated not talking to him for a whole day, let alone three!"

"I find it empowering!" she announces proudly.

He shakes his head with a chuckle "You would."

"I'm surprised Kurt doesn't feel the same. We're so alike, I would've sworn he'd adopt my theory."

"Well, I'm glad he didn't."

"It's probably because he's so ridiculously in love with you..." she teases, and Blaine feels the heat gathering over his cheeks as he can't help his smile "I honestly have never seen such gaiety. And I have two gay dads." She laughs "Oh! They could totally be your gay mentors! It would be so cute!"

Blaine can only laugh and nod along.

"And I'm so going to be Kurt's maid of honor, by the way."

"Of course." He nods.

"I could also be your surrogate...?"

He chuckles and says "You could also go throw your ball, cuz you're up."

"Oh!" she gasps "Come help me, dear!"

He smiles and dutifully trails after her, shaping her body to the right position. And when she throws and hits a perfect strike she squeals in delight and hugs him tightly "Thank you, Blaine Warbler!"

"Anytime!" he says cheerfully with a mouthful of her hair.

And then she tightens the hold on him and whispers "I'm so sorry you and Kurt have to hide. You guys are beautiful, and you should just know that."

He pulls back to find her giving him a warm, honest smile, so he takes one of her hands off his shoulder and squeezes it and says "Thank you, Rachel. That means a lot." He returns her smile and hugs her again, briefly, before returning to their seats, while Finn follows a very defensive Kurt to the lane ("I know how to bowl perfectly well, thank you very much, Finn, there's no need for you to accompany me.", "but you just missed two in a row!", "yes, but I know what I did wrong, so I won't do it this time.", "So you missed again.", "Shut up, Finn.>").

xXxXx

Domesticity is amazing.

It's the first time Kurt has actually felt this between them. It's also the first time he's gotten a real chance to.

They cook meals together, and they play soft music while doing so. Kurt even helped Blaine do the laundry (Blaine told his housekeeper, Anita, to take these days off so they would really be alone) because is it possible that the boy is eighteen years old and doesn't know to separate colors and that dark clothes need cold water?! ("I've never needed to do this before!", "There are basic life skills that everyone should know before turning of age, regardless of needing them.", "I could've just looked it up online anytime I wanted!", "As if! You're underestimating your self-esteem, Mr. Self-assured! I *know* you. You'd just put it all in, no questions asked, and proceed to ruin your mother's lovely white cocktail dress with your red socks!", "What's so bad about a baby pink cocktail dress?") So they bicker for a while longer until Blaine shuts Kurt up with a kiss filled with laughter, and Kurt somehow finds it in his heart to relent.

And then there's the moment when they're cooking pasta and Blaine insists that Kurt break the spaghetti in half before they put it in the pan, and honestly! Who even does that?! But Blaine is so adamant about it ("seriously, Kurt, you're gonna spend half of your mealtime just trying to get all the strings wrapped around your fork so you can actually eat it without slurping, cause they're so big. It's just easier!", "Food isn't about being easy!", "What?! And I suppose it's about being an honest to god challenge to eat something without spilling pasta and sauce all over and making an idiot of yourself, then?", "Well, what's wrong with a little challenge?", "It's food, Kurt!", "Yes, but it's also spaghetti, and you never break the spaghetti!", "Says who?!", "Tradition!", "Oh! You're going to invoke tradition, Mr. Gay-Fashionista-That-Believes-In-Anything-Avant-Ga rde?!", "Shut up, Blaine.", "That's so mature, Kurt!") that he finally just takes it from Kurt's hand and breaks it before there's any time to stop it.

Also, when they're playing cards Kurt keeps lying about what he has in his hands, because... well... what's the fun in losing? ("Oh my god, you totally have fours! Stop lying!", "I don't, I promise I don't! I'd never lie to you!", "You're such a liar! You asked me for fours just five minutes ago, you little bastard!", "I did not. You must be mistaken!", "Show me your cards!", "I will not! You cheater!", "I'm a cheater?! Kurt you're the biggest liar in the whole world!", "Hey there, Mr. Let's-Blow-Things-*Completely*-Out-Of-Proportion!", "Hey yourself, Mr. Let's-Just-Weasel-My-Way-Out-Of-Things-And-Change- The-Subject! How've you been?", "I'm great! How're you? How are the wife and kids?", "Seriously, Kurt, give me the fours.") Blaine wins.

Kurt thinks he might actually be in love with their bickering and its tendency to end with either of them just kissing the other and trying not to laugh too much about it. It's not like they'd never bickered before – come on, Kurt is Kurt, and Blaine has somehow, along the way, been brave enough to stop the whole 'let's pretend Kurt is always right even if he's not so he won't get mad' technique. Of course there has been bickering – about songs, about clothes, about reality TV shows, once even about politics. But they've never been this free about it. They've never really had the opportunity to just plant a kiss on the other when they're being particularly unreasonable (or dangerously right), because they're in the middle of the cafeteria, or Warbler practice, or the library, or even just alone with Wes, who, even though he is awesome at making them feel welcome and such, is still a person who probably doesn't appreciate when people start randomly making out in front of them. And besides, he's always liked it. This is just the first time he's actually felt it as an essential part of them as a couple.

This whole thing is truly and wonderfully domestic. And it's **so. Fucking. Amazing.**

Of course three days isn't exactly enough to determine if you can actually live with someone on an everyday basis, but it's a start. And Kurt likes what he sees.

Blaine also likes to take a moment to relax after lunch, so they curl up together on the couch and either watch a movie or read for a little while. Blaine also prefers to have music on when doing chores, rather than watch TV, like Carole does. Blaine also prefers to ready everything for the morning at night, before going into bed, so they do it together. Blaine understands the absolute need to tidy everything up as soon as possible, so the moment they finish eating they clear the table and wash the dishes at once, and in the morning they both make the bed and fold their pajamas (when there is anything to fold, anyway).

Ok. So maybe it's not perfect. Blaine likes to watch the news after dinner, while Kurt just checks them online, whenever, choosing instead to watch Project Runway, or whatever other show he can. And they both prefer to shower in the morning, which means early morning bickering about who goes first, because they also both prefer to (on a *regular* basis), take their showers alone. And apparently Kurt always leaves the toilet seat up, which actually kind of annoys Blaine.

But the domesticity.

The knowledge that while Kurt is in the kitchen baking cookies, because he feels like it, Blaine is in the other room, practicing songs on the piano. The knowledge that he could just call his name, and Blaine would say "Yes?" and Kurt would say "do you want to scrape the cookie dough?" and Blaine would jump

from the piano bench and run straight to the kitchen with a big beam and kiss Kurt soundly and take both bowl and spoon back to the piano, and for the next fifteen minutes some parts of his singing will be mumbled because there would be a spoon hanging from his mouth.

Domesticity, Kurt thinks, is his favorite new thing about them. It makes him believe that they will be just like this two, three, five, ten years from now. That he will still be baking cookies and Blaine will still be playing the piano – or maybe working on his politics. Or that while Kurt is busy completely stressing over new spring collections and impending fashion shows, Blaine will be in the living room, entertaining their two kids so they don't come face to face with the reality that their dad is actually pretty damn crazy when he's stressed out.

It's the fact that it feels so comfortable and so second nature, just as much as Blaine's voice saying "I'm in this for the long haul" over and over again, that keeps him from thinking – it's too soon to fantasize about this.

Kurt thinks that all those people must be right: sometimes you just know what you want. And Kurt wants Blaine. Forever.

He smiles as he runs soft fingers through Blaine's forehead, traces his eyebrows lightly, feels the bridge of his nose with feather light touches. It's morning. It's their last morning together, like this. Kurt will be leaving in two hours, and Blaine will be getting ready for his dad's thing soon as well. He can't bring himself to even so much as move. Blaine looks stunning in this light.

There's just something about this boy... and Kurt knows, he just knows he's found *it*.

He chuckles when Blaine stirs, cracks one eye open and slurs "Heeyy..."

"Hey..."

"Didnwannawakeup..."

"Why not?" he murmurs, shuffling a little closer.

Blaine's hand slips around his waist and pulls him even closer "you're leavin'..."

"Oh... well..."

"Stay..."

"Sure, Blaine." Kurt chuckles with an almost sad smile, and returns Blaine's lazy attempt at an Eskimo kiss

"Do you want me to go make us breakfast? We could eat it in bed..."

"No... Stay."

"I'll even make orange juice. Just for you, my sleeping beauty."

"No." Blaine shakes his head, half burying it in the pillow "let's have sexy times..."

Kurt laughs and then sits up, ruffling Blaine's head before shaking his "That's the least sexy way of referring to sex, Blaine."

"S not..." Blaine purrs "There's 'beast with two backs'... climbing the tree... the mattress Olympics, cleaning the pipes... and my personal favorite, rumpy pumpy." He finishes with a yawn, flipping to lay on his back and looking up to Kurt with a smile.

"Alright." Kurt sighs "I'll give you that."

Blaine just beams, and squirms a little among their mess of sheets and pillows "I love it when you admit I'm right!" he sighs.

"That's not a thing you can say, Blaine."

"Sexy times!" Blaine chuckles, throwing his arms open and moving his legs so that Kurt's sitting between them.

"I'm not sure I want to anymore."

"Come on, Kurt..." He nudges Kurt with his knee "You totally want a piece of this."

"That's not helpful at all."

"Would you prefer the puppy eyes...?" Blaine smirks, before turning his face into the most adorable pout to ever exist.

Kurt slaps his leg lightly "Stop it, you're terrible!"

"Come on, I know you can't resist the eyes..."

"You're horrible!" Kurt gasps before taking both of Blaine's wrists and pinning him completely to the mattress and kissing him before any more obnoxiousness could get out of that mouth. He feels it as Blaine beams into the kiss and moves his leg to wrap around Kurt, and pull him closer.

The kiss doesn't seem to stop, and instead just keeps going, Blaine pulling Kurt's lips between his own, darting his tongue in and out of Kurt's mouth. His legs somehow maneuver Kurt into lying between them, and he can feel Blaine's dick hardening against his hip. Kurt's hold on Blaine's wrists loosens as he sighs, dropping his head to the crook of Blaine's neck, but Blaine's arms stay put, and there's a rush of blood southward when Blaine's voice sounds low and deep, right there in his ear "You know what you should do...?"

"What?" Kurt whispers back, dragging his lips across Blaine's throat.

"Let me tie you up..." he murmurs back, biting Kurt's ear lobe before adding "let me show you it's ok to not be... in control... sometimes..."

Kurt pulls back to look at Blaine, and he finds dark, alluring eyes, and slightly parted luscious lips, and flushed cheeks, and messy curls and "Fuck, Blaine..."

"Please?"

"I... yeah... Of course..." he mumbles before looking frantically around for something to use.

"I'll go get some ties..."

"We'll ruin the ties."

"I'll buy new ones." Blaine shrugs getting up.

"Ok."

"Besides, these are ugly." He smiles, holding up two, indeed, very ugly ties. In the meanwhile Kurt readjusts his position nervously, and when he's nervously fidgeting with his boxer briefs, trying to decide if he should take them off Blaine says "lose them." He looks up to find Blaine smiling and climbing back on the bed.

He loses himself in the kiss Blaine plants on him the moment the briefs are gone, wraps his arms around Blaine and pulls him closer. When Blaine's hands circle all the way back to gently pull Kurt's wrists away from his neck, Kurt's breathing hitches and he feels hopelessly hard. "You sure you want it?" Blaine asks, voice entirely serious "you don't have to, if you don't want to."

"I want to." Kurt nods, almost frantically. It's been suggested. It's all he can think about.

Blaine smiles – smirks – and takes his right hand to the headboard, wrapping the tie loosely around his wrist and then tying it to the post, before coming back to his place, at the center, peppering long, wet kisses all along Kurt's outstretched arm and chest as he does. Blaine seems to get lost kissing and sucking on Kurt's nipples, because it's only when Kurt's back arches a little and he can help burying his free hand on Blaine's curls that the boy's head pulls back and, with a wolfish grin, he takes the hand from his head and gently guides it to the other post of the headboard.

Kurt thinks he might never have been this simultaneously turned on and nervous at the same time, as Blaine sits back and just seems to take in the sight of Kurt's body, inch by inch, taking his long, torturous time.

"Blaine..." Kurt whines.

Blaine meets his eyes and smiles "I'm sorry... I got distracted..."

"Can you please... do something."

"I'm sorry, I thought this was about me showing you what it feels like to give up... control...?" he murmurs as he leans in teasingly close, lips practically touching Kurt's.

"You're just enjoying teasing me..."

"Well yes, that, too." Blaine chuckles before pressing his lips against Kurt's.

The kiss turns heated and desperate very fast, and Kurt finds himself wrapping his legs strongly around Blaine, urging him closer. Kurt wants to bury fingers in Blaine's hair, make him kiss him harder, but instead all he can do is take what Blaine's giving, and that is the start of a tantalizingly slow trail of kiss down his chin, jaw line, throat, shoulder, chest,... And Kurt thanks god his hands are tied because he understands now as Blaine's lips and tongue move to suck kisses on his stomach, he would've just stopped Blaine from giving him a blowjob.

"Oh, my god, oh, my god, oh, my god..." he mutters under his breath when Blaine's mouth is on his inner thigh, dangerously close to his unbearably hard cock "do something, Blaine, do something!"

There's a smile and a chuckle, before the tip of a tongue starts dragging up from the base to the tip, ever so slowly, and then back down, and up again, and it's the biggest torture that Kurt's ever had, until, finally, a hand wraps around the base of his cock and moves, though slowly, a lot firmer, in drawn-out strokes. "Blaine..." he moans brokenly when lips wrap around the head and a tongue, swirls, dipping into his slit and gathering the pre-come there.

And then the whole mouth sinks in, until the lips are pressed against the hand, and both move in fantastic synchrony, Blaine sucking hard.

"Oh, God!" Kurt gasps. There's tongue movement, too, and humming, and sucking, so much sucking, and Kurt's embarrassed by how soon he feels the heat crawling up and screams out "Blaine! I'm gonna come! Blaine! Blaine! I'm-"

So Blaine pulls out with a laugh and, his lips shining bright red, says "Not yet, you're not!"

And then they hear it. The unmistakable sound of feet climbing the stairs. Several pairs of feet.

Blaine's grin disappears in a split second, and the moment they hear what sounds distinctively like a growled out "-fucking faggot!" is when Blaine launches himself towards Kurt's wrists and tries desperately to untie them. He's just managed to release Kurt's right hand when the door flies open to reveal his scarlet faced grandfather.

"What the hell is going on?" he barks, just as Kurt feels a sheet being thrown on top of him, and then the weight of Blaine's body is gone from the bed, and he chances tearing his eyes away from the furious old man to see Blaine grabbing a pair of briefs – Kurt's, he registers dumbly – and hastily pulling them on, just

as the Blaine's parents arrive at the door, too. That's when Kurt's instinct kicks in and he tries to untie his other hand while the panic of being shouted at by that fucking old man starts making his eyes burn and water. "WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?" He screams, walking up to Blaine's space, and grabbing his arm with bruising force "WHAT ARE YOU DOING? FUCKING ANOTHER BOY?!"

Blaine shrinks in his grandfather's hands, clenches his jaw and screws his eyes, pulls his shoulders up, tries to make himself small, tries to give him less of himself to hit. And when the old man's hand connects with Blaine's shoulder in a harsh shove (YOU FUCKING? HUH? YOU TAKING IT UP THE ASS?!) Kurt doesn't even think before he's out of the bed and pulling him away from Blaine.

"Let go of him!" he groans, as he strains the muscles in his arms, because as old as the man is, he's somehow strong. Maybe it's all the fury.

"You fucking faggots! In my house!"

"It's not your house!" Blaine growls back "Get away, Kurt! Drive home!" he adds before turning back to his grandfather "Let go of me! Go away!"

There's a woman at Kurt's back now. Grabbing his arms, sharp nails digging into his skin, scratching, probably drawing blood, as she tries to pry Kurt away from her husband("You'll hurt him!" she says "You'll hurt him!" in her attempt at protecting the old man, but *he* will hurt Blaine and Kurt could never let that happen, no matter what). Kurt doesn't let go and looks frantically around for help, but Blaine's parents are just standing there, looking at the whole thing without doing a thing, eyes wide open and slacking jaws, pale faces and empty hands. Another shove to Blaine (You sucking cock, you faggot? Huh, you sucking cock!). He wants to slap them. "Do something!" he screams at them "He's your son!" Still nothing. A punch to Blaine's stomach. Why won't Blaine fight back? Please fight back! A punch to the chest and loud cough.

Kurt is on autopilot – he doesn't think, he just sees red. He shoves the woman away, and barrels his body between the two, Blaine actually tripping and crashing against his dresser. "STOP IT!" Kurt screams, trying not to lose himself worrying if Blaine's all right, and focusing on the man in front of him. And then the man actually stops. For a moment Kurt thinks he's managed to get him to come to his senses, to see what he's doing. But then the man gasps, eyes wide open, "You! *You!*" he takes a step further, and Kurt barely has time to register anything except the pure disgust on his face, before and there's a knee to his groin, and he feels the hot flash of pain shoot through him, tears burning in his eyes and voice breaking with force of his scream as he doubles over in pain.

"You fucking fairy!"

A hand is clutching his hair too tight and the pain is sharp but it's nothing compared to the hell between his legs – it's torture, it's nothing like the rom coms, it's nothing like the accidental shove, or the ball against it in P.E., it's nothing like Kurt's ever felt before, and it completely takes his breath away. "YOU FUCKING CUNT!" the man snarls, and Kurt can hear the sounds of Blaine getting up, hears the shuffling of him jumping towards them, can feel his hands grabbing Kurt's arm, trying to pull him back, pull him out of reach, but there's scuffling and sudden voices that were infuriatingly silent just seconds ago, and Blaine's hand is gone, but his voice is louder than ever "LET ME GO! LET ME GO! GET AWAY FROM KURT! LET ME GO!" while another, too weak, too pathetic says "dad, let the kid go...! Blaine stop fighting!"

Kurt's squirming to get the old man's hands off of him, his own hands are stronger and faster than the man's, but there are tears of pain in his eyes so he can't see, and his legs are shaking, barely holding him up... He's managed to pry one hand off him but suddenly there are nails digging into him again, as he tries to twist arms and wrists ("let go of him!" urges a frail woman's voice – the clutch of her fingers, however, doesn't feel frail at all "You're hurting him!"),

"GET AWAY FROM HIM! KURT! GET OFF ME! STOP IT!"

There's pain... in his groin, always in his groin. But also in his cheekbone, quick and sudden and he can't even keep himself from tumbling against the wall, barely able to clutch to it and not crash against the unforgiving hardwood floor. "Infecting my family with your diseases." The old man snarls, and Kurt doesn't even need to look to know the man is pulling his hand back – "STOP IT! STOP IT! PLEASE!" – and when the blow doesn't come and he looks to find Blaine's mom holding his wrist and shaking her head and saying "That's enough, John!"

The man doesn't take his eyes away from Kurt as he grunts "Should just shove a bullet up your ass, since you love that so much." And then Kurt feels the warm sickly feeling of spit hitting his face.

"Get away from him!" Blaine snarls, and the anger in his voice breaks Kurt's stupor and he looks to find the boy struggling against a strong hold, his face red with rage as angry tears streak down his cheeks.

There's something tossed on him. He flinches, but it's light and soft. It's clothes. "Get out." the voice hisses.

"No..." he says, regretting how his voice comes out breathless and strangled. He wipes his face with a shirt sleeve "Not without Blaine..." he adds, trying to look taller, stronger and fiercer than he feels.

"Blaine has a show to perform. Leave."

Kurt stands up shakily and tries to look the man in the eye as fiercely as he can as he pronounces "No."

A fist connects violently with his jaw. Pain sears through him and he finds himself clutching the wall for support. "I said no." he reiterates, breathless.

"Please, Kurt, please, just go, just go, please, I love you so much, just go – please!"

"Dad, stop." Blaine's father says, letting go of his son and taking a hold of his own father's wrist "That's enough, dad." He says before turning to Kurt and, his face as cold as ice, announcing, "You need to leave, Kurt. Blaine won't get hurt. But you need to leave. This is our family's business. Just go."

Kurt looks to Blaine and finds pleading, tearful eyes, finds bruised arms hanging exhausted next to him, finds a small trembling body, finds him shaking his head and pleading "Go... please... just go..."

"I can't leave you." He says simply. Ignores the grunt, the shuffle of feet as Blaine's dad holds back another attack.

"Please, please, Kurt. I can't see you get hurt." Blaine pleads "I'll... come find you... as soon as I can. Please just go."

There's a harsh hand grabbing Kurt's arm, and it's Blaine's father trying to direct him towards the door. Kurt flinches in pain – there are deep scratches on his arms "You need to go. This is not the time or the place."

"I..." he can't leave Blaine, he can't...

"Kurt... please... if you love me you'll go."

Kurt goes.

Chapter Twenty-Two

"Get dressed, Blaine. Fix your hair. We need to leave." His dad says in quick bullet-points. Blaine doesn't move. He's frozen. It seems like the whole room is frozen. The silence is deafening and the tension could be cut with a knife. His dad starts towards the bedroom door before pausing and adding "And brush your teeth."

xXxXx

Sometimes it's the smallest and most absurd things that make everything collapse on top of you – that make you suddenly grasp the full weight of whatever just happened. Kurt starts heaving and sobbing the moment he notices he's standing stark naked on a front porch.

xXxXx

It takes his mother yanking his wardrobe open, pulling out his tux and shoving it against his hands to get Blaine moving. He gets ready on autopilot. He doesn't brush his teeth. They hit Kurt.

xXxXx

"I'm taking you to the hospital! And I'm calling the police!"

"Dad, please, don't!"

"Kurt! This is not ok!"

xXxXx

The drive is silent. There's an object dropped on his lap. "Your cell phone was in the kitchen." He looks at it, not that interested. There are 5 missed calls from his parents, three unread texts.

22.33 pm:

Blaine, you're not picking up your phone. Your father forgot his cufflinks and his shoes. Can you bring them with you tomorrow? – Mom

08.06 am:

Blaine, we need to know if you'll bring them! Do you even know which to bring?! – Mom

11:46 am:

We're coming over, the plane landed earlier than expected anyway. See you in twenty. – Mom

He closes the texts and starts dialing Kurt's number but the cell phone is yanked out of his hand. "You'll get it back after tonight." His dad says before taking his own phone to his ear and in a matter of seconds the words damage control and Hummels are said much too often.

They hit Kurt.

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He presses the icepack to his face, while Carole works fast with the things in her first aid kit. "You don't need stitches, I think."

"Of course I don't." Kurt says "It's just a cut." He shoots his dad a glare. It had taken begging and Carole's agreement to keep Burt from dragging Kurt to the ER. But there had been detailed photographs of his face and his arms for the police, which Kurt hadn't yet managed to talk Burt out of.

"You might be concussed."

"I took a punch to the face, I didn't bang my head." Kurt says.

"I'm still pressing charges, Kurt."

"You can't." Kurt sighs again, feeling the prick of tears coming back, and dropping the ice altogether, much to Carole's annoyance "Please dad... That'll make everything worse... If you press charges everyone will know. And it's not even just the relationship, it's assault. The campaign will be over... they'll... I don't know... Dad... We can't do that to Blaine."

"And Blaine needs to get out of that house!" Burt says at once "This is not up for discussion, Kurt. A grown man hit you. He split your face open."

"It's just a cut!" he insists, pleadingly, ignoring the burn that comes with every facial movement whenever his skin is stretched open "I'll be fine! Blaine won't!"

"I'm sorry, Kurt, but Blaine shouldn't even be in that house, and as much as I love that kid and I want him to have a happy home, too, you're my son, and I cannot stand by this." Burt says strongly, while Carole pulls Kurt's face into her hands and tells him to stop moving while she dabs the cut with disinfectant "That man assaulted you out of hate – he committed a hate crime against a minor – against my *son*!" he stresses, before sighing and taking a deep breath. He adds in a softer tone "And the world needs to know that is not a healthy environment for Blaine. I don't care about that joke of a campaign right now, there are two children involved and justice needs to be made."

"It wasn't even his parents..." Kurt says lamely, even if he knows it isn't true. They're just as guilty.

"They still stood by and did nothing."

"But Blaine's eighteen." Kurt pleads "He won't... he'll... he'll have nowhere to go... he'll lose his parents. He'll lose any shot he's ever had at building a relationship with them."

Burt kneels in front Kurt as Carole steps away to dispose of the used gauze, and takes his hands "Kurt, I think that's going to happen, anyway." He smiles sadly "The boy loves you like you're his own personal sun, and he's just watched you take a punch to the face while they did nothing to stop it. I'm pretty sure he'd want me to press charges."

"But..."

"And as far as having nowhere to go... that's not even remotely true. We love him here, he's always welcome. And you should know that by now."

"I just... I never... I never wanted this..."

"No one did, Kurt, sometimes things just are this bad."

"Please, dad, please... don't make them worse."

"I can't, Kurt..."

"Then wait." He pleads "At least wait until I've talked to Blaine. Let me be the one to tell him."

There is a silence, in which Burt just looks at Kurt with searching, saddened eyes before he breathes out slow and long and nods "Alright. I'll wait until tonight."

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"I'll need you to be sociable tonight." His dad says as they step out of the car, the driver holding the door open and keeping his face worthy of a poker world series.

"I'm not talking to any of you."

"Blaine, let's not do this right now." His mom sighs, while his dad says "We're all adults here."

"You hit Kurt." He snarls at his grandfather, who scoffs "And you did nothing." He turns towards his parents "Don't talk to me about being an adult. Don't talk to me at all." And when his grandfather takes his elbow to push him forward he yanks it away and growls "And do *not* touch me."

They hit Kurt.

There had been the tell tale signs of bruising on his cheekbone, blood trailing down his face from the cut – his granddad had been wearing his class ring. There had been angry red marks on his arms stretching inches by inches. There had been tears of pain.

They hit Kurt.

The multitude of people around Blaine does nothing to soothe his nerves. The men in black suits and bowties, coming up to shake his hand and congratulate him on his dad, do absolutely nothing to soothe his nerves. The women in cocktail dresses, hairspray helmets and fake tans that gush about how handsome he is, how much like his father he is, do absolutely nothing to soothe his nerves. The girls with dashing smiles and batting eyelashes flirting with him do absolutely nothing to soothe his nerves.

Everywhere he looks all he sees is Kurt doubling over, clutching at his own face in pain. It's the worst thing Blaine's ever seen in his life. His family did that to him. Blaine's family did that to Kurt.

And yet, he mingles and mingles and mingles, he smiles and talks and then smiles some more. He plays his part. He plays it to perfection. Sometimes his parents come up to stand next to him, join his conversations, and he doesn't even blink. There might be an Oscar somewhere in the back of the room for him.

But there's a voice inside his head. Each time he catches sight of his grandfather, casually talking to whatever person, champagne flute in his hand – in his left hand, because his right one is by his side, flexing every two minutes – the voice grows a little louder. Each time he catches his father, listening to whomever's trying to keep his attention, the voice grows louder. Each time he sees his mother, standing by his father's side, hand wrapped around his elbow, nodding happily along, the voice grows louder. Each time he sees his grandmother casually giggling with a pair of girlfriends, her long, carefully manicured fingernails scratching her chin, the voice grows louder.

They promised they would try. They promised they would be better parents. They promised they would understand that Blaine has his life and needs to live it. ("Blaine, bud, it's time to get on the stage") They promised they would be welcoming, ("huh?") they promised they would at least make an effort to. They promised a lot of things. ("It's time for your performance.") They promised this, not even a week ago.

The voice isn't even a whisper anymore.

And yet they stood by. ("Don't forget to chat them up a little between songs! Your dad's counting on you, bud.") They watched it happen, like it didn't even mean anything to them. They watched it happen like the love of Blaine's life hadn't just had his breath knocked out of him. They watched it happen like that wasn't their son screaming for them to make it stop.

The voice is clear as day.

They didn't just stand by. ("Everyone's so excited about your show! This is gonna be great, bud!") They held him back. They kept him away from Kurt, away from helping, away from pulling that man off of him, away from making sure Kurt was safe. ("Just smile a little more; you're looking a little pale.") They trapped him and made him watch it.

The voice is loud.

And they let him get hurt, too. Before Kurt. Before the real mess started. Blaine remembers. Blaine remembers his heart hammering out of his chest. He remembers the shoves against his shoulders, hard

and unforgiving. ("Now, go make your dad proud, kid!") He remembers the bark next to his ear, deafening, making his skin crawl with fear and humiliation. He remembers the blow to his stomach. He remembers the blow to his chest. He remembers that it was Kurt who pushed him away, not them. Never them.

The voice is screaming.

He remembers being fourteen and scared. He remembers hard eyes and thin, pursed lips. He remembers tension and disappointment. ("Good night.")

He remembers being sixteen and feeling alone. ("My name's Blaine Anderson, as I'm sure you all know.") He remembers distant and arctic cold. He remembers single words and never a smile.

He remembers being eighteen and needing support. ("So, we're all here to celebrate my dad, right?") He remembers words and abuse thrown at him. He remembers silence from them. He remembers static from them. He remembers nothing from them.

He remembers everything. He feels the fire of his own disappointment at them erupt in his chest. ("So, I guess this one's for you dad, good luck with everything!") He feels the fire of unfairness and anger and everything he's ever felt all these years all at once. He feels the burn of pain, inside and out. He feels the burn of never getting the attention he needs.

The voice is roaring.

The piano is somehow soft, though. For all the burning he feels inside himself, the piano is still soft. The room has fallen quiet. At least the first song should be respected, right? At least that one will get to be listened to carefully. At least that one will get attention.

They don't notice as Blaine's fingers falter for a split second. They don't know better, and they don't notice when the melody changes. When everything changes.

But they do notice when his voice rings through the whole room, over every table, every dancing duo, every group of whispering heads, every waiter handing out fourth and fifth and sixth glasses of champagne. Were it not for the music you could hear a pin drop.

Daddy, I'm not gonna tell you that I'm sorry,

But there ain't nothing you can do to change my mind.

I'm not here to know the things I cannot do,

We've seen the outcome of the Boys Who Didn't Fly.

There are so many different ways he would've preferred things to happen. There are so many things he wishes they would have noticed. Things they should've seen. Things he shouldn't have struggled to show them at all. But mostly he just needed them to see him, and what more should he have done?! In how many other ways and directions should he have bent and stretched himself, just so they could see him, know him, love *him*? Not an idea of him and not an idea of love. Love him.

That road outside that you've been taking home forever,

That'll be same road that I'll take when I depart.

Those charcoal veins that hold this chosen land together

May twist & turn but somewhere deep there is a heart.

There had been so many moments when this could've happened. There had been so many moments when the fire inside Blaine's chest could've just become too hot to bear. An explosion was bound to happen. They should've known. Anyone else would've known. If they just paid attention, they would've known better. He'd told them so. He'd warned them. They just didn't listen. They never listen.

Playing with fire

You know you're gonna hurt somebody tonight

And you're out on the wire

You know we're playing with fire

Punches, tears and screams aren't even the worst of it. They're not the wood feeding the fire – they're just the spark that lit it. It's year after year of impersonal birthday parties, it's year after year of busting his ass to be the perfect son and never once getting even a smile in recognition, it's year after year of watching

their adoration of Cooper, their worshipping of his brother, always on the sidelines, always feeling behind. The wood feeding the fire is the realization that those people are never going to be his family, and the realization that now – now it's too late, anyway. Now he doesn't want them to be.

Perhaps, this calling is the channel of invention,

I will not blush if others see it as a crime.

However dangerous the road, however distant,

These things won't compromise the will of the design.

And why would he? What have they ever done to make his life easier or better? Not out of propriety or social convention, but purely and truly out of love? Not because he asked, but because they offered? Why would he want someone in his life that has to *try* to love him for who is? Someone who was supposed to have done so from the very beginning, unconditionally? Why would he even want them to be there now if he's learned to be by himself and it's so much safer? Why would he ever want them in his life if the moment he starts trusting them again is the moment they hurt him the worst? Why would he want someone in his life if they're just going to disappoint him time after time? If they're never, ever going to be worth the trouble? Why would he if he's just fine by himself? If it felt like he was never meant to be part of that family – if they make him feel like that – than why should he?

Ten thousand Demons hammer down with every footstep,

Ten thousand Angels rush the wind against my back.

This church of mine may not be recognized by steeple,

But that does not mean that I will walk without a God.

All the promises Blaine's made to himself since he was fourteen – hell, since he was old enough to know what a promise was – cast a light of catharsis over him. For every stab of pain he feels, from knowing they will never be a family and never have been, he feels his heart swell with relief from knowing it's not his fault. It's not ever his fault. It's never going to be the fault of the small five-year-old who prefers to watch *The Little Mermaid* rather than *Tarzan*. It's never going to be the fault of the ten year old who's afraid to say he would much rather go to dance class than soccer practice, so he doesn't and instead goes to soccer

until he convinces himself that he likes it, because daddy likes it. It's never going to be the fault of the thirteen year old that doesn't really find Ashley D. all that pretty. It's never going to be the fault of the fifteen-year-old boy with a crush on another boy who thinks it's actually ok to share his feelings. But it would be the fault of the eighteen year old boy who stood by and let his parents treat him like his feelings, his heart, and his soul didn't matter. Because that boy knows better than to insist on fixing something that he didn't break in the first place.

Rollin' River of Truth, can you spare me a sip?

The holy fountain of youth has been reduced to a drip.

But I got this burning belief in salvation in love

This notion may be naive, but when push comes to shove

I will till this ground

There are other people; there are other families. He knows how cliché it is to say that you choose your own family, but it's cliché for a reason – it's true. Blaine is done – absolutely done with trying to mold himself to something he's not for the benefit of others. He knows that outside of this stifling room there are people who love him for who he is, who would never force him to be something else, who only ever want to see him grow up, evolve, learn and wise up – but never, ever lie to himself, cut pieces off of his soul, mutilate who he is, for some misguided notion of right or wrong. Certainly not for some disgustingly flexible political ideals that only ever bend towards the side of money and power, but never towards love, for conformity, because evolution requires effort. He knows that there are people who love him and people who will love him and those are, and will be his family.

You know you're gonna hurt somebody tonight

Oh woah oh woah woah

(out on the wire)

It feels like his heart is bleeding. He looks at his parents, frozen in shock. He sees the way every word registers with them. He knows this is his goodbye. It feels like all of his 18 years of disappointment are

seeping through every one of his pores, it feels like he's bleeding. It's both painful and relieving. And yet, it is exactly what Blaine has ever needed.

I might not get there.

This little town, this little house,

They seem to be leaning in the wrong direction

I'm not afraid of you no more.

Not three hours ago he would've frozen – he *had* frozen. He'd stood there in shock – let them yell, let them bark, let them hit him. But not now. No. Now Blaine Anderson is a man. A man who will stand up for himself. A man who will not let himself be talked down to or belittled, who will not let himself be treated any other way less than what he deserves. A man who respects himself and expects others to do so, too. A man who knows when it's time to stop giving second, third and fourth chances. A man who knows how to say no.

Playing with fire

You know you're gonna hurt somebody tonight

And you're out on the wire

You know we're playing with fire

For months he'd thought he was the one playing with fire, all of that time he thought he'd be the one getting burned. But now he understands that was never true. He was never the one who would end up burnt in a careless juggle. He's alight in flames, but not the way he thought he would be. He sees now- he is the flame itself. He's alight with empowerment, and they never even knew it'd be possible. Now his father is burning, and there is not enough water in the world to save him. He just should never have played with fire.

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Kurt can hear Burt's voice from the study. It's loud and it's angry. He bites back tears of fear because his dad's just had a heart attack and he's pretty sure this isn't helping. Carole is sitting on the floor, next to the door, with her back against the wall, clutching her hair. She's given up on knocking, on trying to get Burt off the phone. Finn is staring at his feet as he sits next to Kurt on the couch. His knuckles are white.

Between not having heard from Blaine in *hours* and worrying about when his father's voice is gonna stop booming through the house, the silence followed by the hard thump of a body crashing against a carpet, Kurt's pack of ice has been absorbing tears more than it has been numbing his pain.

Then, completely unexpectedly, Finn jolts off of the couch, pushes the TV console away from the wall and just yanks out the telephone cables.

"I WILL NOT- Hello? HELLO? WHO? – THE..." The door to the study is yanked open and a red faced Burt comes out holding a dead phone in his hand "What's going on?!"

"You need to stop." Finn says "You're working yourself up and you're still sick, it needs to stop."

"They were bribing us!" Burt snarls, as if that makes everything else go away. "They were trying to keep us quiet about this!"

"You're making everything worse!" Finn responds with impressive strength in his voice "Look at Kurt! Tell me if he looks alright to you?! Look at your wife? Look at me! Tell me if we look alright to you?! We're worrying ourselves sick over here, while you go and give your best shot at having another heart attack- just stop! Deal with it tomorrow; deal with it next week... I don't care if they're offering the moon or threatening to bomb our house! It's not that hard to say no and *hang up* the phone!"

"I don't think you can talk to –"

Kurt's cell phone starts ringing.

"It's Blaine." He gasps "It's Blaine!"

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The whole room is staring at him. There are dozens of cameras and iPhones raised and recording. He's just standing there in the middle of the stage, looking at them looking at him. They are expecting him to do

something, to say something. At this point the only thing left to say would've been "I'm gay, screw all of you." But he doesn't. He gets up, tries to make his legs feel stronger than jelly, tries to make his back straight, and tries to make himself tall and his stomach stop knotting up.

With a glare he walks off of the stage and up to his father. Holding out his hands he simply says "Phone."

Perhaps it's the complete shock going through him, but John Anderson actually puts his hand in his pocket and takes out Blaine's cell phone, handing it over.

Blaine pockets it and says "Bye." Before turning and leaving he hears the gasps, the whispers, the cameras following him, the shutters of photographs being taken, the small nervous giggles, the chair of his grandfather scraping and his voice, followed by his mother's voice making that stop, too. He doesn't look back to see her trying too little, too late. Because she's not stopping *Blaine*. She's not stopping her *son* from leaving. She never has.

It's only when he's closed the door to the garage that he allows his legs to give out, his lungs to cry out, his eyes to shut and his body to shake so completely it might very well be in danger of breaking.

He fumbles with his cell phone, letting it fall twice before he actually manages to dial the number and press it close to his ear.

"Kurt?"

"Blaine!"

"Kurt, oh my God, Kurt, I need you, I need you right now, I need you."

"Blaine! What happened?!"

"I... Shit Kurt... I just... I think... I think I just... came out."

"What?!"

"Publicly! I came out, and I... Kurt, I can't go back... to them! I can't – they're not – you are – I'm-"

"Blaine, Blaine, shhhh... take a deep breath, I'm gonna be there as soon as I can to pick you up."

He texts the address to the diner just across the street with shaky hands and then waits. Paces around the parking lot alternating between panic, sadness, and relief. Has to sit down and then get back up again every three minutes. Has to bury his face in his hands to muffle his sobs, and has to clutch his stomach to keep from hurting too much when he laughs. He ignores the looks from passers-by, people who can't connect his expensive, tailored tux to his barely together hair, his red eyes, and the near constant stream of tears on his face. People who weren't in that building, in the room with him, who don't know he's just officially cut ties with his family – who don't know what it's like to have eighteen years of existence explode like that.

He sees the car arrive, the big black Navigator that looks so amazingly safe and familiar right now, so he takes off sprinting towards it, just as the door swings open and Kurt emerges, looking around, finding Blaine almost at once.

They crash into each other as if they wanted to become one single body, one single organism. "Kurt, Kurt, Kurt, Kurt..." Blaine mutters, burying his face in the crook of Kurt's neck and taking deep shuddering breaths.

"Shhh..." Kurt's hand cradles the back of his head, smooths over his hair "Shhh, baby, it's alright, it's ok, shhh..."

"I can't... I can't go back, Kurt. I'm gone, I don't... I can't look at them!" he sobs into Kurt's shoulder "Not after... Not after... I can't, I just can't."

"Of course, shhh, you don't have to." Kurt coos "No one will ever make you... If you don't want..."

"I don't... I really don't...!"

"You can come home with me..." Kurt squeezes a little more "And then we'll figure everything out..."

"I'd like that..." Blaine nods into Kurt's shoulder, readjusting his hold around Kurt's waist "I love you so much."

"I love you too, baby." Kurt whispers right next to his ear, burying his nose in Blaine's hair and inhaling deeply "I love you, too, and everything will be alright."

Blaine pulls back to find Kurt's eyes – wipes away the tears pooling on his lashes so he can actually see Kurt and gives him a hopeful smile "You promise?"

Kurt chuckles, unwraps his right arm from around Blaine and holds it up between them, pinky outstretched "Pinky promise."

Blaine lets out a choked giggle before wrapping his pinkie around Kurt's and letting his forehead rest against Kurt, never once looking away from those pools of warmth, understanding and love. "It's going to be alright" he murmurs, either completely missing or completely ignoring the sound of a camera shutter.

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They never let go of each other's hand, not when he's driving them back home, not when they're walking inside, not when Carole's flinging herself at Blaine, hugging him so tightly Kurt thinks he might actually suffocate.

He begs his dad to just let them be for the night – that anything else can wait till morning - and he's surprised when he doesn't even need to insist. Burt kisses both of their foreheads, squeezes Blaine's shoulder and tells him "You're a good kid, Blaine, don't ever think otherwise. I'm real proud of you."

Kurt notices the way Blaine's throat bobs and his eyes blink a little faster. He squeezes his hand and with one last thankful smile towards his dad, he pulls Blaine towards the bedroom. They lay down on the bed, and Kurt carefully strips Blaine of his shirt and dress pants, takes off his own clothes, and climbs under the covers, pulling the other boy towards himself. Blaine's head rests against his chest.

He feels his tears as they fall on his skin, and he runs soothing hands through Blaine's back and hair. "Maybe you should try to sleep..."

"Can't..." Blaine mumbles, holding Kurt tighter.

Kurt smiles sadly, and presses a soft, lingering kiss to Blaine's forehead before sliding down the bed until he's face to face with Blaine, using one arm as a cushion, bent at the elbow, while the other stretches so his hand can wander from Blaine's arm to his cheek and stay there. He finds red rimmed, sorrowful eyes and tear stained cheeks.

"Do you regret it?"

"No." Blaine says at once.

"Not anything?" Kurt insists, because he doesn't just mean tonight.

"No." Blaine repeats "Nothing. Never."

Kurt smiles, runs his thumb through the tear tracks "Good. You shouldn't."

"I'm happy." Blaine says, which makes Kurt chuckle and Blaine laughs, too and rolls his eyes, fresh tears dropping because of the movement "I mean it. I am. I'm sad that... that it's come to this, and I'm really hurt about it. But I'm happy too. I feel like... I'm... free." Blaine presses his lips together and frowns a little before adding "I think for the first time in my life... I am... completely free to be whoever I want to be." He gives a hopeful, tearful smile and shrugs "It just really hurts that it has to come with giving up on my parents..."

Kurt smiles and nods, shuffles closer and nudges their noses together. He presses their lips in a soft kiss before he pulls back "Close your eyes." He sighs, softly moving his hand over Blaine's eyelids, and then caressing the bridge of his nose repeatedly with a feather light fingertip, he sings.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night

Take these broken wings and learn to fly

All your life

You were only waiting for this moment to arise

The small smile that graces Blaine lips as Kurt starts to sing says everything about them that Kurt would ever need to know. The fact that, however small it is, it's still one of the truest smiles he has ever seen, not just on this boy, but the whole world... He knows that Blaine knows how important this is for him. He knows Blaine isn't taking this for granted, he knows that smile means Blaine is grateful most of all, not just for the song – that means so much to Kurt that he could never even contemplate giving it to anyone else at this moment – but for them as well. For all they've been through. He knows now that Blaine was right, that he kept true to his word. Blaine knew they would be alright, that whatever problems were to come, they would face them together. Kurt knows now he was afraid for nothing. Blaine is nothing if not true.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night

Take these sunken eyes and learn to see

All your life

You were only waiting for this moment to be free

What else are you ever going to when someone like Blaine walks in to your life except love him unconditionally and irrevocably? There is nothing else left for Kurt to do then fall helplessly in love with him. Helplessly... Like Kurt would ever need help because of loving Blaine. No. His heart was so completely safe in Blaine's hand that the word 'helplessly' could never even come close to scaring him. The same way he knew Blaine's was safe in his. They were completely raw and open in each other's hands and yet... nothing had ever felt so right, so peaceful, so easy... so safe.

Blackbird fly, blackbird fly

Into the light of the dark black night

And liberating. Nothing had ever felt so liberating. Loving Blaine was like being given wings and the highest cliff to jump off from – all the adrenaline of jumping and the safe knowledge of a perfect landing on the bright side of life.

Blackbird fly, blackbird fly

Into the light of the dark black night

Nothing could ever feel like this. It had to be Blaine. No one else could have ever taught Kurt so much about love and life and living without even meaning to, without even the smallest presumption of being able to. They're just meant to be, and no one can take that away from them. They're completely and overwhelmingly free to love each other now.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night

Take these broken wings and learn to fly

All your life

You were only waiting for this moment to arise

You were only waiting for this moment to arise

You were only waiting for this moment to arise

He finishes with a long sigh and leans in for a kiss, feels Blaine's hand curling around his neck and pulling him closer. He pulls away to murmur against those soft lips "I don't think I could ever love anyone like I love you." Blaine nods fiercely and pulls him in for another kiss; seeming completely lost in Kurt's arms "I don't even think I'd know how."

"Then don't..." Blaine says simply.

"Ok..." Kurt half laughs at how easy everything feels with Blaine.

He lets Blaine wrap his arms around him, lets Blaine cover himself with Kurt's body and feels as they both start to ease into sleep – their breathing coming together, deep and slow. That night Kurt dreams of clear open skies.

He wakes up with his head on Blaine's chest, ear pressed against the steady thump of his heart, and strong arms holding him. He lets his fingers play idly with the scarce hair on Blaine's chest, a small nervous smile playing at his lips, before he shifts enough to look at him and allow the beauty before him to take his breath away, like always. He can't help wondering if it's going to be like this forever.

Blaine stirs awake when Kurt can't help running careful fingers through the soft planes of his face. "Hey..."

He blinks his eyes open before rubbing a hand over his face and croaking out "Hey."

"How do you feel?"

"Sore." He half shrugs with a yawn "Like I should just stay in this bed forever. With you, of course."

Kurt smiles "I think my dad needs to talk with us."

"I guess."

"And then you should call Wes."

Blaine's eyes fly open and he sits up at once, searching through his discarded clothes until there's a cell phone on his hand "Shit... he called me like ten times, shit." He presses it to his ear at once "I'll be right back..." he kisses Kurt's head hastily as he makes a quick exit towards the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

Kurt sighs and smiles a little sadly to himself before climbing out of bed. He pulls a t-shirt and some pants on and goes into the kitchen for breakfast. Carole is finishing filling a glass of water and looks up, surprised "Oh, Kurt! You're awake! Good!" she says, "you should come to your father's office. There's something you need to see. And Blaine, too... is he awake?"

"He's just talking to a friend. He'll be right out."

"Ok, then come on."

He follows a nervous Carole and finds his father bent over his laptop, frowning "Kurt!" he says as he notices him "It's all over the news." He explains, turning the laptop towards Kurt, and there's a picture of him and Blaine with their foreheads pressed together, staring lovingly at each other, pinkies linked. He jumps towards it and starts scrolling – there are pictures of Blaine on a piano, there are links to a video, he opens it. He chokes on himself when he recognizes the song; so that's what Blaine meant when he said he'd come out.

He's seen Blaine perform many times and he's even seen Blaine pour his feelings out in song on a handful of occasions, but... this is... this is the true definition of singing his heart out. This is ripping your body open and laying your soul bare for everyone to see. This is expression at its most.

And this is... this is a fire. A burning fire of anger and passion and hurt. He wants to go back in time and crash through that party and hold Blaine in his arms and never let him feel like that again. He wants to shield him from ever looking that distraught. But he also knows that it was probably necessary for Blaine to have that. That one moment of pure and complete, honest liberation.

"What's that?" Blaine's voice pulls them all out of their stupor.

"It's... huh... it's you." Kurt stutters "there are... videos... and photos of last night... online."

"I know." Blaine nods and waves his cell phone as explanation "So everyone knows..." he sighs and shrugs "No more hiding." He says with a smile. It's tight and nervous.

"Blaine, I'm going to press charges against your grandfather." Burt says, without so much as an introduction. Blaine looks at him, he seems surprised at first but then he blinks and he nods.

"Good." He says "You should."

"It'll involve... huh... you know you'll have to testify against him, right?"

Blaine nods. "Yes."

"And you're willing?"

"He's not my family. Not anymore." He says with rehearsed simplicity. He looks so stoic; it's such a strange look on him. Kurt doesn't like it at all. He reaches out and takes his hand, watches as the coldness in his eyes warms a little.

"What did Wes say?"

"Oh... He just... He just wanted to know how I was, and what happened." He gives Kurt a small smile before adding "And... suggested we go out for a week, up to Boston... go apartment hunting."

"Oh, that's actually a good idea!" Kurt enthuses.

"I... huh... I think... I should put... Harvard on hold." Blaine says, mostly to himself.

"What? Why?"

"I... the trust fund..."

"You have it secured. You're over eighteen now... They can't-"

"I don't want it. I don't want their money. I don't want anything from them." Blaine says "but without it... I... I need to look into student loans, and I need to get a job and start saving money, and maybe... maybe next year, I'll be able to have a solid ground to... I could go with you to New York next year, and... you'd have your classes and I'd get a job, save some mone-"

"That's completely idiotic, Blaine." Burt interrupts "You're not going to compromise your future on a matter of pride that doesn't matt-"

"It matters." Blaine says at once "It matters to me."

"I..."

"Blaine..." Kurt sighs, but Blaine just shakes his head and walks out of the room.

Kurt looks pleadingly at Burt and Carole, but they just stare back for a second. Burt sighs and rubs his nose before breathing deep "We'll think of something, Kurt, don't worry. I'm not gonna let that kid throw his future away."

"Thank you!" Kurt throws his arms around Burt, kisses his cheeks and runs out after Blaine.

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Kurt finds him sitting next to his bedroom window. Blaine imagines the whole thing looks strangely dramatic- his gazing out the window in backlight against the bright morning sun. The poetry of it all would be enough to amuse him any other time. Kurt approaches, kneels in front of him, and puts his hands up on Blaine's lap, open in a silent plea.

Blaine sighs and takes them with a tight smile.

"You're being unreasonable." He says softly.

He doesn't know, Blaine reminds himself, he doesn't know about the phone call.

Blaine reinforces his smile but shakes his head "I'm really not."

You see, there was a phone call. After he called Wes, there was another phone call.

"Talk to me about it?"

It had been short. ('Blaine, where are you?! We're worried.', 'I'm at Kurt's.', 'Oh... When will you come home?', 'Do you want me to come home?', 'I... Well... I... Yes. Of course.', 'Does dad want me home?', 'I... Well... he's upset.', 'Right', 'Blaine. He's got a right to be upset. This is... his campaign...', 'Between me or his campaign, what's his choice?', 'I... Don't be like that, Blaine! He's-', 'Wrong answer.', 'Blaine... if you'd just apologize he-', 'Mom. I watched my boyfriend get beat up by grandfather and I couldn't do anything because dad was holding me back and you, too. I might not have handled it as well as I should've last night... but... I'm not the one to blame.', 'Blaine...', 'If you can't see that then I'm done with you... both of you.', 'Blaine, it's not that simple!', 'Yes, it is! It really is.', 'I...', 'Tell me if he changes his mind and wants to apologize to me.', 'Blain-', 'Until then, let me know whenever the house is free so I can go by and get my stuff. Bye') As long as they thought he had to apologize, they were no longer his parents.

"How would you feel taking money from the people you want nothing to do with?"

There had also been a text barely two minutes after the call.

"I..."

(from Dad: '14h00 – 19h00')

"Kurt... I... It's not just me wanting to never see them again – it's actually not that at all. It's me not wanting to have anything to do with them. I don't want to be their son, I don't want to be anything to them and I don't want to be anything *like* them." There are tears stinging in his eyes. God, will he ever stop crying over this?!

"You're not!"

"I can't accept that money." He insists, dropping Kurt's hands and standing to pace around the living room, pressing his palms against his eyes "I can't. I'm not going to be that much of a hypocrite, Kurt. They can be that, but not me, I can't. Every time I charge anything to my credit card, every time I pay anything, any tuition, I'll just feel dirty. I can't."

"Alright." Kurt nods "I understand. You're an idealist, Blaine. I love that about you. I understand, I do." It's almost annoying how condescending it sounds. Idealist is the word you use to define naivety and stubbornness in a flattering light. Blaine can practically hear the 'shh'ing sound from Kurt.

"But?"

"But this is your future. And your dream. Harvard is your dream." Ok, so maybe not a shh'ing sound. Maybe a good point. Not good enough, still.

"Not like this, it isn't."

"Don't rush into it." Kurt offers, pleading with honest eyes and the hint of condescension Blaine had glimpsed is so far gone he thinks it was probably never even there in the first place "I'm not saying take the money. But...consider your options before making any definitive move about it." he smiles and lays a careful hand on Blaine's cheek – it feels warm and caring "Go with Wes – see apartments, fall in love with a new city, fall in love with the campus, and... in the meantime we'll figure something out. We have time! Plenty of people have gone to Harvard without trust funds, I'm sure we'll think of something."

Blaine's silent for a while, but he smiles and offers "Everything will be alright."

"Exactly." Kurt grins and lets Blaine pull him in for an embrace "We'll figure it out, together."

Blaine nods, his face buried against Kurt's neck and sighs "Thank you..."

"Of course."

"I need to go get my stuff. After lunch."

"Do you need me there?" Kurt smiles, pulling back.

"No..." Blaine shakes his head with a sad smile "I... I want to be alone." He finds one of Kurt's hands and pulls it up to kiss its palm "Is that ok?"

"Sure." Kurt nods "Just don't forget to bring back those red pants... you know the ones that make my ass look incredible."

Blaine hangs his head in a silent chuckle.

"And the bedside clock!" Kurt adds "For god's sake do not forget that beauty! I swear to you, it's an antique, it's amazing."

Blaine laughs and shakes his head "Why don't you just take until lunch to write down everything, lest I ignore any treasure in there."

Kurt just smiles in response, eager and honest and Blaine just leans in and kisses him instead of answering the unvoiced question – 'yes, yes, you can always make me laugh'.

Lunch is stilted and awkward. Burt only gets to the table halfway through because he's been buried in his office making phone calls. That fact alone is enough to put the weight of the world on Blaine's shoulders. He can't help it if he rushes through the meal so he can just excuse himself and leave.

The first thing he does once he's alone in the taxi cab – well, as alone as one can be in a taxi – is take a deep breath.

"Where to?"

"Huh?"

"Where to?"

"Oh...! Right." He scratches the back of his neck and sighs his address, letting silence fall between them again.

He can't help the way his leg shakes, the way he keeps cracking his knuckles, the way his jaw tenses every two seconds. He can't help it.

It's the last time he's setting foot in his house. For five years now they've lived there, but the couch... they've had that for seven. And the painting on the wall, Blaine was two when they bought that. His desk is ten years old. The full body mirror in his bedroom is twice as old as Blaine and has been his since his thirteenth birthday. The coffee table was a gift from him and Cooper to their mother four years ago. The souvenir they keep their house keys in was bought in Cabo, when Blaine was eight and it's probably one of the last family vacations they ever took before things got strained. The fridge still has that dent from when he and Wes had their food fight, freshman year, and Wes fell on his back and hit his pan-clad head on its door. The rug on the bathroom has that bloodstain from when he cut himself the first time he shaved – for some reason they never managed to get that stain out. Blaine once spilled cinnamon tea on his comforter and, much like the stain on the bathroom rug, no matter how many times he's washed it since, it still smells like cinnamon. The bookshelves on his dad's office have the marks of a very creative four-year-old

Blaine who thought it was a brilliant idea to carve drawings on the hardwood wood with the letter opener. There's the kitchen clock that always runs a little late, too, but it's a family heirloom so Blaine's just constantly running five minutes late. There's... Well, there's a lot of things.

You'd think they were just that... just things. But they're also memories – they're things that come with years of memories. They're things that made up a home or, at the very least, an idea of a home.

You know when you travel for a while – like, at least a week – that's as long as it takes for you to start missing your own bed, right? You know that feeling? Like you've been away and then you get to come home and have that scent fill your lungs, and everything looks exactly the same, even the sounds are the same as ever, and your bed – finally, *your* bed! – feels so good... It's something about the familiarity of a home that makes it so special. The fact that you'll come back to something you just *know*.

Blaine lets his back slide against his bedroom door and he just sits there, chin on his knees, trembling, as tears fall freely.

It's the familiarity. That's what gets him thinking... wondering. Will they ever apologize? Will they ever come after him? Will they ever try to make things right?

And what if they do? Will he let them?

Will they be at his graduation? Will they visit his first apartment in New York? Will they want to take a picture with him on the Harvard University campus, just like his dad has with his parents, at Yale? Will they throw him a big fancy dinner with family and friends when he graduates college? Will they go to his wedding? Will they meet his children? Will they insist on getting the kids baptized? Will they...

Will they ever be his parents again?

For the first time he actually grasps the full scale of Kurt's fears regarding his parents. And while he's still sure he would never blame Kurt for it, he understands there was a reason for it. You put all these memories, all these thoughts and all these doubts and you juxtapose them against what you're supposed to be gaining in return. It's the natural instinct. It's not necessarily what he wants to do, let alone what he should be doing, but it is the instinct. The whole "is it worth it" thing starting to throb louder and louder in his head as the minutes pass and he sits alone in a room he may never see again with memories he may never get back again.

It's not Kurt I'm choosing, Blaine reminds himself, it's my life as I want it to be.

And yet the thought of going back to Kurt's after this makes him feel heavy and suffocated. It's not that he loves him or wants him any less. It's that the thought of being so close to everything that's happening in his life is so completely overwhelming it actually makes him hyperventilate.

He types a text to Wes and lets himself breathe because he knows it's the right thing to do for everyone, but mostly for himself, and for Kurt, and their relationship. *'Can we please leave today for Boston? Can I leave all my stuff at yours? - B'*

'Of course. Packing as we speak! Come over whenever you're ready. Roadtrip! - W'

Blaine smiles sadly at his cell phone before dropping it to the floor. Time. That's all he needs. And Kurt said he should go to New York, right? Kurt wouldn't be mad, or sad, or disappointed, right? Kurt would never feel like his fears were coming true? Like Blaine was failing to keep his promise to not let... well, any of what was happening happen... right..? Kurt would know this didn't mean he was leaving, right? Kurt knew he'd always come back, right? Kurt knew he just needed time to clear his head, right?

This isn't Blaine doubting anything, it's just... space, and time. Kurt has to know that. But all those conversations about it... the fight... the big fight, so fresh, still in their minds. It all comes barreling down over Blaine and god, Kurt will hate Blaine, won't he?

I'm scared things will go bad between you and your parents and that you'll get hurt about it. And then I'm scared you'll resent me for it.

He takes a deep breath, trying not to start crying even harder at the sudden crushing guilt, wipes the tears off his face, murmuring "stop this, you're not even resenting him, stop it!" and pushes himself off the floor.

He turns on his laptop and puts some music on. No need to drown in the silence of an empty house.

"Nothing like cutting ties with the parents for a good, thorough spring cleaning." He mutters as he yanks his biggest backpack from the back of the closet.

With a long sigh he starts on his closet, folding his clothes as tightly as he can. Of course the clothes alone are enough to fill the backpack – and then some. He decides to leave behind his tux and all of his pajamas, except one. It's not like he's making much use of them as it is, nowadays. He finds a second smaller

backpack and fills it with his favorite books, and then with the journal Kurt had made for him, and his music sheets. He goes to the basement and finds a cardboard box which he fills with his records and random important objects – including the bedside clock. He keeps every picture but decides to leave the frames behind – unnecessary weight, anyway. Once he's checked to be sure his guitar is well packed with all of the necessary attachments, he takes a moment to sit down and breathe.

He closes his eyes and thinks to himself, *this is probably the last time I'll be here.*

With a sort of calmness he didn't know he could have, he sits on his desk and turns on the webcam.

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"Kurt, I need to have a word with you?" Burt's voice from the doorway yanks Kurt's attention away from his bedroom wall. Rachel and Finn have been sitting there with him, trying to keep him distracted, but he's been mostly distracted from them and not by them. Rachel, having heard of the idea of early apartment hunting was already stressing out and urging Kurt to arrange for the two of them to leave as soon as summer holidays start and look for their own brand new New York City home. That only serves to remind Kurt that next year he'll be hours away from Blaine, that they'll go from being together everyday to surviving on weekends, holidays and, maybe, if they're lucky, a couple of free afternoons. All he can think about, with a long sigh, is that the moment one problem stops, another starts. But then again, if they can handle this, they can handle long-distance (well... semi-long distance, it's just three hours after all).

He stands and tails after his dad into the study, closing the door behind himself.

"What's wrong?" he asks quietly.

"Nothing's wrong... per se. But... I just needed to talk to you about Blaine and your relationship."

"Oh?"

"Listen, I know I never gave him the talk, you know? The one where I threaten to break his knees should he ever hurt you."

"Yes..."

"It's not because I forgot, it's because I think you're a big boy who can make his own choices. I would much rather talk to you, if I were to be worried about your relationship, than him anyway – the same way I'd choose to talk to Finn about Rachel, and not her. It's not because I don't care, it's just that I prefer to offer support on the sidelines."

"Right..." Kurt says slowly, still confused about the direction of this conversation "That's a good thing. I like that."

"But Blaine doesn't have that. Blaine doesn't have someone looking out for him – someone who would never go and talk to you, should you hurt him. And... well, he's a great kid, an amazing kid, actually – I'm so proud of him. But he's also fragile, Kurt."

Kurt frowns, because of course he knows that, and of course that's always been his biggest concern about Blaine "I know that. But he has me, now." He pauses "Are you giving me the talk?"

"Sort of... it's... well, you say you're there for him, but do you know what it entails?"

"I love him – that's what it entails."

"Yes. But also that he loves you, and that you need to trust that." Burt takes a deep breath and scratches the back of neck "Remember that talk we had a few days ago? I told you to relax a little and let him make his choices... and trust his feelings? I need you to remember that now. I think you're going to need to hold on to that for a while now. He's going through something really hard right now, and he might become a little lost, and he might even forget a few things himself, and... well, I just want you to... be ready for that. Don't... Don't just get lost in the disappointment that everything wasn't as easy or happy as you promised each other it would be, and really be there for him."

"Ok..."

"And I don't mean just say you love him and he's wonderful. Being there for him can come in a hundred different ways, Kurt. It could mean letting him go and trusting he will come back."

"I..." *couldn't ever let him go*. But then he stops, because that's not true. Blaine's alone right now, he asked and Kurt had been able to let him go. Kurt had urged him to go to New York. Kurt could do this; Kurt could be the boyfriend Blaine needed him to be, no matter what.

"I've seen you two and you have something special, you do. But now, more than ever, you'll need to hold on to that and trust in it."

"Are... do you think Blaine's going to break up with me?"

"No." Burt says at once "But he might need a little space once he realizes what's really happened, just like you thought he would, and you need to be ready to give him that, but you also need to remember that it's just time and it's just space- he'll be back."

"I think I can do that." Kurt nods and smiles.

"I'm telling you this because the kid's got no one else to tell you this. And, of course I love you and you come first, no matter what. But Blaine's a great kid, and I really wouldn't want him to get any more hurt than he already is because you got impatient."

"I-"

"Which you always do." Burt interrupts sternly.

"I... I... I do?"

"Yes, you do." Burt chuckles "And it's not just about the laundry or my cooking. You're a person of expectations, and that's a good thing, but sometimes, for the people we love, we need to let go of them, just until they get their footing right again."

Kurt nods, trying to grasp the full meaning of his father's words. It's not like it's something completely new to him. He remembers his first fight with Blaine. He remembers why it happened – how he'd let himself doubt Blaine's feelings for him, how he'd let himself think things were a lot worse than they actually were. He remembers their fight last week. The fight that's still much too fresh in his memory. The fight Burt's talking about.

I'm scared things will go bad between you and your parents and that you'll get hurt about it. And then I'm scared you'll resent me for it.

He realizes what he's dad saying – that Blaine might get lost for a little while there – that Kurt's fear might actually come true. But that that doesn't mean it's the end – it just means Kurt will have to be patient and

wait it out. And that maybe if he does wait, if he does show kind tolerance it won't even be that bad – if he gives enough space to start with, Blaine wouldn't need to resent him or question his choices but instead clear his mind easier and better.

Maybe Kurt didn't even need Burt to tell him this – maybe he would've managed it on his own because – yes, it's true, he's an impatient person – but this is Blaine we're talking about here. This is the person that makes Kurt be a thousand times better each day; this is the person that makes him strive to do the right thing each time. This is the person for whom Kurt could definitely wait for without ever being asked to do so.

And yet, as much as he could've done this alone, the fact that Burt would go through these lengths for Blaine, that Burt would talk to Kurt about Blaine, would ask Kurt to be kind to Blaine, that Burt would protect him like that... it means the world to him.

He throws his arms around his dad and hooks his chin over his shoulder, inhales with a smile and says "Thanks, dad... it means a lot you'd say that."

"It's my job..." Burt shrugs, but squeezes back.

"Thanks for doing it so well, then."

Burt pulls back with a chuckle "Yes, well, say that again when we're in my lawyers' office in forty minutes."

"What?"

"Come on, Kurt, we need to start moving with the charges." Burt says gathering his suitcase "I need you to get ready in five minutes. Let me just check if I have the photos we took on my laptop, and then we'll leave. Hurry."

Kurt hurries, confused and half on autopilot. He's still not over the fact that his dad is definitely going to press charges against Blaine's grandfather, but, he thinks as they're already in the car heading towards Richards & Simmons, the shit's already hit the fan so strongly that one more scandal is hardly going to make it any worse.

They're practically pulling into the parking lot when there's a phone call.

"Hey, Burt!"

"Hey Jenny..." they both say to Burt's former campaign manager, as the call is on speaker.

"Apparently people are still confusing me for your P.A. or something because I just got a call asking about your reaction to the blog thing, with the video and all... Should I tell them no comment, or draft up a press release? I don't mind, really."

"What? What blog thing?"

"You know. Blaine Anderson apparently being behind the biggest Anti-Anderson blog ever. He posted a video there, like ten minutes ago... everyone's freaking out..."

"What?!"

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My name is Blaine Anderson and I am the person behind this blog. I'm making this video not to aggravate all of the scandal going around right now – not as a way to add something else to point your fingers at when you decide my father isn't fit to be President – but because there are some things I want to say.

First of all, yes, I am gay. But no, that is not the reason my father isn't fit to be President. The *many* reasons for that have been addressed on this blog month after month, post after post, and in an ideal world those would be why he lost the election. Not my sexual orientation.

That is why I... No. I'm sorry. I was going to say regret, but I don't... Ok. That's why I wish things could've gone differently last night. I never wanted for this to happen. I never wanted to make a big spectacle of things, and I certainly never wanted to be the reason why my father lost the election.

But it happened. Why it happened is of no interest to you – or it shouldn't be. It just did. And I don't regret it because at least now I'm free to be honest about who I am and what I believe in. I don't believe in the campaign my father has tried to put on these past few months, and I don't believe he would make a good job as commander in chief.

I do believe, however, that he's worked hard enough to not have everything ruined because something that should be as inconsequential as who I fell in love with is now universally known.

For all you republicans out there who saw in him a supporter of... so called 'family values', and a conservative view of the world – he is *still* your man. The fact that I'm his son has not changed his views on the subject, and therefore should not change your vote. And he certainly did not raise me to be gay, I can assure you. And for all of you democrats out there who are probably smiling smugly because, hey!, he just lost the elections... well, be bigger than that. Take the high road. Don't act like this ok, because it isn't: this is politics, not a Lifetime movie drama.

If you want to stop supporting him, do it for the reasons I've brought to light on this blog, do it because his policies are all wrong for this country – hell, do it because he clearly cares more about image than the family he claims to be so passionate about; because he puts more stock on polls and sponsors than he does on his son's well-being; because he's been enforcing a lie for close to four years now just so his image as a republican can remain intact – do it because if he won't be loyal to his own flesh and blood than why would he be so to his country.

But do not do it because his son is gay.

This is not a reason to lose an election. This is my life.

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Headlines and excerpts found on several forms of news media

Anderson Boy Comes Out as Gay

"While the song in the fundraiser coupled with the picture of Hummel and Anderson was more than enough, Blaine Anderson has decided to grace the word with a taped confession of his homosexuality. What is more is that the video was posted on a wildly known and well-regarded anti-Anderson blog that had, for months, been running as a sort of counter-campaign for the candidate. In the video the young Anderson also admits to running said blog and, considering its contents, states the real and only reasons why his father should lose the campaign, urging voters to disregard his own sexuality."

"'This is my life' he says, making us all feel guilty for finding this whole thing insanely captivating and having our popcorn popping up in the microwave already!"

"I Am Gay" says Blaine Anderson

"As the picture depicts Hummel and Anderson in a seemingly intimate moment one cannot help but relate Hummel's bruised cheekbone to Anderson's outburst, just barely an hour previous to the captured moment."

Song hinted it, Picture said it, Video confirmed it: Anderson is gay for Hummel

The Rumors Are Confirmed! (Biggest political sex gay scandal ever!)

Anderson Guilttrips America

Bruise on Kurt Hummel Sparks Debate

"But seriously, what is it with the bruise?!"

"While I do understand that on principle journalism should be impartial to its contents, I can't help but wonder just how lightly we, as a nation, are charging into this young man's life like we have the right to use it as not just a conversational topic, but an actual public national debate. This isn't Kim Kardashian who literally makes a living out of these things, this isn't even politicians who've necessarily signed up for this. Blaine Anderson is a teenager, in love with his boyfriend, trying to live his life as quietly as possible and asking us to let him do just that. Personally, I don't think it's that hard to just let him be and focus on the adults."

Hummel Presses Charges Against Anderson Senior

"Just when we thought things couldn't get any more complicated it seems there's more story to it! The intriguing cut and bruise on Kurt Hummel's cheekbone finally has a culprit's name to go with it and it's none other than John Anderson – no, not the candidate, but his father! It seems that family dinner got a little out of control!"

Things Don't Look Good For the Anderson Campaign: gay son and domestic violence scandal makes the numbers plummet

LGBT Groups Plan Courtroom Protests Against Anderson

"first hearing is set to happen in less than a week, and things aren't looking up for John Anderson, Sr. Pictures from the night of the reported attack have leaked and what looked like a simple bruise in a badly

lit paparazzi shot is making too many indignant voices shout for justice, right before primaries are set to start. If Anderson is found guilty for assault on a minor he could be looking to jail time, even though, considering age and status, most predict a fine or community service."

Polls Predict Anderson Loss

"Anderson's issued statement is, to say the least, lacking of emotions that anyone would expect when a father talks about a son. Two pages long in which only one paragraph could be constituted to actually address the actual question about what is going on in that family and how it's being dealt with: 'although it is always going to be a tough choice, the differences between my family and our son Blaine have lead to a parting of ways that, although regrettable, is definitely the better choice and so we bid goodbye to him with wishes for the best.'"

Numbers show Anderson set loose

Exit polls predict Anderson loss

"The polls were clear and, apparently, the only one who didn't got the memo was Anderson himself. Most people seem to think he should've just quit and left the race with his head held high while he still could (well, relatively high, as high as a man whose son just told the whole country he's a lousy dad can), but quitting was not on the agenda for the candidate who much preferred to walk into his own funeral. Meanwhile, as everyone had predicted, the primaries started, just this Sunday, to appalling results for his campaign and no indication of improvement."

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There are microphones and cameras being shoved at his face as Kurt tries to walk down the court's front steps without tripping. He can feel his dad's arms around him and as he glances back he can barely see Blaine's gelled hair behind Josh – his dad's bodyguard. Apparently, it takes your dad being a former presidential candidate and your attacker being another presidential candidate's father to get not only completely overboard coverage of a pretty simple assault case, but also get it to move fast.

It's barely been a week, and the first hearing's been done with. Kurt's still a little numb, to be honest. He lands in the backseat of the car without really knowing how he got there, amidst all the shouting and shoving. Blaine's scrambling inside within seconds and Kurt's heart manages to steady just the tiniest bit

once their hands are connected again. He takes a deep breath and buries his face in the crook of Blaine's neck, and Blaine's hand squeezes his reassuringly. "It's fine, we're fine."

"I hate these guys..."

"Me, too." Blaine mumbles against Kurt's hair "But it's over for now..."

Kurt nods and straightens up, blushing once he remembers that there are more people in the car, including his own dad.

He keeps his hand in Blaine's, though.

It's also been a week since they've seen each other and he desperately needs him there, solid and strong, talking to him, mouth moving and eyes shining in that way that only Blaine's can.

Blaine had arrived from Boston just before they'd had to go into court.

"I missed you." Blaine whispers, leaning into Kurt, as if he'd been reading Kurt's mind.

Kurt can't help forming a little smile, and ignoring the flush of his cheeks, he nods and mutters "I missed you, too." His heart beat speeding up as if he was falling in love all over again, as his father's words about being able to let him go and waiting for him to come back resonate within him, and all he feels is Blaine's warm hand in his, and he thinks *please be back*.

A week ago he'd left. There had been a text '*come downstairs, please, I need to talk to you – B*', a tearful conversation by his car, a tearful plea for time to think and be away from all the mess "I'm sorry, Kurt, I know I said I wouldn't, I know I promised, but I need this, I need time to think, I need to clear my head, I still love you, I will always love you, I will always choose you, but I need time, I need space, I need to get away! I'll come back, I'll promise, I'll come back! To you! I will! God, Kurt, please don't hate me, please believe me – I'm not-"

It turned out, of course, there had been no need for tears or any plea, and Kurt had agreed to it at once, taking Blaine's face between both hands and saying "Shhh... Blaine, calm down. I believe you. You're not breaking any promises, you're just doing what you have to; it's fine, it's ok. I love you, and I need you to be ok. So go, be ok. Whatever it takes. I can handle myself just fine over here."

Blaine had only cried harder and dissolved into Kurt's arms, grasped onto him and mumbled 'thank yous' and 'I love yous' over and over again.

Now he feels their intertwined fingers and he sees the way Blaine's eyes look at him like they always have, with so much warmth, and he knows he's back. Actually, he knows he never even left; he just went for a walk.

Now all that Kurt needs is an empty, private bedroom where he can hold Blaine as tightly as he can and hope that he doesn't need to leave again. Because, as much as he'd do it, he's not sure how much more of this whole mess he can handle alone. There's too much heat, too many eyes on them – on *him*. Too much pressure for answers, for actions and for... something that no one even really knows what it is. It feels like they just want blood and don't care whose is it.

For now, as long as the car ride lasts, he just grips Blaine's hand and tries not to think about how cold John Anderson's eyes had looked in court today, or the amount of times journalists implied Kurt was just being an attention whore, or the fact that everyday his dad was being bothered with questions about the whole thing.

Burt's talking with his lawyer about the case and, as much as Kurt doesn't understand half of it, he manages to gather things are looking good. Well, they're looking as good as they can.

"How was Boston?" Burt suddenly turns towards Blaine, effectively ending the legal conversation.

Blaine looks a little startled for a second before he nods and says "It was good. I think we found a nice enough apartment, but we'll still go back after school ends."

"That's nice. So, you're not putting Harvard off because of..."

"No." he sighs "I'll use the money to pay this year's tuition – because it's too late to qualify for scholarships – I'd already claimed the trust fund, so... But I'll get a job there, and spend as little money from the fund as possible. And I'll pay it back eventually. Just like any student loan, without all the interest."

"Right. Well, if you need a job, I got a buddy up there looking for an assistant consultant, or an advisor or something... I forget now." Burt says nonchalant and takes a white little card from his breast pocket and extends it towards Blaine "He's expecting you to call him."

"I... I... couldn't – I"

"Look, he called me about you. He's a new name, trying to work up the ladder... He knew your blog, he liked it, and when he found out I knew you he called me. I'm not asking favors for you, kid."

"I... Really?"

"Yeah, just call him up this week." Burt shrugs "see what he wants from you and if you think you can do it." he smiles and winks, and Kurt sees the way Blaine's smile becomes a wider and freer, his eyes shining with anticipation as he takes the card and slips it into his pocket.

Kurt shoots his father a brilliant beam and then steals a quick kiss on Blaine's cheek.

Everything will be alright.

xXxXx

Blaine closes the door behind them with a tired smile. Kurt's already sitting on the bed looking up at him, the most beautiful he's ever looked – or maybe just as beautiful as he always looks... but Blaine hasn't been with him in a week – a week that felt like a month or two – a week that he used to reevaluate his life and the choices he's made, including Kurt.

A week when he decided he would never be ready to give up on him and Kurt because people expect him to, or because it's the easier thing to do no matter the consequences, because Kurt's an essential part to Blaine's biggest dream out of life – the dream to be happy, to find someone and build something worthwhile with them and just be *happy*.

Everyone has their dreams – lots of them, and sometimes they collide, and we have to choose one of two, or three. Blaine has lots of dreams: has Harvard, has a house with at least two kids and a nice backyard for barbeques, has a backpacking trip around Europe with Wes before either of them graduate college, has a successful, meaningful and fulfilling career, has late Friday nights curled up on the couch in warm embraces eating takeout and watching movies, and yes, he also has the dream of having his parents at his wedding, but... the dream of a wedding, of having that someone to curl up with, to raise children with, to host barbeques with, to build futures with, that dream is brighter, and better, and bigger, and so... for now Kurt is that dream, Kurt and everything that amazing boy stands for in Blaine's life is brighter, better, and

bigger, and therefore he's never going to regret this choice, because since day one he's known that that would always be the right one.

Since day one, he's always known he would choose love – his love, his life, his freedom.

So, a week after the biggest storm in his life, after the culmination of months of fighting and building up for himself, he looks at Kurt and sees the love of his life sitting on a bed, holding out a hand for him and smiling the most beautiful smile in the world.

He sees the love of his life.

Taking the hand he pulls it to his lips and kisses its back – Kurt giggles – its palm – Kurt sighs – its wrist – Kurt breathes "Blaine..."

"Kurt..." Blaine whispers back, climbing onto the bed, hovering over Kurt as he lies down. He kisses Kurt's lips with love and dedication, he shows him how much he cares for him and wants their love "Kurt... you're the love of my life, Kurt."

Kurt pulls back enough to take Blaine's face between his hands and lock their eyes, staring into Blaine's, probably looking for something like doubt, something Blaine knew wasn't there. Finally he just gasps and pulls Blaine down for another kiss, a kiss that says "I believe you, I trust you, I love you."

Blaine wants nothing more than to melt into Kurt and make their bodies one. They've made love before, obviously, but as he peels layer of fabric after layer of fabric off of Kurt's ivory skin, he knows they've never made it like this, like they mean it forever, like a promise, like an oath of love, of devotion, of safety – of coming home.

Every kiss has its own meaning. One means 'we're young and we're in love and what if this lasts forever, wouldn't it be amazing?', another means 'I don't ever want to stop doing this', there's the one that means 'your smile makes everything better', and the one that means 'I never want to look into anyone else's eyes like I look into yours', there's 'Nobody has ever known how to love me like you do', and still 'can you be mine forever... please?', 'yes!', 'can I be yours and only yours?', 'I've never wanted anything else so much in my life'.

Between their caresses there's want, there's need, there's passion, there's love... There's the understanding that the future is unpredictable and feeble, but there's the hope that they can do it

together. There's youth's wisdom that if you put enough heart into it, maybe it'll last, maybe they'll be forever, maybe they'll still be teenagers in love sixty years from now – maybe they'll be the ones to beat the odds. There's the idea that the future is built one day at a time and that each day is an opportunity to fall in love with each other all over again, a little bit more every time. And there's the unspoken declaration of will – a will to make sure that it happens.

There's the understanding that neither of them want volatile adventures, neither of them want to explore the other fish in the sea, neither of them need to. The understanding that they want the same thing and that they're both willing to fight for it against a world that laughs at them for being so young and yet so headstrong.

While they chant each other's name with reverence and adoration, their bodies work together at the rhythm their voices set, waking a fire in a crescendo of emotions and sensations. Kurt claws at Blaine's back, keeping him close, in his arms, in his body. Blaine cards his fingers through Kurt's hair, brushes thumbs through moist, flushed cheekbones, kisses perfect skin, tastes the salty sweat and drags his lips lower to find Kurt's again. They don't kiss, though, they breathe together, moan and gasp into each other's mouth.

"I love you, I love you, I love you." Blaine chants over and over again.

"I'm yours, I'm yours, I'm yours." Kurt gasps with each thrust of hips.

"I need you, I need you, I need you!" Blaine cries.

"I'm here, I'm here, I'm here!" Kurt moans back.

"I love you, I love you, I love you!" they breathe as colors become white hot, light and stars make up the whole world, and everything's legs and arms and hands and strong embraces, tightening muscles and dripping sweat, and they surrender completely to one another and every single promise they think to make. Everything else can wait. For now, this is it – their love, their lives... for now they can just be. Everything else comes later.

"I love you, I love you, I love you...!"

Epilogue

The applause, the shouting, the celebrating, the confetti cannons still pumping every few seconds, the loud music. Everything's overwhelming, but so, so good.

Blaine turns to Kurt and finds him beaming, tears in his eyes, hands splayed against flushed cheeks. He laughs, completely unable to contain his happiness, his thrill, his excitement. The adrenaline rushing through his blood is making everything happen three times faster.

xXxXxXxXxXxXx

Kurt sees him just as he jumps off the train onto the platform. "BLAINE!" He shouts and waves his arms frantically. Blaine's head turns towards him and a giant grin appears at once. They crash against each other, halfway, arms tight around shoulders and feet leaving the ground for full minutes. Blaine's giggles are clear and bright as he breathes, "Put me down, put me down!"

Kurt complies, but hugs him again "Let's not forget your bag again, shall we?" Kurt cocks an eyebrow as he walks around Blaine to a few feet behind him where he'd unceremoniously dropped his bags in his haste hug Kurt.

Blaine chuckles and rubs the back of his neck, accepting the bag and Kurt's hand.

"So..." Kurt says with a smile "Tell your proud little boyfriend about that A you got on your essay?"

Blaine beams at once and actually squeals.

xXxXx

A text conversation from 12/05/2014

A guy hit on me. – B

Oh. ? – K

He just added me on Facebook and invited me over. – B

Why are you telling me this? – K

I almost said yes. – B

Blaine. Fuck. I'm in class. I can't call you right now. This isn't a conversation to have via text – K

It's better than no conversation at all, and at least I know you're reading this, instead of ignoring my calls.
– B

That's usually what happens when I'm mad at you, though. Of course I'm not taking your calls. – K

Because I cancelled? – B

AGAIN. – K

I need to STUDY! You've cancelled before, because there were parties you needed to go to and I pretended to be ok with that. The least you could do is understand that I have to study as well. And besides you're the one being stubborn about coming over. I have no problems with you coming over this weekend, cuz I'd still be able to study w you here. But I cannot go to NY. – B

But it's your turn to come here! – K

Seriously, Kurt?! – B

Well, I'm not the one considering cheating, am I? – K

I'M NOT EITHER! Of course I'm not considering cheating on you, Kurt. But it's kind of hard to hang on to this if you hardly ever make an effort to see me. I can't be the only flexible one in this relationship! – B

I'm trying to build a life in NY! This internship is important, connections are important, these things are important. I'm not just blowing you off to be with my shiny new friends! I need to get my name out there. I can't sit on my ass and expect opportunities to fall on my lap. – K

Shit, I know that Kurt but you can't honestly expect me to be ok with the way things are right now. I saw you a month ago and we spent the whole weekend out with your friends. Last night I called you because I just wanted to hear your voice. I had a long day and I needed you, and you wouldn't even pick up the phone. – B

I'm sorry. – K

I want to be with you. Forever. I do. I really, really do. But you can't just ignore problems until they go away. If you're mad at me then call me and we'll talk it out, don't shut me out. If you do, there's no way this can survive. – B

I love you. – K

I love you, too – B

Can I call in half an hour? – K

Of course. – B

Talk to you then. – K

xXxXx

Blaine climbs into bed, snuggles against Kurt who laughs at the mistletoe hanging on their headboard before giving into a kiss. "You've been stealing ideas from my dad, haven't you? Nerd." He mumbles once they pull back, and Blaine just grins and shrugs.

"If I carried this thing around all year would it count, or is it only valid for Christmas?" Blaine mumbles.

"I think it would die, at some point."

"What if I got fake mistletoe?"

"That's tacky." Kurt shakes his head and Blaine laughs "And you don't need mistletoe to get me to kiss you, silly."

They kiss again, slow and long, before Blaine pulls back and takes Kurt's hand, lifting it up to his lips for a kiss to his palm. He sighs and then says "I got a package..."

"Blaine... that's... we've talked about dirty talking... that's not"

Blaine's laughter cuts him off "No!" he pants "I... Not dirty talking!" he throws his head back again with a chuckle before calming back down "I meant a real package. I got one in the mail... just before I left Boston." He explains "It's... it's from my parents."

"Oh..." Kurt gasps, sitting up at once "What was it?"

Blaine shrugs "I don't know." He says as he reaches into his bag, by the door – practically falling off the bed in the process – and pulls out a wrapped package "I haven't opened it, yet. The wrapping screams Christmas, so... I figured... I'd wait."

"Do you want to open it now?"

Blaine nods and peels off the first patches of wrapping paper.

It's a framed photograph. A flushed mother holding a newborn baby, beaming as she tilts the baby towards a young boy, scrunching his nose in distaste, while over the mother's shoulder the father beams to the camera, holding a thumbs up.

Blaine's hands shake as he holds it.

"There's a card." Kurt mutters, picking it up and holding it out for Blaine.

We're sorry and we miss you. Let's try again?

- Mom, Dad

xXxXx

North Yorkshire, UK, August 5th, 2015

Dear Kurt,

You would not believe this place. I need to see this place with you next to me. I need to see your eyes light up the way they do when you're witnessing something magical. Wes is threatening to kill me if I say "I wish Kurt was here" one more time, but oh my god... I know you wanted Paris for the honeymoon... but I might have to fight you on that!

Other than that, I have now purchased new jeans, so I'm no longer limited to embarrassing short shorts – which is always good news. And Wes's skin tone has finally returned to something resembling a human and not a lobster.

I miss you and I love you and I wish you were here.

Forever yours,

Blaine

P.S.: Hey Kurt! Blaine's being annoying! Please make it stop. :) Love, Wes.

xXxXx

"So Blaine, how're things with your dad? He's doing better?"

"I think so." Blaine nods, sipping his beer as Burt cringes at a particularly bad pass. Kurt's setting the table behind them, going to and fro, singing under his breath "I talked to my mom last week and she said the doctors were hopeful he'd make a full recovery."

"You haven't been down to see him yet?"

"I'll go next weekend. Just bought the tickets, actually."

"So..." Burt says uneasily "You're still not... hum..."

"Close?" Blaine offers with a knowing smile "Not exactly. We talk at least once a week, though. It's... it's progress. But... I'm not... ready for more, right now. You know?"

"Of course." Burt nods.

The game goes on, and the smell of dinner is starting to fill the whole house. There's a crash in the kitchen and Kurt's voice sounds out "FUCK!" a pause "Sorry dad!" he calls out, and both men on the couch try not to laugh too much.

"I think I'll go help him." Blaine says.

"You do that..." Burt says teasingly "But you might want to change your jeans, those look a little too nice to use for cleaning the counter with your butt." Blaine turns tomato red at the jab, remembering the moment Burt had walked in on Kurt and Blaine making out in the kitchen – Blaine sitting on the kitchen counter, Kurt between his legs, just about ready to climb after him.

"I... huh..."

There's another smaller crash "Oh, yes! Please! I love picking up salad off the floor!"

Blaine looks over his shoulder and back towards Burt "I'll... I'll go – huh- actually- something, I, huh, I meant to ask you..." he says nervously "While he's distracted..." he mutters under his breath "might as well now..."

"Spill it out."

"Oh... huh... I'm huh..."Pause. Deep breath. Exhale through nose. And then he says in the calmest voice he can "I'm thinking of proposing, actually."

"Oh."

"I don't have a ring, yet, I'm still looking, but..."

"Are you trying to ask for my permission?" Burt interrupts with an amused frown.

"Well, yes."

Burt chuckles "Ok." He shrugs.

"Ok?"

"Ok."

Blaine beams, hesitates only a second before quickly throwing his arms around Burt in a fast, but tight hug and chokes out "Thanks!"

"No problem." Burt nods, trying to keep himself from laughing and doesn't tell Blaine about the ring Carole found last week in Kurt's sock drawer when she was spring cleaning (he also doesn't talk to him about the cherry flavored lube, or the handcuffs, or the oath to never spring clean Kurt's bedroom again).

xXxXx

"I'VE GRADUATED COLLEGE!" Kurt throws his head back, arms spread wide as he spins around, twilight already verging on dark, as more and more people disappear for the thousands of graduation after-parties.

Blaine barrels him down with a hug "YOU'VE GRADUATED COLLEGE!" He laughs; both of them sprawled on the green grass, Burt's laughter booming above them.

"I have a son with a fashion degree!" he says, as he offers Kurt a hand. The graduate takes it and lets his father pull him into a hug "I'm proud of you, kiddo." Burt murmurs, face buried in his son's shoulder.

"Thank you, dad!" he breathes back "Thank you for everything!"

They're both crying when they pull back and Finn snickers – Carole clinging onto him and crying profusely too, though – punching their shoulders "For two grown men, you sure look like little girls!"

"Oh, please!" Kurt shoots back "Like you didn't cry at Rachel's!"

"T-that's... you promised you wouldn't tell!"

Kurt merely laughs and shrugs, then turns to Blaine, takes both his hands and twirls them around for a second or two "You're next, mon cher."

"I am!" Blaine nods happily.

"And then New York." Kurt says, pulling him closer.

"Then New York." Blaine confirms, letting Kurt slip his arms around his neck and wrapping his own around Kurt's waist.

"Can you believe it?" Kurt mutters.

"What?" Blaine brushes their noses together, his eyes bright.

"In just two weeks... we'll be packing up your things and you're moving to New York. We'll have a home, Blaine. Just us, just you and me."

Blaine bites his bottom lip before pressing their lips together and sighing, "That's how families start, you know...? Just two people and a home."

"I can't wait."

xXxXx

"Kurt! That box's too heavy!" Blaine warns.

"It's my magazines, my load." Kurt counters, "besides, I'm stronger than you and this has been established like... five times already... do you need more proof?" Kurt cocks an eyebrow before smirking and picking up the box with a grunt. There's no elevator.

"I was... just... we could've just done it together...." Blaine mutters under his breath as he picks up the last box, holding it against his hip with one arm and closing the trunk with the other. He locks the car and follows Kurt back inside, climbing the three flights of stairs and all the while thanking heavens for such a light last box.

Kurt's already cutting open boxes and taking out contents at random, surrounding himself in books, plates, ornaments, pillowcases, silverware, ... "Shouldn't we figure out a system?" Blaine suggests, putting the box down on the still plastic wrapped table.

Kurt just shakes his head "I need to find my scrapbook!" he mumbles "Can you please look in that box, I think I lost it."

"It's too light." Blaine dismisses it, going for a different one.

"Just look in that box!"

"But-"

"Blaine! I swear to god, I need that scrapbook, look in the damn box! Look into e-ve-ry box!"

"Jeez..." Blaine raises his hands in surrender "Fine... I'll look in the box."

He picks up the second razor and cuts open the box with his already patented 'Kurt's-being-unreasonable-but-there's-no-point-in -arguing' expression.

The box is full of balled up newspaper "I think this is breakables..." he says, as he starts taking out ball after ball, and as he finds no kind of glass or vase, or... really, any breakable, and things start looking a little fishy he notices Kurt has stopped moving altogether. He squints at his boyfriend who startles and pretends to look through an already empty box.

"Kurt?"

"Is it there?"

"Why do we have a box full of balled up newspaper?"

"We don't! That's stupid!"

"We do!" Blaine counters turning the box to the ground so all the paper falls down. There's a harder thump amongst it, though and Kurt's looking at Blaine with his patented 'you-are-such-an-idiot-Blaine-Anderson' expression.

"What did I just break?" Blaine cringes, trying to look sufficiently apologetic as he kneels on the floor and starts looking through the balls of paper.

There's a small blue velvet box there, right next the table's leg. Blaine's heart stops and he thinks *Shit*. "How did you find my-" he stops though, because Kurt's scrambled to kneel in front of Blaine and grabs the box and pops it open right in front of his face and it's not the same ring. It's not Kurt's ring. It's... it's a different ring. And Kurt's holding it, and smiling hopefully, trying to get Blaine to look at him and meet his eyes.

"I love you..." Kurt says.

"Are you... Is this... What..."

Kurt just smiles wider, nodding and blushing "Will you marry me, Blaine Anderson?"

Blaine lets out a choked laugh before shuffling forward and crashing their mouths together "Oh, my god!" he mumbles between kisses "Oh, my god! Yes! Yes!"

Their kisses are messy and they find themselves on the floor trying their very best to have sex without knocking over a stack of plates or hitting their heads against a pile of books. And once they're sweaty and panting against each other, naked except for Blaine's shirt and Kurt's socks Blaine rolls over and breathes "Wait... what do you mean there was no big speech?"

Kurt just laughs "There are no words to describe you or my love for you." Kurt rolls his eyes, as if trying to cover up just exactly how true those words were.

Blaine laughs "Nice save." He nods and then laughs again "I was going to wait until your birthday. I had the dinner all planned out... candlelight, moonlight stroll through the city, maybe some ice cream... roses..."

"Oh..." Kurt gasps "You were going to propose?!"

"Well, duh..." Blaine chuckles "I have the ring in my jacket... I keep it with me all the time."

"Oh..." Kurt turns to look at Blaine "D-did you want that? A fancy dinner and...?"

"No!" Blaine says at once, propping himself up on his elbow and leaning closer to Kurt "No! This was perfect and great and beautiful! I..."

"I just... I just thought... if we're going to start a home... we might as well make it... you know..."

"Official."

"Exactly." Kurt says and tilts his head up for a soft, smiling kiss "Did you have a big speech prepared?" he teases.

Blaine blushes "Well, I can't very well say yes, can I? Mr. there-are-no-words-to-describe-our-love."

Kurt throws his head back with laughter.

xXxXx

"Where's Kurt? Have you seen Kurt? How is he?" Blaine asks, trying not to fidget too much while his mother fixes his bowtie.

Wes rolls his eyes "I've just seen him, he's a vision in white."

"What?!" Blaine gasps "He's wearing white? But-"

"Hey, I'm kidding. I haven't seen him." Wes says "But I'm sure he's somewhere around here stressing over flower arrangements or something."

"Don't make fun of my fiancé!" Blaine says, still getting a thrill out of the word even if it is the last day he's going to use it, because... then it'll be the word husband.

Wes just shoots him a smile "I'll go see if he's alive."

There's a moment of silence between the three people left in the dressing room. His mother's still trying her best at fixing the bowtie, his dad's calmly sipping scotch, and Blaine's about to have an aneurism or something like that.

"I'm sweating." Blaine gasps once he notices the stain under his arm "Oh no! I forgot the deodorant!"

His mother sighs "Relax, Blaine, everything will be fine. I'll go get the deodorant." She smiles as she slips out of the room and Blaine's left there staring at his armpit in horror.

"Oh my god..." he sighs "This is a disaster."

"That is *not* a disaster." His father says, sounding slightly bored "Your aunt Jeanie getting left at the altar was a disaster." He adds with a chuckle.

"Oh my god, what if Kurt leaves me at the altar?!"

"Oh Blaine, please!" The man rolls his eyes "As if!"

Blaine looks at himself in the mirror and tries to put at least two straight thoughts together, but he can't. "This is ridiculous! Why am I so nervous?! We've been together for five years... we've always assumed we'd get married. I've never even had cold toes, and I certainly don't now... but... why does my heart feel like it's about to explode?!"

His dad smiles a little and shrugs "Cuz you're getting married."

"That's not all that helpful dad, but thanks."

"Ok. Listen, when I married your mother I'd never been more sure of anything in my life. She was it for me – still is. I loved her like she was my own personal sun and yet, come our wedding day, I was sweating like a pig and nearly fainted at the altar."

"Really?"

"Really. It's something about the fact that marriage is it. It's... a declaration of devotion for eternity, and... you just feel like... I felt like I needed to be everything your mother would ever need out of life."

"Right!"

"And that's a huge responsibility to take on. Hence the nerves. Doesn't mean you don't want it, but it's still nerve wracking."

"Right."

"But – and this is the best advice I'm going to give you here, son – you're not ever going to be everything Kurt needs out of life, just like I'm not everything your mother needs. Sometimes she needs you, or Cooper, sometimes she needs her girlfriends, sometimes she needs your Uncle Rob, sometimes – to my horror – she needs her mother, sometimes she just needs to be alone, and sometimes, yes, she needs me. I just have to make sure I'm there, each and every time she needs me."

"Oh..."

"Don't think you'll have to be his everything and the task won't seem so scary after all." His father smiles
"Just promise him love, friendship, devotion and hard work, and that's all there is to it."

xXxXx

"Oh god Blaine, what if she hates me?"

Blaine shoots him a sympathetic smile "She won't hate you *or me*."

"How do you know that?!"

"Kurt, we're two *successful* adults – a designer and a professor – and, we're both good people, we're kind, we're calm, we're responsible... we have a good house without sharp corners that could kill babies, and we're so in love it disgusts our friends." He chuckles "Come on, do you honestly think she could *hate* us?!"

"What if we're too old?"

"We're not even thirty."

"What if we're too young?!"

"Jesus Christ, Kurt!"

"Alright." Kurt sighs and they fall silent for a while, his leg shaking and his hand fidgeting with his coffee cup instead of drinking it. "But what if she says yes and then we get a baby and we're awful parents and our kid hates us forever."

"We're not going to be awful parents." Blaine says, making a visible effort at patience.

"What if the child's awful, though? What if the kid's just like the spawn of the devil... you know when we watched We Need To Talk About Kevin, what if it's like that?!"

"It's not going to be like that, Kurt!" Blaine laughs, and puts a steadying hand on his leg.

"You do realize we're never going to have a sex life again, don't you?"

"Kurt!"

"Hi!" A cheerful voice says from their right and tall blonde woman is extending them a hand "Are you the Anderson-Hummels?"

"Yes!" Blaine beams at once, taking her hand "You must be Sarah!"

"I am!" she nods with a brilliant smile "Do you mind if I just go grab a cup of coffee and come back?"

"No, no, please do!" Blaine answers and waits until she's turned her back to look at a scarlet colored Kurt.

"Oh my god, do you think she heard that?!"

Blaine laughs "Oh my god, Kurt, relax! Everything will be just fine!"

xXxXx

"DADDY!"

There's a knocking on the door.

"Keep going!" Kurt moans, clutching Blaine's ass tighter and making it slam back down.

"Kurt!"

"Keep going!" Kurt grits out "She'll leave, come on!"

Blaine just nods frantically and his hips fasten and harden their movements.

"DADDIES!" she insists "TONY'S BEING MEAN TO ME!"

"The door's locked, the door's locked, the door's locked!" Blaine's chanting under his breath as he thrusts, trying not to make the headboard hit the wall.

The door bursts open.

"Daddies, Ton-" silence. Silence. Silence. "Daddy! Papa's jumping on the bed!" she gasps horrified "He can't do that! You can't do that, Papa! Daddy's always saying-"

"Lizzie!" Kurt breathes out "Just go to your room while I talk to Papa, and we'll be right there."

"But Tony's being mean and he's telling me scary stories again, and can't I sleep here with you tonight?"

"NO!" They both gasp at the same time.

"Just go to your room sweetie, and we'll be right there." Blaine sighs.

xXxXx

Blaine shrugs off his black coat, and helps Kurt get out of his own, not bothering to hang them properly. He isn't surprised when Kurt doesn't so much as blink at his lack of care. "Could we just... go to bed? I'm exhausted." Kurt sighs, holding onto Blaine's shoulder with one hand as he kicks off his shoes.

"Sure..." Blaine smiles sympathetically "Do you mind if I make some tea first? Do you want some?"

"No, I just really want to sleep..." His voice is so small.

"Ok..." Blaine nods, before leaning up to kiss Kurt's forehead, whispering "I'll just be a minute, ok?"

"K... I'll just go ahead and get myself ready for bed..."

Blaine squeezes his hand before letting it go. He watches as Kurt made his way upstairs, only moving once he's out of sight. With a deep sigh he makes his way to the all too empty kitchen.

Carole and Finn are still at the church, and the kids are sleeping at Wes'. But Blaine just couldn't bear to make Kurt stay there for a single more minute – he just looked so worn out.

As he waits for the water to boil Blaine eyes his surroundings carefully for the first time since they got back. He's been in this house many, many times, but it's never seemed as unfittingly big or depressingly empty – it was like he was seeing the house for the first and thousandth time simultaneously. What shocked him most was the big chair, by the TV... - That was where he used to sit. Most afternoons that Blaine used to come over when they were kids that was where he sat, that was where he greeted Blaine,

smiled and asked how he was doing, if he was sure he didn't want to stay for dinner, where he would congratulate Blaine on his school results (which for some reason he always knew) or comment on the last game.

Blaine feels his chest tighten. For a house that looks so empty and so big, it suddenly feels a hell of a lot claustrophobic. There just isn't enough air. He just keeps seeing him smiling and laughing, that twinkle in his eyes as he teased Blaine "So when are you going to run for president, huh?" and "when are you two gonna give me some grandkids, huh?" He just can't deal with *seeing* that and knowing it's just a memory now. Blaine turns away from the couch because he just can't look at it. He grips the counter tight trying to keep the tears away, his whole body shaking.

With a few calming breaths he manages to get a grip on himself.

With one last trembling sigh he straightens himself up and rubs the bridge of his nose quietly. That's when he hears it – the loud thump upstairs, accompanied by a sob.

"Kurt?"

There's no response, only another shocked off cry.

"Kurt?" He repeats louder jogging up to the bottom of the stairs. "Kurt?... Sweetheart?" He runs up the stairs "Kurt?"

He finds the bathroom door ajar, light streaming out to the dark corridor – he can hear the quieter sobs coming from inside. He pushes the door open carefully. His heart drops to the pits of hell as he's faced with the sight of Kurt lying on the floor, curling in on himself, trying to hold his body together as he falls apart, tears pouring down his face, his sobs suddenly breaking free again, and coming out broken and uneven. "Oh, Kurt..." He sighs, crashing to his knees at once, wrapping his arms around Kurt, his own eyes flooding in a split second. Immediately Kurt's arms fly to wrap themselves around Blaine's torso, gripping him so tightly that in any other situation it would've hurt.

Blaine doesn't even so much as Shhhh Kurt... He can't. Kurt needs this. Hell, Blaine needs this.

"It smelled like him..." Kurt mutters after a while, like he actually needed a reason to break down on a day like this.

"The bathroom?"

"Yeah... I miss him already."

"I know, love, I know..." Blaine murmurs, holding him tighter.

"It h-h-hurts s-so much, Blaine... It j-just hurts."

"Fuck...!" Blaine lost it for a second there as his own sob came loud and clear and he held on to Kurt as for dear life.

"I want my dad back, Blaine! I need him! I need him back!"

xXxXx

"Shit!" Blaine gasps, and Kurt takes his head out of Blaine's lap to look. There in the middle of the playground is their daughter on hands and knees with the tell tale signs of erupting tears.

"Dammit!" he mutters as they both dash off the bench and go towards the little girl, her brother already at her side, clumsily patting her hair and saying "It's ok, Lizzie, you're ok..."

"Did you hurt yourself?" Blaine asks as soon as they reach her, kneeling right in front of her. She just nods as tears start streaming down her cheeks, and she shows her bleeding, scraped knee.

"Oh no..." Kurt gasps. Reaching into his bag for the small bottle of anti-septic and Band-Aids. He grabs a tissue and pours the brownish liquid onto it before dabbing at the flesh wound and blowing cool air on it. She still flinches and even as he's done her crying doesn't subside.

"Does it hurt, sweetie?" Kurt coos, brushing some hair off her face.

She nods between sobs.

"Do you want Papa to kiss it better?" Blaine smiles hopefully, and Kurt eyes him in half-amusement. She nods "Ok, I'll show you how to make it better." He says softly and Kurt watches him carefully, curious "Fist you have to clean it, like Daddy did or it won't work, ok?" she nods and hiccups a sob "Then you kiss it, like this..." Blaine bends down and presses a quick kiss to the scraped wound "Then you take your daddies

favorite drawing pen..." Blaine half chuckles, snatching said pen out of Kurt's breast pocket "And you draw a heart around it, like so..." he sticks his tongue out a little as he draws "So it'll keep the love in there, you know?" she snuffles, already distracted from the pain "And then, just to make sure the kiss doesn't go anywhere, you put the Band-Aid on" he holds out his hand and Kurt nearly trips over himself, snapping out of his stupor to hand the Band-Aid over and Blaine shoots him a wink as he takes it and goes back to looking at their daughter "Like this."

"Is it better, Lizzie?" Tony squeezes his sister's little hand and she nods, giving him a small, shy smile.

Kurt stares at Blaine in disbelief before leaning over and pressing his lips to his husband's cheek and whispering "I love you."

xXxXx

Kurt's standing against the front door of their house, Blaine's briefcase in hand.

Blaine smiles as he reaches for it and collects a long kiss instead.

"Ready for your first day at the office, Mr. Senator?"

Blaine's smile makes his eyes crinkle, now. "Well, yes, if I can just get past the front door."

"Only after another kiss. Because you have a very proud husband that can't really get enough of his smart, successful and ambitious man!"

"I'll give you as many kisses as you want." Blaine says, voice low and husky and he leans forward.

"Careful there..." Kurt mutters as they pull apart "I might just want a thousand, and not all on my mouth, and then I'm afraid you'd be late for work, dear"

"It'd be worth it..." Blaine sighs against Kurt's lips as they kiss again, losing themselves a little too much in it until a squeal breaks the moment.

"Ewww!"

"DAD! Stop macking on Papa and help me find my yellow cardigan! I'll be late for school!"

"Oh... I forgot those." Kurt groans and Blaine chuckles, taking the briefcase from Kurt's hand and kissing his cheek.

"I'll see you tonight." Blaine says meaningfully, to which Kurt smirks and grabs his tie, pulling him in for a last kiss "Until tonight, then, Senator Anderson."

"DAD!"

"COMING! Jesus! Calm down! The world doesn't revolve around you and your cardigan, Lisa. There are other things to life."

xXxXx

"Oh the grey hairs..." Wes teases as he sips his cup of coffee.

Blaine gives him a weak smile "I swear, I must get a new one each day."

"You work too much."

"I do."

"That was easy." Wes frowned "You usually come up with some kind of excuse and say 'no, but I have to...'"

"No, no... I..." Blaine can't help the prickle in his eyes and he wipes angrily as the first tear starts rolling down his cheek "I missed Tony's play last night. Wes, I missed his play. His high school play! He had the lead role, and I missed it! It's not... I've never thought – I... I don't want to be that father." He takes a sharp breath "And Lizzie's first boyfriend came over for dinner last week and I arrived in time for *dessert*. And when Tony finally managed to pass Algebra we were supposed to go out for dinner – to a nice place – we ended up ordering pizza in because I left the office so late we missed the reservation. I... can't even remember the last time I had breakfast with any of them! And... I... honestly think... I'm... I slept on the couch last night – I got home and the bedroom door was locked... and... Jesus... Kurt's – he's got every right to be mad, he does. I can't be this person who gets home after dinner and leaves before breakfast."

"You should set boundaries then. Get a new assistant! A second one!" Wes says "It's not like you can't afford it, and I'm sure there's plenty of teenaged yous begging for the chance to be your assistant... You have to delegate and learn to trust people will do a good enough job of it."

"It's not... What if it's a kid with a girlfriend or a boyfriend at home, waiting for him while dinner gets cold, and he only gets there at ten pm because I went to my family while he stayed there burning his eyes...?"

"Blaine?!" Wes sighs "Honestly? That's the stupidest thing to do. Delegating tasks is exactly about ensuring no one gets too much work. Right now, you're getting too much work. I think you're actually the only one in that building that *does* any of his work at all, let alone from scratch! So, get a damn assistant and have dinner with your family. And please, please don't let Kurt even contemplate divorce, because you two are it, and if you split I'll lose faith in humanity."

"I... yeah.. I..." Blaine sighs "I'll just go wash my face and then we can chat about the game last night." He offers with a sad smile, while Wes chuckles and rolls his eyes.

"You're going to call Kurt, aren't you?"

"Huh..."

"I'll try to keep your coffee warm." Wes sighs "Don't mind me, really, take your time."

Blaine closes the bathroom door behind him and pulls his cell phone out, already dialing. It rings for almost a minute before Kurt's voice comes through.

"I'm only picking this up because we made a promise of never ignoring each other's calls, and unlike you I actually keep my promises, you asshole."

"Kurt... please!"

"He was devastated you weren't there, Blaine!"

"I'm devastated I wasn't there!" Blaine sobs "I don't want it to be like that, and I'm so, so sorry!"

"Well, too little too late, don't you think?!"

"I know, I know... I... Kurt. I'll change, I will, I promise! I've been thinking and I'm going to get a second assistant, and I'll keep my hours from nine to five and that's it. And weekends are for family only, and Friday nights are sacred! I promise! Please, please! I'm begging, please forgive me, please don't divorce me!"

There was a pause, a sharp intake of breath "Of course I won't divorce you! I'd never divorce you, Blaine!" Kurt sighs "Jesus Christ, sweetie, I love you.... I just... I just... I want to see you, you know?"

"I know. I want to see you, too. I miss you all the time. And our kids... I miss them, too and whenever I'm not having dinner with you, all I can think about is how much I wish I was home."

"Just... Come home then, Blaine, and we'll... figure everything out."

"And you won't make me sleep on the couch?" he says hopefully "Because my back is killing me, Kurt. I'm not eighteen; I can't just crash on the couch."

"Oh, poor you." Kurt drawls out, but there's a hint of a smile "Listen, I'm leaving the office at three. I can drive by yours at three thirty...? The kids won't be home until four thirty, and I thought it'd be nice for Tony if you were there when he got home... with a cake... and a new car... and tickets to some concert... and a puppy... and... well... yourself."

"Of course, yeah, that sounds terrific. I'll cut lunch short."

There's a beat of silence and then "You're really getting an assistant?" Kurt's voice is both hopeful and incredulous.

"Yes!"

"Ok." Kurt says and Blaine just knows he's smiling, and Blaine wants nothing more than to see it happen in front of him, because of him, again "Then I will see you at three thirty."

"I will see you then, sweetheart." He sighs.

"Cheezyness will get you everywhere...!" Kurt chuckles.

"Oh, my love, I can't wait to see your beautiful eyes again, baby."

Kurt's laugh is so bright and Blaine hasn't heard it like that in ages, it makes his throat burn and his eyes prickle. "Kurt...?"

"Yeah?"

"Was he amazing?"

"Yes!" he breathes "He was phenomenal!"

Blaine buries his face in his hand and chokes out a sob, sliding against the cold tiled wall towards the floor, before he pants "C-can you t-tell me all ab-bout it? P-please?"

"Of course, sweetie!"

xXxXx

"FIFTY!" Finn yells, practically in his ear "The big five-oh! God, you're old."

"Shut up, Finn, you're two months younger than me!" Kurt snaps back.

"Still, I'm younger." Finn snickers and Kurt sighs and tries to hold his head high with the dignity of a fifty year old world renowned menswear designer "Oh my god, Kurt, is that a hickey?!"

"What?" Kurt blanched, his hand flying up to exactly the spot he'd been assured there would be no hickey at.

"Oh. My. God." Finn gasps before bursting out with laughter and walking away and Kurt tries to find something he can throw at his head but there are only expensive vases near him, and he has to settle for a plastic fork.

"I'm going to kill Blaine..." he mutters under his breath and he makes his way to the bathroom, skillfully dodging people "'Don't worry, Kurt, I won't leave a mark, Kurt, shut up Kurt, relax, Kurt, just enjoy it, Kurt, I promise I'm not overdoing it, Kurt..." he mumbles "Fuckhead."

xXxXxXxXxXxXxXx

Everything is happening three times faster and he wants to say so many things to Kurt but can't really find all the words – it reminds him of Kurt's proposal and he laughs again, before taking Kurt's face in his hands and pressing their lips together. He knows there are cameras everywhere, recording, taking pictures, probably even livestreaming, he doesn't care. "Thank you!" he gaps as he pulls back, keeping their foreheads together "Thank you so much for giving me the world and beyond!"

Kurt just beams, tears pouring out of his eyes "I'm so proud of you."

Blaine tries not to cry because, well, it'd be a pretty embarrassing look for the cameras "You are my light. You're my... everything Kurt, I couldn't have done this without you." He says before turning to Lizzie and Tony, who are still hugging and jumping "Any of you!" he reaches for them and the four embrace with strength and barely contained excitement. "I love you all so much!" he breathes "Congratulations, Papa!" Lizzie squeals into the embrace, her baby bump making it only a little awkward "YEAHHHH!" Tony whoops as he puts his hand in "Show circle!"

Kurt and Blaine burst out laughing as they put their hands in the center "Three, two, one, TEAM ANDERSON!"

They disperse and Kurt nudges Blaine on to the stage, to that little podium. Both hands on his shoulders he squeezes a little and smiles "Go on, Mr. President, make your speech. We're right behind you!"